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### **3.7 ANALYSIS OF DATA**

This section describes how the data collected were analyzed to answer the research questions in order to achieve the objectives of the study.

Before the interviews were tape recorded, the researcher obtained permission from the participants to record the interview. Each participant had a name or a code in order to be distinguished when transcribing the information. During the recordings participants were encouraged to speak one at a time to avoid garbling the tape (Kreuger, 1988), whilst (Howe & Lewis, 1993) suggest that it is essential that participants identify themselves before they speak. In this study the participants identified themselves with a letter of the alphabet assigned to them respectively.

Basing the analysis on audio-taping; avoided pitfalls of inaccurate and selective manual recording and inaccurate and selective recall by the researcher. The focus group interview recordings were transcribed by the researcher. This was done by transcribing word by word, expression by expression and exactly as it was on the audio tape. Notes were made throughout the transcription process. The researcher read through all the raw findings numerous times in order to obtain a general sense of the information and also to reflect on its overall meaning. To ensure trustworthiness of the findings, transcriptions were sent to the participants. The majority of the participants confirmed the accuracy of the findings in writing.

The thematic analysis approach was employed to analyze the findings. According to Coolican (1999), a thematic approach includes extensive discussion about the major themes that arise from analyzing data that was collected in a qualitative research paradigm. It is the understanding of the content of conversation and it allows for the identification of major themes arising from a discussion. Thematic analysis is therefore

concerned with how people understand the meanings of the words and phrases that they use. Often this approach uses extensive quotes and rich details to support the themes. Findings was carefully sorted and re-sorted to produce a system of categories or themes (Coolican, 1999). It emphasizes both commonalities and differences between participants concerning the dominant themes. It often amounts to little more than a grouping of quotes from the material, the better the “analytic” examples of the approach organize the themes into a structure that illuminates the material.

This approach seems highly suitable because the aim of this study was to elicit common themes and about the challenges facing Itinerant Learning Support Educators. The themes that emerged in this study included the role of Itinerant Learning Support Educators, Remedial Educator, educator and parent support, co-ordinating the institutional level support team, successes, learner achievement, educator development, placement and challenges. These themes are described in detail in Chapter four.

As the analysis of findings is a reflective activity it required that the researcher maintained a detailed record of the analysis process. Therefore the audio tape recordings and transcriptions were kept in a safe place. The final interpretation of the findings analysis is presented in Chapter 4.

### **3.8 TRUSTWORTHINESS OF THE DATA COLLECTED**

The quality of research relies heavily on the reliability of the methods used and the validity of the conclusions drawn (Silverman, 2005). The reliability of a psychological measuring device is the extent to which it gives consistent measurements and the greater the consistency of measurement, the greater the reliability of the tool (Banyard & Grayson, 2000). The validity basically checks whether the test measures what it is supposed to measure. In this study the researcher took cognizance of trustworthiness of the findings collected as a measure of validity and reliability by following Guba’s model on identification of four aspects of trustworthiness, which includes truth-value, applicability, consistency and neutrality (Krefting, 1991). This is relevant to this study due its qualitative nature.

Truth-value is important in qualitative research. The researcher provided the participants feedback on the transcriptions to confirm whether the transcription is a true reflection of their responses. Participants had the opportunity to provide their opinions regarding the accuracy of the interpretation of the transcriptions (Krefting, 1991).

Applicability in this study is relevant because the purpose of this research is to obtain a general sense of the challenges faced by Itinerant Learning Support Educators in Metro South Education District (Krefting, 1991).

In terms of consistency for this study, there are common themes arising from the experiences of the participants as Itinerant Learning Support Educators in Metro South.

With regards to neutrality of the analysis, the findings of this research will be solely a function of the informants or participants and on the conditions of the research and not on other forms of biases (Krefting, 1991).

### **3.9 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS**

This study was conducted in accordance with some of the ethical guidelines for research suggested by Goodwin (2002) and Wellington (2000) when conducting research with human subjects.

All participants were treated with respect and sensitivity. The ethical issues pertinent to this study included negotiations and dissemination of information, human rights and values, informed consent and voluntary participation, privacy and confidentiality and inclusion and exclusion.

#### **3.9.1 Negotiations and Dissemination of information**

As I indicated earlier in the research, permission was requested in writing from the Western Cape Education Department, the Metro South Education District, schools and Itinerant Learning Support Educators. All participants signed a consent form for participation in the study. In terms of dissemination it is noted that all participants have a

right to the information. Participants were involved in decision-making throughout the process. Most research projects including this study conform to widely accepted principles such as: obtained informed consent, ensure that participation is voluntary, preserve confidentiality, privacy etc. (Swann & Pratt, 2003).

### **3.9.2 Human Rights and Values**

I was committed to conduct this research ethically by respecting the human rights, value orientations and religious denominations of all participants. I undertook not to allow personal value orientations and beliefs to influence this research in any way. All participants were treated fairly, with consideration, with respect and honesty (Goodwin, 2002).

### **3.9.3 Informed Consent and Voluntary Participation**

Obtaining informed consent ensures that all information regarding possible advantages or disadvantages participants may be exposed to, are followed and emphasis must be placed on accurate and complete information from the onset (Strydom, 2005). Nobody should be coerced into participating in a research project, because participation must always be voluntary (Neuman, 2003). Participants were not coerced to participate in this study. I entered into an agreement with participants that clarified the nature of the research and the responsibilities of both parties. They were requested to provide written consent after being fully informed about the aims and objectives of the research. No attempt was made to deceive or mislead participants in any manner. Principles such as openness and transparency were employed throughout the study. All participants were invited and participated voluntarily in the study.

### **3.9.4 Privacy and Confidentiality**

Privacy implies the element of personal privacy, while confidentiality indicates the handling of information in a confidential manner which can be ensured by coding and anonymity (Strydom, 2005). The participants were assured of anonymity by the researcher who would thus conceal their identities and ensure that participants'

transcripts would not to be accessed by anyone. Personal or intimate questions were avoided in order to ensure privacy. Confidentiality and anonymity were maintained at every stage of the study.

### **3.9.5 Inclusion and Exclusion**

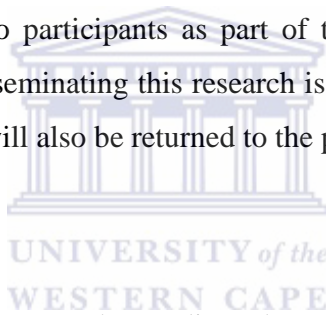
The researcher ensured non-discrimination throughout the findings-collection process (Wellington, 2000). All participants had an opportunity to respond to the interview questions. Equal participation was ensured by the researcher by means of a coding system. The researcher posed all questions in such a manner that each participant could respond. The small focus groups also ensured optimal response opportunities for participants.

Finally, feedback was given to participants as part of the final dissemination process. Although the main aim for disseminating this research is a thesis for the requirements of a Masters' degree, the results will also be returned to the participants.

## **3.10 CONCLUSION**

This chapter has presented the research paradigm that was used for the purpose of this study. It provided an outline of the research methodology and the research process. It gives details with regard to theory of a qualitative research design. In particular, it explained the case study method as this was the method by which the data were collected. Focus group techniques were used, their interviews recorded and transcribed and a thematic approach was used to analyze the findings. In conclusion, issues regarding trustworthiness were discussed and the ethical guidelines for this study were presented.

The next chapter presents the findings.



## **CHAPTER 4**

### **PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS**

#### **4.1 INTRODUCTION**

In chapter three, the research design and methodology of the study was discussed. This chapter presents the findings collected regarding the perceptions of the Itinerant Learning Support Educators and their perceived challenges of providing support within an Inclusive Education Framework. As a result, it presents the findings and it illustrates the relevant themes that emerged from the findings.

Below follows the research questions and the relevant themes that emerged from the findings.

#### **4.2 RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

What do Itinerant Learning Support Educators regard as challenges in supporting learners with barriers within the context of an Inclusive Education framework?

How do Itinerant Learning Support Educators perceive their role within the Inclusive Education framework?

What do Itinerant Learning Support Educators regard as successes in supporting learners with barriers within the context of an Inclusive Education framework?

#### **4.3 PERCEPTIONS OF CHALLENGES**

Participants were asked to describe the challenges they experienced in supporting learners experiencing barriers to learning and development as part of the learning support that they provide at the two schools that they are allocated. The challenges described by the participants included the following:

Carrying out duties of other professionals

- Educator Support
- Parental Support

Limited understanding of the Inclusive Education Paradigm

Unrealistic workloads for Itinerant Learning Support Educators

- Co-ordinating the Institutional Level Support Team (ILST)

Lack of clarity on roles and responsibilities and unclear job descriptions

Lack of resources

Lack of accommodation

Negative attitudes from the mainstream educators towards Itinerant Learning Support Educators

Inadequate time for learning support

Inappropriate quality management performance measurement

Lack of support for Itinerant Learning Support Educators

#### **4.3.1 Carrying out duties of other professionals**

Itinerant Learning Support Educators implied that they were expected to perform duties of other professionals which included educator support and parent support. Educator support would primarily be conducted by District Officials such as Learning Support Advisors and Curriculum Advisors whilst parent support included support that should be provided by School Psychologists or School Social Workers.



#### 4.3.1.1 Educator Support

The participants stated that they assisted or trained educators to adapt and differentiate the curriculum for learners experiencing barriers to learning. Over and above the training, informational support are provided to educators in the form of handouts containing information about practical activities associated with development and perceptual skills, motor skills, assessment methods for numeracy and literacy and various other forms of support related to the use of behavioural principles, especially that of positive reinforcement. In addition, Itinerant Learning Support Educators were expected to assist mainstream educators to complete Institutional Level Support Team referral forms as well as referral forms to special schools. Despite this being perceived as part of their role, Itinerant Learning Support Educators felt overwhelmed by the unrealistic overload of educator support expected.

One participant said:



**No, look, whenever there is a form to be filled in then there is frenzy. Everybody is running around, show me again man. They have been doing it for the past five years just to fill out the Institutional Level Support Teams form and even for the application to special schools. The learning support teacher must fill in the forms even if you have given them a booklet and have supported them.**

Another participant said:

**Ek moet selfs al die vorms in vul. Die onderwysers doen niks nie. Ek verkies om die vorms self in te vul want as ek vir hulle die vorms gee dan kry ek dit seker die einde van die jaar terug en dit wil sê ek het niks kinders om te onderig nie.**

**(I am even expected to fill in forms. The teachers do nothing. I choose to complete the forms myself because when I do give them the forms then I will**

**most probably get it back at the end of the year which means that I will not have any learners to teach)**

#### **4.3.1.2 Parental Support**

Some of the participants expressed with concern that parents thought that Itinerant Learning Support Educators could solve some of their social problems. For example, Itinerant Learning Support Educators were expected to solve problems such as truancy, trauma emanating from parent divorce, emotional, sexual and physical abuse. When schools were faced with these social-emotional cases they automatically refer the case to the Itinerant Learning Support Educator.

Furthermore, Itinerant Learning Support Educators also reported that they provided information to certain parents who found it difficult to deal with children that experience learning difficulties. This information included explaining various learning difficulties, and identifying and addressing these difficulties. Individualized programmes were worked out for the parents to support their children at home, such as learning support activities in the areas of numeracy and literacy. If these efforts were not effective, the Itinerant Learning Support Educator would refer the parent to the District Based Support Team for further support and intervention. They would conduct interviews with parents and educators in order to locate the primary barrier by investigating extrinsic factors which could attribute to the learning difficulty.

It appears that it was required of the Itinerant Learning Support Educator to support the parents with regard to the social, emotional and psychological challenges in addition to the barriers to learning and development that learners experienced.

Furthermore, the Itinerant Learning Support Educators indicated how burdensome it was for them when they were expected to perform roles such as counsellors and social workers by counselling parents, solving daily problems as indicated earlier and providing the parent with some form of home program to support the learner at home as well.

The Itinerant Learning Support Educators reported that they provided academic and emotional support to the parents of the learners who are in the learning support program at the school. In terms of emotional support, the Itinerant Learning Support Educators felt that they were expected to work like social workers in the manner in which they assisted parents. Furthermore, Itinerant Learning Support Educators claimed to have provided some advice to parents on where and how support services could be accessed for the identified social needs of the learners. Sometimes they gave parents advice about social and emotional issues by referring cases beyond their competencies to other specialists in the specific fields such as psychologists or occupational therapists.

One participant said:

**Hulle verwag as die leerder na jou toe kom en in twee dae moet jy die kind kan help of dit sosiaal was of kindermisbruik dan verwag hulle jy moet dit kan uitsorteer. Somige ouers sien jou selfs as die sosialewerker by die skool**

**(They expect that when the learner comes to you then in two days you should be able to help the child whether it is social or child abuse, then they just expect you to sort it out. Some parents see you as social workers at school)**

Another participant stated:

**Where I get distracted is where I have to help with everybody else's social problems any time of the day. People always think that you can help with everything. `Jy moet nou help met `n ouer wat bo op jou staan en die ouer kannie weggaan noe voordat jy nie vir hulle gehelp het nie`.**

**(You are expected to help parents immediately and the parent does not leave until you help them).**

One participant said:

**I would work out an IEP for the child and then me working closely with that IEP and consulting with the teacher and the parent to work with the IEP.**

Another participant said:

**Sometimes it's just that the child needs to be sent to Dr. Fairburn (School Doctor) for instance or to the school psychologist and the parents or the teacher.**

One participant said:

**Ek voel dat jy word oorlaai met werk. Dit is te veel vir jou as een person te hanteer. Met die gevolg is jy moet hierso help and daarso help en dit laat vir jou disorieenteerd.**

**(I feel that one is over burdened. It is too much for one person to handle. As a result, you must help here and help there which makes you disorientated).**

Another participant said:

**I am not a counsellor. So you are more the counsellor or social worker than you are the teacher.**

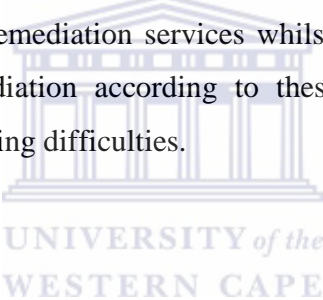
This section highlighted that Itinerant Learning Support Educators found it very challenging and overwhelming to provide psychological and social services to parents. This role for Itinerant Learning Support Educators was found to be very overwhelming because most of the Itinerant Learning Support Educators were not professionally skilled and trained to provide these specialist services to parents. The findings suggest that there were unrealistic expectations which posed many challenges for Itinerant Learning Support Educators.

#### **4.3.2 Limited understanding of the Inclusive Education Paradigm**

All the participants indicated that their core function was to provide learning support to learners experiencing barriers to learning. Learners are assessed by the Itinerant Learning Support Educator and the results of the assessment informed the development of the Individual Education Plan (IEP). However, the findings showed that there is a mismatch between the educators understanding of providing learning support and remedial teaching. The quotations that follow indicate the perceptions or mismatches of Itinerant Learning Support Educators in terms of the difference between learning support and remedial.

In terms of remedial support, five participants viewed their role to be to withdraw special needs learners from the mainstream class and provide remediation. Nine participants maintained that they provide remediation services whilst the other five noted that they offer learning support. Remediation according to these participants has to do with diagnosis and fixing of the reading difficulties.

One participant claimed:



**I would say there is definitely a difference. Your approach is different because now you don't only give support to child but you also go and give advice to the teacher as to what she can do with the child and also the parents and give advice to them.**

Another participant noted:

**Well with remedial you have to find what the child's weakness is and then you have to work on that. Say for instance it is the b-d or the b-d-p confusion then you are going to focus on that and you are going to do some exercises to try and remediate that so that is how I function. There is a period where the whole school does remedial.**

One participant said:

**I don't think that there is any difference because learning support is in actual fact remedial and that is the child who has a problem in a learning area and you have to remediate that problem and then send the child back to his class. But in our case the learners that come to us, very, very few of them are learning support, they are mostly the old adaptation.**

One participant added:

**In the old days remedial cases used to be referred to the remedial teacher via the psychologist. The psychologist would assess the child and then the child has an average IQ and has a backlog in maths or in language. Now the TST refers the child to the learning support teacher.**

Another participant added:

**Support is obviously withdrawing children with learning barriers and supporting the teacher and the parents. We call the school psychologist and they don't always come so sometimes we call a private psychologist who I recommend to come and assess the learner.**

It is clear that not all the Itinerant Learning Support Educators in Metro South were working within the same paradigm and that there were mismatches between their perceptions of the concepts learning support and remedial support. These could have implications for pedagogy, practices and the support that individual learners receive at different schools within the same Metropole. In addition, this section indicated that the Itinerant Learning Support Educators who participated in this study did not have a common understanding about their roles and responsibilities. This was evident in that some of the Itinerant Learning Support Educators were working within the remedial framework whilst others claimed to work within a Learning Support framework. This in itself illustrates that the role of Itinerant Learning Support Educators is diverse with broad expectations. However, this alludes to the fact that not all Itinerant Learning

Support Educators received an official job description from the Western Cape Education Department. Each participant identified different roles from other Itinerant Learning Support Educators. On the contrary, they identified one common understanding with regards to their primary responsibility which was to support learners who experience barriers to learning. The findings therefore suggest that there is a lack of understanding of the inclusive education paradigms and a unified consensus between a remedial and learning support framework.

### **4.3.3 Unrealistic workloads for Itinerant Learning Support Educators**

Itinerant Learning Support Educators implied that they have unrealistic workloads to perform such as co-ordinating the Institutional Level Support Teams (ILST).

#### **4.3.3.1 Co-ordinating the Institutional Level Support Team (ILST)**

Itinerant Learning Support Educators reported that their role on the Institutional Level Support Teams also differs. In most cases an Itinerant Learning Support Educator was expected to take the leading role on the Institutional Level Support Teams by being the co-ordinator. This role included the setting up of the Institutional Level Support Team meetings and the facilitation of discussions on learners that are referred for additional support. They found themselves ensuring that the Institutional Level Support Teams meet regularly. In some cases the Institutional Level Support Team only comprised of a principal and an Itinerant Learning Support Educator.

However, the Western Cape Education Department discourages that Itinerant Learning Support Educators become the co-ordinator of the Institutional Level Support Team because they are not school-based which means that they are not at the same school every day.

One participant stated that:

**Before there was an Institutional Level Support Team at my one school but it was not functioning and there was no Institutional Level Support Team at**

**my other school. Somebody else must be the co-ordinator but you will find that the Itinerant Learning Support Educator is the co-ordinator because with the referrals and the forms you will find that the forms becomes your baby and everybody else will look at you and want to know from you what to do.**

Another participant said:

**I agree with the previous speaker that I also do have to take a leading role. At both my schools I am the co-ordinator. On the ILST your sole purpose there is completing the forms, window dressing for when the teams come for promotion and progression and being the co-ordinator.**

One participant said:

**Even though the department said that we must not be the co-ordinator of the ILST, we are still expected to do it.**

#### **4.3.4 Lack of clarity on roles and responsibilities**

Generally, the Itinerant Learning Support Educators felt that their roles are more demanding than the school-based Itinerant Learning Support Educators. They reported that being itinerant implies servicing two different schools, under two principals. More often than not these principals had different demands from that of the Western Cape Education Department. This lack of common understanding created a range of confusions and uncertainties among Itinerant Learning Support Educators in this study. One reason for the confusions cited was that not all of them received a job description. Due to the lack of an official job description Itinerant Learning Support Educators have created their own job descriptions. Often these job descriptions became overwhelming and it opened up possibilities of Itinerant Learning Support Educators being exploited by schools, principals and mainstream educators. In terms of the different expectations from the principals and staff members, the Itinerant Learning Support Educators felt that the expectations were too demanding. This resulted in Itinerant Learning Support Educators

having different roles at each school and this resulted in challenges for the Itinerant Learning Support Educator in relation to function and perform efficiently.

Furthermore, Itinerant Learning Support Educators needed to fit in with the school where they are placed, fitting in with the context and culture of that school. It appeared that many principals and staff members were not aware of the role of the Itinerant Learning Support Educator. On the other hand, when principals and staff know the Itinerant Learning Support Educator's job description, it made it somewhat easier for them to understand the role of the Itinerant Learning Support Educator.

One participant said:

**I actually have two roles... the expected role from the education department and the role expected from the schools.**

Another participant added:

**I think the only thing for me is that the principals or the educators expect from you to supervise when an educator is absent. That's the only problem that I have. They actually don't realize that you also have work to do.**

A participant said:

**It's a very autocratic principal. So the principal demands everything. When you busy in the class then that time when he calls you then you must listen and then you must pay attention now.**

Another participant said that:

**In terms of your day to day running at the school it depends on the mood of my principal, really because if he is in a good mood then you can go ahead with your class. But if he is in a bad mood then you can be sure that man is going to scratch out something that isn't there now and he's going to start looking and questioning you.**

A participant said:

**It is like they said we are an entity on its own and you don't fit in with any of your schools and any of the clicks of the schools. It creates problems for you.**

One participant said:

**We were given a job description that very first year when it started, remember? I don't think that we are sticking to that job description. It definitely goes beyond that.**

Another participant added:

**I never ever got a job description. I've never received anything and I did speak to one of my advisors about it last year and the year before and she told me don't worry too much about it now.**

Further a participant noted:

**I have an old job description I received at Oatlands in Simons Town. That's quite a number of years ago. That's the only one I have.**

One participant said:

**I think my principal studied the job description in 2003 so with the result when educators give me work then he say that is not part of my job description and at both my schools I have the principals on my side. So I can use that all the time.**

The above findings show that there is a lack of clarity on roles and responsibilities. The lack of a clear job description poses enormous challenges in supporting learners. However, the findings also hints that if the leadership at schools are knowledgeable about the job descriptions of Itinerant Learning Support Educators then it could facilitate better working conditions for Itinerant Learning Support Educators. It is apparent that Itinerant

Learning Support Educators were not completely sure about their job description. Some have received a job description in 2003 and many others have not received a job description at all.

#### **4.3.5 Lack of resources**

Itinerant Learning Support Educators claimed that there was a lack of resources as well as lack of access to resources such as computers, copy machines and printing facilities at the schools. The Itinerant Learning Support Educator had to ask permission from the deputy principal to access the computer lab at the school whilst the other staff members could access the computer lab at their leisure.

One participant said:

**In terms of the computer room I'm only allowed in the computer room with a senior. I cannot be there on my own. Now you tell me who is my senior there? It's frustrating.**

Another participant added:

**I can't even make copies. I can only make 200 copies per child per year or I don't know what. I have to ask people to do it for me so that is a big challenge.**

Some schools purchase stationery for the staff but not for the Itinerant Learning Support Educator. It therefore became very difficult for Itinerant Learning Support Educators to provide optimal support to the learners experiencing barriers to learning.

One participant said:

**You are not even included with the stationery at the schools. You don't get everything that you should get and you spend a lot of money. Everybody is getting their things, the pritt and books get sent to them and then you stand last in the line all the time.**

Itinerant Learning Support Educators also reported that they have to purchase their own educational charts and games. It was mentioned that this could be very expensive when Itinerant Learning Support Educators have to do this at both schools. Sometimes they shared the resources they purchased between the two schools in order to cope with supporting the learners effectively. This also made Itinerant Learning Support Educators feel that they did not belong to any school. This led to feelings of despondency, and inadequacy which had a negative impact on the provision of support to learners experiencing barriers to learning and development.

One participant felt:

**I think the another challenge is the amount of money you spend is double out of your pocket because now you have to buy two of everything, two prep books, two files, two whatever, whatever, whatever. Everything that you have to buy, you have to buy double.**

Another said:

**Everybody is getting their things, the pritt and books get sent to them and then you stand last in the line all the time. If somebody has to move out of a class you are the first one to go. I was chucked out of my class many times. You know and every time I paint the room because the room looks terrible. I think that's why they move me to paint and decorate the rooms. So we always end up at the short end of the stick. It takes money out of your pocket.**

Itinerant Learning Support Educators also reported that they have to cart their resources from school to school because their schools did not provide the necessary resources. This is problematic because loading and unloading of resources can be very time-consuming which in this case took up valuable time for planning and support.

One participant said:

**You have to cart your resources from school to school sharing you resources between the schools. You can't even belong to a lift club because you move up and down.**

The findings thus suggest that carting and acquiring resources has become a major challenge for Itinerant Learning Support Educators in the attempt to support learners experiencing barriers to learning and development.

#### **4.3.6 Negative Attitudes from mainstream educators toward Itinerant Learning Support Educators**

Generally most of the Itinerant Learning Support Educators experienced major challenges working between two schools especially in terms of attitudes toward Itinerant Learning Support Educators and being accepted at the schools. They reported experiencing negative attitudes from some mainstream educators.

Some of the Itinerant Learning Support Educators have reported that they were deliberately made to feel as outsiders or that they were labelled as belonging to or as being from the department. The Itinerant Learning Support Educators reported that they did not feel part of the staff at both schools because they only visited the school two to three times per week. In actual fact, Itinerant Learning Support Educators were on the staff establishment (that is the list of educators allocated to a school) of the Metro South Education District department and not on the school's staff establishment. Itinerant Learning Support Educators generally reported that they felt that they did not belong anywhere because they were labelled being Metro South Education District officials or representing the department. Itinerant Learning Support Educators are seen as not belonging to a particular school. One of the main impacting factors is that the principals and educators do not know or understand their roles at the schools and as a result they experience bad attitudes from their mainstream colleagues. They felt that they have to

prove themselves constantly to their respective schools and the principals are not making it easy for them.

A participant said:

**You don't actually belong to the school and they often tell you that also because you are not part of the staff establishment because like the school-based teachers they belong there, they are part of that school and you've been there how many ever years. With the itinerant teachers, today you here tomorrow you gone.**

One participant said:

**In my experience I don't belong anywhere. The least of things like your birthday is not important to the staff because you are labelled as working for the department. Your birthday is not even displayed like the rest of the staff.**

#### **4.3.7 Insufficient time to provide adequate learning support**

On average, Itinerant Learning Support Educators saw their learners twice or thrice a week for about 30 minutes per session. Educators received timetables for the learning support program; however, time was wasted between periods when learners have to be fetched from their classes because some educators forget to send the learners to the learning support class. Itinerant Learning Support Educators have reported that they spend about 20 minutes in actual contact time with the learners which do not do justice to learning support.

One participant said:

**I can only get in 20 minutes of learning support to the learners because it takes forever for those learners to get to you. If you don't have an intercom system then it is even worse because now you have to send out your call cards and then with the type of learners you have you find yourself having to run**

**around. If you do send one of the learners you find that they get lost on their way. So at the end of the day you sit with something like 10 to 15 minutes per lesson which is not going to happen. You know what I mean? What can you really teach? What have you done thus far since the beginning of the year?**

#### **4.3.8 Inappropriate quality management performance measurement**

Integrated Quality Management System (IQMS) is a performance management system which has a monetary value attached to it. Itinerant Learning Support Educators are rated as post level 1 mainstream educators for IQMS. Itinerant Learning Support Educators reported that their job descriptions were linked to IQMS hence with no job description in place they are unable to meet the required rate for IQMS. However, it appears that the performance standards are not really addressing the requirements of Itinerant Learning Support Educators. They reported that this has a negative impact on their performance scores because they are rated as post level one mainstream educators as opposed to being rated or measured uniquely as Itinerant Learning Support Educators. Further, not all Itinerant Learning Support Educators have received a job description nor have they received a framework for planning. As it were, IQMS had a direct impact on salary.

One participant said:

**I can't come up with anything of what the Metro South Education District is supporting us with because I don't know who to go to. I can only go to my advisor. The advisors will come to you with the IQMS and tell you no you can't get more than two because you were not trained for that and that you did not get specialized training but then you are in the position. Your class looks too much like the mainstream. If you have a problem then your advisor will help you to solve it but further than that I don't see any support coming from the Metro South Education District because they don't listen to our complaints.**

Another participant added:

**They don't tell you how you must run your program or what you must do in your class or how you must select your learners. You do it because of the knowledge that you do have. You don't even know if you are on the right track but they don't come and support you but then they tell you no you are on the right track, no this is right but when they come it's for IQMS and then they tear you apart and this is not right and that is supposed to be here.**

#### **4.3.9 Lack of accommodation**

The findings show that accommodation at the schools also was also raised as being a challenge. Itinerant Learning Support Educator reported that they were moved constantly out of a class, into smaller rooms, libraries, staff rooms and resource rooms with no consultation in most cases.

One participant reported that when she came to the school one day she was told by the caretaker that she could no longer use a particular classroom and needed to move to a smaller room. She was not consulted, was not informed by the principal either and when she confronted the principal she was told that she just had to accept it. Practices such as these seemed to create a sense of instability for Itinerant Learning Support Educators which has an impact on the learners as well. It was reported that it leads to a sense of instability and that it becomes disruptive when learners were exposed to constantly adapting to a new learning environment. This particular Itinerant Learning Support Educator found it extremely challenging when organizing the classroom and displaying the resources when the venue was constantly moved or changed.

One participant said:

**When I came to the school this year, I was put out of my class, nobody told me anything. When I got to the school, they were busy moving my things out. I was put out of my class last year because they wanted to extend the computer room and they never did that. They gave it now to somebody that**

**has a sports program after school that are not using it during the day but I can't go back there now because it's their room now.**

Another said:

**I wanted to say that accommodation is a major problem with the LSEN educator. I'm in learning support for a year and a half now and for the year I have been in four different classes. I think that's so unfair because you do such a lot for the school so we are the people that get the least out of everything.**

#### **4.3.10 Lack of support for Itinerant Learning Support Educators**

Itinerant Learning Support Educators generally felt that they were not being supported enough by the Metro South Education District and the Western Cape Education Department especially in terms of their planning. It seemed as if advisors were not conveying the same message with regard to expectations for Itinerant Learning Support Educators. Itinerant Learning Support Educators felt isolated because they felt that they get no support from the schools and not much support from the Metro South Education District. They had to find their own means for planning support and interaction with the schools. Some Itinerant Learning Support Educators received a framework for planning from their advisors. This framework guided them in terms of their planning. However, this was not the case for all Itinerant Learning Support Educators. Those Itinerant Learning Support Educators that received a framework appeared to have more confidence in their planning and their approach in accommodating learners experiencing barriers to learning. The Itinerant Learning Support Educators who did not receive a framework found it very challenging to plan appropriately for the learners experiencing barriers to learning and development. Therefore, not all learners received adequate support from Itinerant Learning Support Educators in addressing their barriers to learning and development.

One participant said:

**With the challenges and successes report, I've been writing the same challenges for the past five years and no answer.**

Another participant added:

**I feel that they don't actually support you. They only come to your school when they are told to do some business.**

One participant said:

**I plan mainly from assessments that I've done, that I've picked up weaknesses and areas that has problems and then I work from there. I draw up programmes from there. I don't do my planning with this RNCS. I don't know how to do it so I don't do it. I do it the old way and I get very low marks when it comes to IQMS. I still plan the old way.**

When support was given it made a big difference, as one participant made it clear:

**Just something I want to add. In the past we got absolutely nothing in terms of a framework, however this year we received a CD with programmes on to help make it easier in the learning support classroom.**

The findings highlights the challenges that Itinerant Learning Support Educators face as these challenges appear to be directly influencing the function of Itinerant Learning Support Educators at schools but more importantly it highlights how these challenges could impede the vision of the department's inclusive education ideals.

#### **4.4 ROLES OF ITINERANT LEARNING SUPPORT EDUCATORS**

The participants were asked to describe their roles and responsibilities. Nine Itinerant Learning Support Educators reported that their roles at the schools are primarily to

support the learners who are experiencing barriers to learning and development, as well as to support the educators and the parents.

The Itinerant Learning Support Educators claimed that they provided informational and curriculum support as well as support with psycho-social issues. The nature of support identified ranged from support in the classroom, provision of additional literacy and numeracy intervention activities to the educators, as well as support and feedback to the parents regarding the progress of the learners.

One participant mentioned:

**In terms of my one school you are seen as the social worker, psychologist, and nurse whatever they need you are supposed to be.**

Another participant said:

**My rol eintlik by daai een skool is net basically remedial...vir wiskunde en geletterdheid.**



**(Actually my role at the one school is basically remedial...in numeracy and literacy)**

Further another participant added:

**Learning support is where you just help the teacher to get to know the curriculum and help the child to adjust to the new curriculum.**

One participant said:

**At my schools I am the co-ordinator.**

Another participant added:

**At the other school it is expected of me to actually co-ordinate the Institutional Level Support Teams even though we were told not to. I even have to complete the Institutional Level Support Teams referral forms.**

Further another participant noted:

**I know that at the District they say that the application forms to special schools are not the learning support teacher's duty to complete but if you leave the future of that child in the teacher's hands, well I'm sorry I can't do it.**

Itinerant Learning Support Educators did not seem to have a common understanding regarding their roles and responsibilities regarding at schools. Not all Itinerant Learning Support Educators have received a job description which evidently influenced their roles and responsibilities but more importantly their practices and quality of support that they provide.

#### **4.5 PERCEPTIONS OF SUCCESSES**

The question posed at this stage attempted to determine what Itinerant Learning Support Educators regard as successes achieved within the context of Inclusive Education. The findings show the following successes:

Improvement / change in learner behaviour


Professional development of mainstream educators

Placement in special schools

#### **4.5.1 Improvement / change in learner behaviour**

The Itinerant Learning Support Educators felt rewarded when they saw progress in the learners attitude and behaviour towards their learning development. In addition, learner behaviour with regard to discipline also improved in the learning support classroom. They have reported that after the exposure to additional learning support, learners became more confident and in some cases they returned to the mainstream class displaying more confidence and became more interactive in group activities in the mainstream class. In some instances, some of the educators changed their attitudes towards the Itinerant Learning Support Educator because of the learners' increase in confidence levels. Learners experiencing language barriers were also benefiting from the learning support program because some of the Itinerant Learning Support Educators were investing some of their time in supporting learners.

A participant said:



**I think my success is when a child returns to class and s/he can actually raise his / her hand, s/he has enough confidence to also participate in class or when the educator reports back and say that the child is able to do something in class s/he was never able before. The smallest success makes a difference to me.**

One participant said:

**I would regard that after you have your children we try to instil confidence into the child. Now when the child goes out and the educator tells you that the child is different you know then that I regard as successes because that is when the child becomes eager in their class.**

One participant said:

**Like we have at the Afrikaans school we have many different children whose parents put them in the Afrikaans class? They come from an English school**

**and come to an Afrikaans school so they don't have a learning barrier but have a language barrier and that's where I assist the child with vocabulary.**

The findings highlights that Itinerant Learning Support Educators based their successes on the progress and development of the learners.

#### **4.5.2 Professional development of mainstream educators**

Itinerant Learning Support Educators reported that they found that the educators on their staff, who have studied further, and have done the Advanced Certificate in Education (ACE) with Special Needs as a module, were much more supportive of the role of the Itinerant Learning Support Educator, as well as the role of the educator support team. It seemed that awareness and capacity building assists with educator interest and participation in the Institutional Level Support Teams.

One participant said:

**I find that since educators that are doing the ACE course they are more interested in Inclusive Education and it makes your task much easier. The educators are more involved in the EST and the co-ordinator now takes her role more serious. So I am just a member of the EST now.**

Another participant commented:

**The educators who are studying are becoming more aware of things because our co-ordinator has finished her studies and she is very enthusiastic about the EST and the researcher role is to work out programmes.**

#### **4.5.3 Placement in Special Schools**

Itinerant Learning Support Educators have reported that in most cases they have found placement for learners who experience barriers to learning at special schools. This implied that referrals and placement appears to be the most successful solution for learners experiencing barriers to learning. Referrals to special schools require application

forms to be completed. Some of the Itinerant Learning Support Educators assume the responsibility for the completion of these forms in order to ensure that the applications will be processed. They also felt that they were personally responsible for the successful placement of their learners. Hence Itinerant Learning Support Educators have reported that since they have placed their learners in special schools they receive positive responses from the special schools and the parents because the learners are doing well in terms of working independently and participating fully in society.

One participant said:

**Another success to me is when some of our learners get placement at special schools or school of skills because before educators did not know how to apply to the special schools. Hence I am also taking responsibility for the referrals to special schools. I have trained the staff in placement of learners to special schools, however they still are not competent to complete the application forms for placement, not even the deputy principals or the school principals know how to complete the forms.**

Another said:

**I would regard success as the completion of the forms and successful placement of the learners at special schools.**

One participant said:

**I would regard success as the completion of the forms and successful placement of the learners at special schools.**

Another participant added:

**When I pick up the learners that I send to Batavia some of them come back with such lovely stories and then I think goodness me I'm so glad that I could get them in there because you know he has just shone since he's there.**

## 4.6 CONCLUSION

The findings revealed that Itinerant Learning Support Educators are experiencing successes and challenges. They are however facing much more challenges than successes. The following chapter will discuss the themes that emerged from the above findings.



## CHAPTER 5

### DISCUSSIONS OF FINDINGS

#### 5.1 INTRODUCTION

Chapter 4 presented the results of the findings. The patterns in the findings revealed that Itinerant Learning Support Educators found their roles and responsibilities in an inclusive paradigm context at the Metro South Education District challenging and demanding in relation to policy implementation and practical constraints. This chapter provides an in-depth discussion of these findings and the consequent challenges it revealed in relation to Itinerant Learning Support Educators in the context of Inclusive Education.

In the discussion, this chapter makes a link between the findings of the study and the literature in relation to the challenges facing Itinerant Learning Support Educators in an inclusive education paradigm in the Metro South Education District.

#### 5.2 CHALLENGES FACING ITINERANT LEARNING SUPPORT EDUCATORS

This section discusses the challenges facing Itinerant Learning Support Educators in the case study. The findings in this study highlighted challenges such as:

Limited understanding of the Inclusive Education paradigm

Unclear roles and the responsibilities of Itinerant Learning Support Educators including a clearly demarcated job description

- Unrealistic workloads for Itinerant Learning Support Educators

Co-ordinating the Institutional Level Support Team (ILST)

Insufficient time to provide adequate learning support

Lack of resources and accommodation for Itinerant Learning Support Educators

Negative attitudes of mainstream educators towards Itinerant Learning Support Educators

Lack of support for Itinerant Learning Support Educators and

Inappropriate quality management performance measurement.

### **5.2.1 Limited understanding of the Inclusive Education paradigm**

The findings revealed that Itinerant Learning Support Educators were not all working within the same paradigm. One of the reasons cited was that some Itinerant Learning Support Educators were not adequately trained or orientated in the principles guiding an Inclusive Education paradigm and inclusive practices.

The findings highlight that the former remedial educators, who are now Itinerant Learning Support Educators were still making use of remedial approaches to identify and support learners that are referred to them with learning difficulties. In other words, they assessed learners and then attempted to fix the 'problem' i.e. operating in the medical paradigm. The findings suggest that these Itinerant Learning Support Educators merely aimed to fix the problem within the learner.

On the other hand, there was a group of Itinerant Learning Support Educators who claimed to be using a holistic approach where barriers to learning and development are located within the entire system. Hence they claimed to collaborate with mainstream teachers, parents and the education department official in supporting learners.

As a result, the findings suggest an inconsistency with regard to the nature of support provided by Itinerant Learning Support Educators. This inconsistency has implications for the effective functioning of Itinerant Learning Support Educators. This is of great concern because it implies that learners experiencing barriers to learning and development are not being supported holistically. Further, this could imply that not all the

learning barriers are considered for intervention. As a result, there might be a lack of optimal learning support for learners experiencing barriers to learning.

The findings therefore suggest that Itinerant Learning Support Educators have a limited understanding of the Inclusive Education paradigm and this poses implications for the effective functioning of learning support for the Itinerant Learning Support Educators and the learners. In this study they reported that learners were separated from the mainstream classes for short periods. This practice is therefore similar to the withdrawal concept and the remedial education approach of a withdrawal or pull-out system. However, the Itinerant Learning Support Educators in this study did not perceive the withdrawal of learners as posing any challenges for inclusion. The findings suggest that Itinerant Learning Support Educators regard withdrawal of learners with barriers to learning as supporting the learners.

There is growing evidence that separate education programmes have not been beneficial for students with disabilities (Wade, 2000). Subsequently, although the former remedial teachers in this study were confident about the benefits of the remedial approaches they used, it can be argued that the remedial education has its own limitation.

### **5.2.2 Unclear roles and responsibilities of Itinerant Learning Support Educators, including a clearly demarcated job description**

This study revealed that, the functions of Itinerant Learning Support Educators at schools included being a social worker, being an institutional or school level support co-ordinator, and being responsible for applications and placement of learners at a special school. Being itinerant and having all the latter responsibilities distracted the Itinerant Learning Support Educator from his/her core function. The majority of the participants in the study claimed that they were not certain about their roles and responsibilities at schools. One of the reasons cited was that they were not given an official job description by the Department of Education. However, some Itinerant Learning Support Educators reported that they have received a copy of the job description but that it has changed by word of mouth so many times that they are still unsure of their roles and responsibilities.

Further, they felt that their roles differed from context to context. According to these participants, this lack of clarity created confusion and that this confusion was in fact exploited at some schools.

In addition the participants in this study felt that the expectations of principals and staff at both schools were overwhelming. They expressed feelings of frustration, overload, burdensomeness, depression, feelings of inadequacy and hopelessness. Lortie (1975) states that uncertainty about job description leads to emotional flooding, feelings of frustration, a sense of inadequacy, a sense of failure, anger at the learners and despair. As a result, Itinerant Learning Support Educators' feelings of frustration could have a negative impact on the standard and quality of learning support offered to the neediest learners.

Further, the findings also reveal that in most cases the school principals did not have a copy of the learning support educator's job description. Eleweke and Rodda (2001) argue that a job description will address many of the loopholes hindering the provision of appropriate services in inclusive settings. The findings then suggests that a job description would provide guidelines on what kind of support services should be provided, who should provide it, and where and how it should be provided. In addition providing clarity on roles and responsibilities would enable Itinerant Learning Support Educators to develop a common vision, shared values, and agreements about what constitutes good practice.

### **5.2.3 Unrealistic workloads for Itinerant Learning Support Educators**

The core function of the Itinerant Learning Support Educators was to assist the learning support educator at the schools that they were allocated but the findings showed that their workload was often blurred and varied depending on the contexts that they found themselves in. As mentioned in chapter 4 in 4.2.3, Itinerant Learning Support Educators in my study were also expected to solve problems such as truancy, trauma, and emotional, physical and sexual abuse. Therefore, principals and schools expected from these Itinerant Learning Support Educators to also counsel and advise those parents who

could not deal with their child's emotional, psychological or social dysfunction. However, not all Learning Support Educators were trained to do counselling.

### **5.2.3.1 Co-ordinating the Institutional Level Support Team (ILST)**

As mentioned before in the study, each school was responsible to establish a school based support team synonymously known as Institutional or School Level Support Team who is responsible for the implementation of inclusive practices at the particular school. However, the findings showed that there was a perception that many schools were not very open to the establishment of an Institutional or School Level Support Team and hence made the Institutional or School Level Support Teams the responsibility of the Itinerant Learning Support Educator. Further, at some schools it was automatically expected of the Itinerant Learning Support Educators to co-ordinate the Institutional or School Level Support Teams. As a result, it became part of the workload of the Itinerant Learning Support Educators.

This situation then became challenging as the Itinerant Learning Support Educators were then expected to co-ordinate two Institutional or School Level Support Teams as they worked between two schools. The participants in the study claimed that they had unrealistic workloads. For example, Itinerant Learning Support Educators stated that they had to deal with learning barriers of learners at schools, complete referral forms and provide counselling and advice to parents in conjunction with co-ordinating the Institutional or School Level Support Teams at school.

Participants reported that it was very challenging for them to co-ordinate two institutional or school level support teams because these teams required a co-ordinator present at the school on a daily basis. As the Itinerant Learning Support Educators were not present daily, it had a negative impact on the support provided by the Institutional or School Level Support Team. According to the Itinerant Learning Support Educators, their work ultimately relies on the referrals done by the institutional or school or school level support team who should provide the names of learners experiencing barriers to learning. If learners were not referred to the Itinerant Learning Support Educator then there would

be no learners in the learning support program. This could have resulted in perceptions that Itinerant Learning Support Educators were not performing or executing their duties. This was especially so when learning support advisors visited the Itinerant Learning Support Educators and they requested a daily register, the list of learners as well as referral forms which the Itinerant Learning Support Educator did not have because learners were not referred. Participants therefore generally expressed emotions such as anger, anxiety, aggression or depression due to these unrealistic workloads.

In summary, the findings thus suggest that Itinerant Learning Support Educators have enormous workloads that might ultimately have a negative impact on the provision of learning support to learners experiencing barriers to learning and development. In addition, despite the fact that Itinerant Learning Support Educators show empathy for the learners experiencing barriers to learning and development, the huge workload meant that they were highly strung and frustrated which hampered the effective implementation of Inclusive Education at these schools.

#### **5.2.4 Insufficient time to provide adequate learning support and the withdrawal of learners**

Most of the participants in this study claimed that the time they spent on providing learning support to learners in schools is inadequate. Itinerant Learning Support Educators were expected to withdraw learners from the mainstream class for one period twice a week and thereafter learners returned to the mainstream class. Itinerant Learning Support Educators have a maximum of 12 learners in a group and approximately 160 learners in total between two schools. At some schools they were expected to withdraw learners from grade 1 to grade 7.

The class timetables of the Itinerant Learning Support Educators can accommodate eight periods a day and they spend two to three days at a school. Learners received a maximum of 20 minutes of support per session because mainstream educators forget to send the learners and learners take their own time to get to the learning support class. There is a lack of continuity and stability with the learners because the Itinerant Learning Support

Educators do not see the learners' every day. These logistical issues highlight that Itinerant Learning Support Educators might not have sufficient time to address barriers to learning and development in the mainstream.

### **5.2.5 Lack of resources and accommodation**

Alberta Educators' Association (2006) notes that support and appropriate resources are essential because without it, students will continue to be segregated from their non-disabled peers, even though `placed` in proximity to them. In addition, The Education White Paper 6 (Department of Education, 2001) clearly emphasizes the need for optimal resources to provide effective and optimum support to learners experiencing barriers to learning. Yet, the findings revealed that Itinerant Learning Support Educators still have limited access to resources.

Most of the participants in the study claimed that they were not provided with appropriate resources at their schools. Itinerant Learning Support Educators in this study claimed that they have limited access to resources at their respective schools. For example, some schools did not provide stationery and having limited access to computers at the schools because they were not considered part of the school's staff establishment. This was perceived as a challenge because they stated they were unable to provide optimal learning support to the neediest learners. The Itinerant Learning Support Educators reported that they made use of their personal finances to purchase materials and resources for their classes and in most instances they were forced to share their resources between the two schools due to lack of resources.

Furthermore, Itinerant Learning Support Educators reported that in addition to resources, accommodation was a challenge for them because they were not at the same school every day. Some of them reported that at any point in time their classrooms were also used for other activities without any consultation. Some Itinerant Learning Support Educators reported that they were forced to move to many classes and venues in one year and they sometimes found that there was no venue to work in.

The findings therefore suggest that a lack of resources and accommodation could negatively impact on the effective provision of learning support in mainstream schools. It is generally acknowledged that adequate resources and conducive physical learning environment enhances service delivery and factors such as the absence of support services, relevant materials and support personnel are the major problems of effective implementation of inclusion (Eleweke & Rodda, 2001). It is therefore argued that inadequate resource provision was one of the major obstacles to the implementation of meaningful programmes such as learning support in many developing countries (Eleweke & Rodda, 2001).

#### **5.2.6 Lack of support for Itinerant Learning Support Educators**

The findings reveal that the majority of the Itinerant Learning Support Educators did not get the necessary support from the WCED and the Metro South Education District especially in terms of planning. The participants claimed that they did not receive regular class and school visits from their respective advisors. Some Itinerant Learning Support Educators complained that their learning support advisors only visited their schools when the principals complained about them thus supporting the principal instead of them. Subsequently, Itinerant Learning Support Educators in this study felt very isolated.

The findings further reveal that the majority of the Itinerant Learning Support Educators were qualified and trained in remedial, psychology and foundation phase. Hence they lacked adequate training in Inclusive Education theory and pedagogy. The findings therefore further suggest that the participants felt that they were thrown at the deep end and simply have to find their own way in terms of planning. Each learning support educator planned on his/her own. Only some of the Learning Support Educators have received a framework from their advisors and those who had a framework displayed more confidence in their approach than those Itinerant Learning Support Educators who did not received one. As a result, those without a framework reported that planning for the learners being withdrawn from the mainstream classes was challenging because the requirement is that each learner must have an individual support plan (ISP). Itinerant Learning Support Educators claimed this to be difficult because they are only able to

develop ISP for the learners in conjunction with the Institutional or School Level Support Team and the educator.

The findings suggest that Itinerant Learning Support Educators were not getting sufficient support from the department of education in order to provide the effective support to our most needy learners as expected. This could result in Learning Support Educators not providing optimal or sufficient support to learners experiencing barriers to learning and development. This was indeed the case in India where many learners with special needs were forced to drop out of the support program due to lack of relevant support and resources which clearly suggests that factors such as lack of support services could be a major stumbling block towards effective implementation of inclusion (Chadha, 1999; Chadha, 2000). In essence one can therefore argue that Itinerant Learning Support Educators cannot be expected to meet the needs of learners experiencing barriers to learning and development if they did not get appropriate support from schools and the department of education.

### **5.2.7 Negative attitudes from mainstream educators toward Itinerant Learning Support Educators**

The majority of Itinerant Learning Support Educators in the study reported experiences of negative attitudes from mainstream educators at the schools where they are based. They claimed that staff members were very resistant to the training offered by Itinerant Learning Support Educators and that they perceived Itinerant Learning Support Educators as departmental officials and outsiders trying to 'teach' them how to do their jobs. The findings suggested that this left Itinerant Learning Support Educators feeling like outcasts and that they experienced a sense of being outsiders.

The findings suggest that if principals and schools understood the role of Itinerant Learning Support Educators, then mainstream educators would develop more positive attitudes and respect toward Itinerant Learning Support Educators. It is therefore argued that teachers' beliefs and attitudes are critical in ensuring the success of inclusive

practices since teachers' acceptance of the policy of inclusion is likely to affect their commitment to implementation (Hornby, Atkinson & Howard, 1997).

### **5.2.8 Inappropriate quality management performance measurement**

The majority of the participants raised their concerns about the inappropriate manner in which they were being measured in terms of the Integrated Quality Management System (IQMS). This IQMS is a performance management system that has monetary value attached to it. Itinerant Learning Support Educators are rated as post level one mainstream educators for IQMS. With no job description in place they were therefore unable to meet the required rate for IQMS. As such, Itinerant Learning Support Educators felt they were being 'marked down' because they did not meet the performance standards that are included in the evaluation. Subsequently to that, Itinerant Learning Support Educators were measured according to the performance standards and performance indicators applicable for a post level one educator. This had a negative impact on their performance scores because it appears that the performance standards were not really addressing the requirements of Itinerant Learning Support Educators. Itinerant As it is now, IQMS has a direct impact on salary.

In essence the findings suggest that Itinerant Learning Support Educators experienced many challenges within the context of Inclusive Education. The following section highlights the perceptions of successes experienced by Itinerant Learning Support Educators.

## **5.3 PERCEPTIONS OF SUCCESSES**

This section highlights the indicators of success for Itinerant Learning Support Educators in the case study. These successes include:

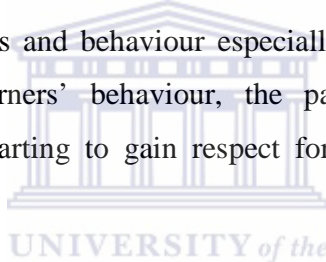
Early identification and Learner progress

Professional development of mainstream educators

## Placement in Special Schools

### **5.3.1 Early identification and Learner progress**

The Itinerant Learning Support Educators indicated various experiences of success one of which was early identification and learner progress. Some of participants claimed that they regarded early identification and learner progress as a success when some learners displayed some progress in the learning support program. The participants reported that the learners progressed well when they were identified early in the foundation phase. In addition early identification of learners experiencing barriers to learning and development also resulted in positive outcomes for learning support interventions. The sooner the barrier was identified to sooner the gap or learning backlog was bridged. Furthermore, some Itinerant Learning Support Educators claimed that mainstream educators reported a difference in learners' attitudes and behaviour especially in terms of confidence. As a result of the change in learners' behaviour, the participants reported that some mainstream educators were starting to gain respect for the Itinerant learning support educator in some cases.



These findings then suggest that Itinerant Learning Support Educators measure their personal success of the implementation of Inclusive Education differently. There were very few Itinerant Learning Support Educators who reported progress of learners in the learning support program. This could be influenced by many factors such as the manner in which Itinerant Learning Support Educators measure their own success which vary from individual to individual. This implies that success for individual Itinerant Learning Support Educators in this study varied from individual to individual and from context to context.

### **5.3.2 Professional development of mainstream educators**

The Itinerant Learning Support Educators in the study claimed that they collaborated with mainstream educators, who have studied further or doing the Advanced Certificate in Education (ACE) with Special Needs. These mainstream educators were much more

supportive of the Itinerant Learning Support Educator and very supportive of the learning support program. Further, they claimed that since the Itinerant Learning Support Educators exposed mainstream educators to special needs and Inclusive Education by means of workshops and staff training, some of them were inspired to learn more about inclusion. Consequently it seems that awareness, academic development and capacity building has positive spin offs in terms of mainstream educator interests' and participation in the Institutional or School Level Support Teams. This is in line with research that has shown that personal enrichment leads to empowerment and creates awareness because professional knowledge needs to be developed in terms of lifelong learning (Moreno, 2007).

### **5.3.3 Placement in Special Schools**

Most of the participants regarded placement of learners in special schools as one of their main successes. Hence Itinerant Learning Support Educators based their success on the successful placement of learners at special schools. Special School placement steers toward a functionalist approach, which segregated learners with Special Needs via diagnosis and treatment and thus it excludes learners from the mainstream (Naicker, 2001). This process of placement then speaks to the medical model or deficit model and does not form part of the Inclusive Education discourse. The researcher is of the opinion that placement at special schools promotes the notion of exclusion and segregation. It is concerning when engaging with the findings which suggested that despite the rigorous move toward inclusion, Itinerant Learning Support Educators were still regarding placement for learners with barriers to learning and development at special schools as the first resort or option.

The findings therefore suggest that despite the fact that placement at special schools is only recommended for high intensity level support, most Itinerant Learning Support Educators were considering placement as the first option for moderately impaired learners. This then alludes to a gap between an inclusive policy and inclusive practices that leans strongly towards a functionalist approach.

## **5.4 SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION**

This chapter discussed challenges facing Itinerant Learning Support Educators within the framework of Inclusive Education in the Metro South Education District of the Western Cape Education Department. The findings highlighted that itinerant learning support educators experienced enormous challenges in their work. These challenges included a limited understanding of the Inclusive Education paradigm; unclear roles and the responsibilities of Itinerant Learning Support Educators including a clearly demarcated job description; unrealistic workloads for Itinerant Learning Support Educators; insufficient time to provide adequate learning support; lack of resources and accommodation for Itinerant Learning Support Educators; negative attitudes of mainstream educators towards Itinerant Learning Support Educators; lack of support for Itinerant Learning Support Educators and; inappropriate quality management performance measurement. These challenges are hampering the effective functioning of Itinerant Learning Support Educators within the context of Inclusive Education. This in turn hampers the effective implementation of Inclusive Education policies in Metro South Education District in the Western Cape Education Department.

Chapter 6 discusses the findings and makes recommendations that could assist and support the Itinerant Learning Support Educators in this study in to be able to function more effectively in an inclusive education paradigm.

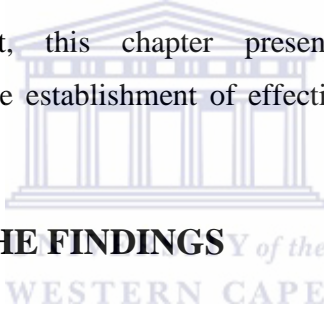
## **CHAPTER 6**

### **CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

#### **6.1 INTRODUCTION**

This study was initiated from an aspiration to make a positive and meaningful contribution to the implementation of Inclusive Education and the establishment of effective learning support services in South Africa. A qualitative approach was employed to explore the challenges facing learning support services in South Africa.

In order to highlight the challenges facing Itinerant Learning Support Educators within the framework of Inclusive Education in Metro South Education District in the Western Cape Education Department, this chapter presents a summary and makes recommendations for the future establishment of effective learning support services in South Africa.



#### **6.2 SUMMARY OF THE FINDINGS**

##### **6.2.1 Introduction**

Most of the challenges related to the roles and responsibilities expected for Itinerant Learning Support Educators. Itinerant Learning Support Educators had different perceptions and views about their roles and responsibilities and the findings suggested that they were working in two opposing paradigms in providing support to learners experiencing barriers to learning and development.

##### **6.2.2 Challenges facing Itinerant Learning Support Educators**

The findings of this study revealed that Itinerant Learning Support Educators were faced with many challenges and that policy development is essential to provide clear and distinctive guidelines for service delivery. Many challenges emerged from this study and these included lack of job description, lack of understanding of the Inclusive Education

paradigms, unrealistic workloads, and negative attitudes toward Itinerant Learning Support Educators, inadequate time for learning support and withdrawal of learners, inappropriate quality management performance measurement and lack of support for Itinerant Learning Support Educators.

### **6.2.3 Summary of successes**

The findings of this study revealed that Itinerant Learning Support Educators experienced minimal successes as Itinerant Learning Support Educators. These successes included placement in special schools, measurement of personal success for Itinerant Learning Support Educators and professional development of mainstream educators.

## **6.3 RECOMMENDATIONS**

This study acknowledges that Itinerant Learning Support Educators work within different contexts and they are faced with vast challenges in the context of Inclusive Education. In other words, the effective implementation of Inclusive Education is hampered by these challenges. This section therefore makes recommendations to the Western Cape Education Department (WCED) and Metro South Education Department (MSED).

Given the challenges discussed in this study, these recommendations are based on the assumption that implementing Inclusive Education is a good thing. The recommendations are organized around the key issue relating to the roles and responsibilities of Itinerant Learning Support Educators. Most of these recommendations could be considered and possibly pursued across the province and districts. It should be noted that some of these recommendations are not new. However, all emerged from the findings of this study. One could therefore argue that many of them reinforce recommendations that have already been made by different studies at national level.

### **6.3.1 Unclear roles and responsibilities of Itinerant Learning Support Educators, unrealistic workloads and a lack of job description**

The findings suggested that there is a clear lack of explicit roles and responsibilities. The study found that blurred guidelines exposed the Itinerant Learning Support Educators to unrealistic workloads from schools, staff and principals. The findings suggest that Itinerant Learning Support Educators often have to assume roles as Institutional or School Level Support Team Co-ordinator at both schools as well as act as social workers and psychologist. Further, clear guidelines are necessary with regard to the staff establishment that Itinerant Learning Support Educators should belong to. The study found that Itinerant Learning Support Educators felt that they did not know where they belong. For example, they felt that even though they were on the staff establishment of Metro South Education District, they are based at the two schools and not at the District. As a result, Itinerant Learning Support Educators found that they were on the boundaries of both staff establishment i.e. school and district. As such in this study, participants experienced feelings of isolation and being an outsider.

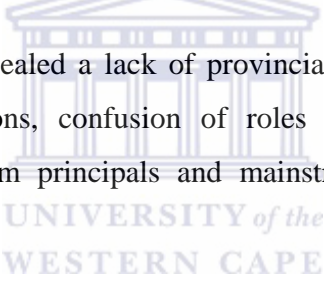
Further, the findings revealed that there were some Itinerant Learning Support Educators who have been working for years without an official job description. This lack of job description has added to the confusion of their roles and responsibilities. In addition, it has positioned Itinerant Learning Support Educators in an exploitative position – principals and schools developed their own job descriptions, unique to a specific school, for Itinerant Learning Support Educators. Itinerant Learning Support Educators were therefore exposed to three different jobs descriptions, one from the Western Cape Education Department and one each from the two schools that they serviced respectively.

Furthermore, the findings disclosed that Itinerant Learning Support Educators are often exposed to unrealistic workloads at the schools. These include co-ordinating the Institutional Level Support Teams, counselling and advising parents. However, Itinerant Learning Support Educators are not professionally trained to counsel and provide social work services. Their roles on the Institutional Level Support Team includes completing the referral forms to special schools for all learners at both schools, providing psycho-

social support to the learners, educators and parents, capacitating mainstream educators to deal with barriers to learning and development, and ultimately ensuring the smooth running of the Institutional Level Support Team, with very limited support from the mainstream educators and the principals.

Furthermore, Itinerant Learning Support Educators had to take a leading role in the Institutional Level Support Team co-ordinating the Institutional Level Support Team at both schools. Itinerant Learning Support Educators found themselves in this position because their daily functioning requires the effective functioning of the Institutional Level Support Team. If the Institutional Level Support Team did not function then no learners would be referred to the learning support program. Additionally, the findings highlighted that this function was mostly expected from schools or principals and that Itinerant Learning Support Educators experienced it as time consuming and burdensome.

In conclusion, the findings revealed a lack of provincial support at district and school level, no clear job descriptions, confusion of roles and responsibilities, extensive workload, limited support from principals and mainstream educators. Based on the finding it is recommended that:

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- The Western Cape Education Department should provide all schools with a clear job description of the Itinerant Learning Support Educators in order to ensure that principals and mainstream educators are au fait with the roles and responsibilities of Itinerant Learning Support Educators
  - The Western Cape Education Department must ensure that all Itinerant Learning Support Educators are in possession of an updated job description
  - The job description should be used as a framework to develop a learning support policy for the specific context of the school
  - The Western Cape Education Department should ensure that all district officials such as learning support advisors have clear guidelines and a framework in which to support the Itinerant Learning Support Educators. In addition the Western Cape Education Department should monitor the kind of support provided by learning support provincially

- The Western Cape Education Department should ensure that all mainstream educators be trained and skilled about Inclusive Education
- The Western Cape Education Department should create regular platforms to encourage regular feedback from educators about the challenges they may experience with regard to the implementation of Inclusive Education
- The Western Cape Education Department should employ strategies to encourage the enabling of the Education White Paper 6 in order to effectively manage the implementation of Inclusive Education
- Mainstream educators must be optimally skilled in basic counselling, networking and referrals in order to collaboratively support Itinerant Learning Support Educators to address barriers to learning and development
- Parent skills training should be introduced so that parents are more equipped to deal with the barriers to learning and development that their children face

### **6.3.2 Limited understanding of the Inclusive Education paradigm**

Some Itinerant Learning Support Educators in this study were working predominantly within the remedial education paradigm, whilst other Itinerant Learning Support Educators were striving to work within the Inclusive Education paradigm. Itinerant Learning Support Educators referred to remedial education and Inclusive Education synonymously. This is a clear indication that Itinerant Learning Support Educators lack clarity on their roles and responsibilities as Itinerant Learning Support Educators within an Inclusive Education paradigm. In addition the findings suggest that there was a continued focus on a functionalist approach despite the shift towards inclusive education. An example of this was evident when Itinerant Learning Support Educators regard the placement of learners at Special Schools as a success. Education White Paper 6 clearly suggests that a shift from placement and encourages the integration and inclusion of learners with barriers to learning and development in the mainstream.

This study also revealed that Itinerant Learning Support Educators were constantly referring learners for placement at special schools. Total inclusion leaned toward the notion that all learners have the right to equal and quality education despite barriers to

learning and development. This implies that the movement towards inclusion discourages placement of learners in special schools. Special schools should be the last resort for high intensity support for learners experiencing barriers to learning and development and should not be the first consideration for intervention and support. This study found that Itinerant Learning Support Educators lack adequate theoretical understanding of inclusive education. This was clear as Itinerant Learning Support Educators in this study had different perspectives on remedial teaching versus learning support. Some Itinerant Learning Support Educators perceived remedial support synonymous to learning support implying that the medical approach is synonymous to the social approach. This clearly implies that there is a clear lack of solid theory underpinning the practices of Itinerant Learning Support Educators. It is therefore recommended that:

- The Western Cape Education Department should ensure that the Head Office Officials, District Officials, Itinerant Learning Support Educators and mainstream educators make paradigm shifts if total inclusion is to be achieved
- Formerly trained remedial educators who come from the old system should be re-orientated and trained in the Inclusive Education paradigm / philosophies
- Newly appointed Itinerant Learning Support Educators should be orientated about the role and responsibilities of Itinerant Learning Support Educators
- Itinerant Learning Support Educators should receive in-service training about new developments with Inclusive Education policies; and The Western Cape Education Department should review the type of provision for optimal support to learners experiencing barriers to learning and development in the mainstream and special schools
- The Western Cape Education Department should provide clear guidelines on placement within the Inclusive Education paradigm
- The Department of Education should ensure that mainstream schools understand policies about total inclusion by providing orientation and training about inclusion to all educators

### **6.3.3 Lack of resources and accommodation**

The findings revealed that the participants in the study experienced enormous challenges to access resources and adequate accommodation. For example, they were not included in the disbursement of resources at the schools and usually were the last to receive funds available for resources. In addition, they did not have accommodation conducive for learning support. In most cases their accommodation was also used for other school activities which had a negative impact on service delivery for Itinerant Learning Support Educators. This resulted in principals and mainstream educators thinking that the Itinerant Learning Support Educator was in any case not present at the school on a daily basis. Hence his or her venue was regarded as being available for extra mural activities at school and in some cases venues were constantly changed throughout the year without consultation with the Itinerant learning Support Educator. The following recommendations are suggested:

- The Western Cape Education Department should allocate a budget to schools specifically for the provision of learning support in the learning support class
- The Western Cape Education Department should ensure before learning support posts are allocated to schools that schools have the capacity to accommodate the Itinerant Learning Support Educators. If not, then the Department must provide accommodation that will be conducive to the provision of learning support

### **6.3.4 Insufficient time to provide adequate learning support and withdrawal of learners**

The study revealed that Itinerant Learning Support Educators experienced huge challenges regarding time constraints and the withdrawal of learners. As discussed in chapter 5, it was highlighted that Itinerant Learning Support Educators missed out on valuable time when learners were withdrawn from the mainstream class. This was due to mainstream educators forgetting to send the learners and learners forgetting or not being sure where the venue was due to constant changes of venues. The following recommendations are suggested:

- Principals should ensure that mainstream educators rigidly follow the learning support timetable
- The Western Cape Education Department could review the withdrawal policy by piloting the effectiveness of in-class support from Itinerant Learning Support Educators. Instead of withdrawing learners, the Itinerant Learning Support Educator could support the learner in the mainstream class
- Learning Support policies should review the effectiveness of working itinerantly that is, working between two schools. This will create consistency and stability for learners experiencing barriers to learning and development

### **6.3.5 Lack of support for Itinerant Learning Support Educators**

The findings highlighted that Itinerant Learning Support Educators have different qualifications and training backgrounds which have implications for the type of learning support services provided to learners experiencing barriers to learning and development. Their qualifications and training predominantly included remedial, psychology or foundation phase training. Therefore, they were not adequately trained in an inclusive education theory and pedagogy approach as is encapsulated in the Education White Paper (6). The findings also suggested that the lack of support structures and a framework resulted in Itinerant Learning Support Educators working and functioning differently from each other. The following recommendations are suggested:

- Principals should ensure that mainstream educators rigidly follow the learning support timetable

### **6.3.6 Inappropriate quality management performance measurement**

The findings highlighted that Itinerant Learning Support Educators were measured or moderated with the exact same tool as post level one mainstream educators. This resulted in Itinerant Learning Support Educators often scoring low because the criteria do not reflect the role that the Itinerant Learning Support Educators have to perform at schools. This would have implications for the monitoring and evaluation of Itinerant Learning

Support Educators in terms of the Integrated Quality Management System (IQMS). IQMS has a monetary value and progression of salary attached to it. The unfair criteria in this tool deprive many of the Itinerant Learning Support Educators from salary progression. This led to a lack of motivation and Itinerant Learning Support Educators in this study felt undervalued. Based on the finding it is recommended that:

- The Integrated Quality Management System should be specific for Itinerant Learning Support Educators

### **6.3.7 Placement in Special Schools**

The study revealed that Itinerant Learning Support Educators were regarding placement in special schools as a success and were constantly referred learners for placement at special schools. Special schools should be the last resort for high intensity support for learners experiencing barriers to learning and development and should not be the first consideration for intervention and support. It is recommended that:

- The Western Cape Education Department should review the type of provision for optimal support to learners experiencing barriers to learning and development in the mainstream and special schools
- The Western Cape Education Department should provide clear guidelines on placement within the Inclusive Education paradigm
- The Department of Education should ensure that mainstream schools understand policies about total inclusion by providing orientation and training about inclusion to all educators

## **6.4 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY**

The researcher was exposed to a number of limitations at the onset of this study. These included:

- Very limited literature and research available on Itinerant Learning Support Educators and the challenges facing Itinerant Learning Support Educators in the South African context
- All the Itinerant Learning Support Educators in Metro South Education District were invited to participate in the study, however, only 14 responded positively

The above-mentioned limitations justify further research in the pursuit to overcome barriers to learning and support at schools in the Western Cape Education Department.

## **6.5 FINAL CONCLUSIONS**

The study revealed that Itinerant Learning Support Educators had different perceptions and views about their roles and responsibilities and also that they were working in two opposing paradigms to support learners experiencing barriers to learning and development. This study therefore recommends that the Western Cape Education Department reviews the inclusive education policies as well as itinerant learning support policies in order to enable total inclusion as envisaged by the authors and initiators of Education White Paper 6.



In conclusion, The Western Cape Education Department should ensure that universities offer courses for Itinerant Learning Support Educators about Inclusive Education, with a strong focus on theory that is integrated with pedagogy and practice. The Itinerant Learning Support Educators in this study experienced many challenges. There was a lack of understanding when it came to the roles of Itinerant Learning Support Educators. Because many of them did not have access to an updated job description, it left gaps for schools to exploit the services of Itinerant Learning Support Educators. School management teams and mainstream educators did not completely understand the role of the Itinerant Learning Support Educator. As a result Itinerant Learning Support Educators were sometimes used to supervise classes; they were expected to co-ordinate the Institutional Level Support Teams at both schools; had limited access to resources had no control over accommodation and they were unable to make up for lost time when they missed a group. Inadequate time for learning support was another major challenge. They

had up to 12 learners in a group with eight periods a day. This implies that Itinerant Learning Support Educators supported approximately 160 learners between the two schools. Groups were only seen twice a week with literally 20 minutes actual contact time. With this in mind, one can state that the Department of Education is not doing justice to the philosophy of supporting learners experiencing barriers to learning. It appears that Itinerant Learning Support Educators were left to fight their own battles at the respective schools, be it with Integrated Quality Management System (IQMS) matters or even planning. There was limited support from learning support advisors. The Itinerant Learning Support Educators simply did not feel supported by the schools, the district and Department of Education. They perceived themselves as outcasts unable to fit in and who at the same time had no support systems in place.

In essence this chapter provided a comprehensive list of recommendations in an attempt to improve itinerant learning support in Metro South Education (MSED) in the Western Cape Education Department (WCED). These recommendations emerged from extensive research into the available literature on special needs and inclusive education and a systematic research approach that was applied in this study. The researcher is of the opinion that the Western Cape Education Department should take cognizance of these recommendations as doing so might enhance and strengthen support to learners experiencing barriers to learning and development. In my opinion by addressing the challenges facing Itinerant Learning Support Educators, I believe that total inclusion can be possible in South Africa by 2020.

It is therefore hoped that this study will foster innovation in facilitating the effective functioning of Itinerant Learning Support Educators within the framework of Inclusive Education. Further and most essential, valuable insights gained from this study could contribute to the Department of Education's policy regarding itinerant learning support within the context of Inclusive Education.

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# APPENDIX 1

## WCED Circular 00219/2003

Close this circular

Maak omsendbrief toe

Buyela emva

Navrae  
Enquiries  
IMibuzo  
Telefoon  
Telephone  
IFoni  
Faks  
Fax  
IFeksi  
Verwysing  
Reference  
ISalanthiso

**D FLANDORP**  
**H HUFKIE**

**021 467 2000**

**021 467 2996**

**7/1/B**  
**20030604-0015**



**Wes-Kaap Onderwysdepartement**

**Western Cape Education Department**

**ISEBE IeMfundo IeNtshona Koloni**

CIRCULAR : 0219/2003  
EXPIRY DATE : NONE



UNIVERSITY of the  
WESTERN CAPE

**TO: CHIEF DIRECTORS, DIRECTORS, HEADS OF EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS, AND  
CHAIRPERSONS OF SCHOOL GOVERNING BODIES AND COUNCILS OF EDUCATIONAL  
INSTITUTIONS**

**BRIEF SUMMARY:** *Emphasis on the policy and procedures regarding the awarding and utilisation of  
ELSEN posts at mainstream schools.*

**SUBJECT: ELSen EDUCATOR POSTS AT MAINSTREAM SCHOOLS**

1. Policy measures in the above regard are contained in [Circular 47/2002](#) of 24 April 2002. However, it has been noted with concern that not all role-players have total clarity on the allocation, utilisation and management of posts for learners with special education needs (ELSEN posts) (CS Educator post level 1 posts) at mainstream schools.

2. The core policy of the Western Cape Education Department (WCED), as stated in paragraph 2 of the above-mentioned circular, is that all ELSN posts are linked to the establishment of EMDCs so that they can be utilised in the most economic manner at one or more schools.
3. Should an ELSN post have been allocated to a school before 1 July 2001 and if it has been filled on a permanent basis since then, the school will retain the post for as long as that incumbent of the post fills it. Such post will be indicated as additional to the staff establishment of the school. However, as soon as the post become vacant, it will be transferred to the EMDC district in which the school is situated. These posts may only be utilised for learners with special education needs and in terms of WCED policy. This implies that the posts can only be utilised in the following ways:
  - The ELSN educator renders support to educators with regard to as many learners with special needs as possible within the ordinary mainstream classes.
  - If the above-mentioned approach cannot be applied effectively in a specific class or school, the ELSN educator can withdraw (for one or more teaching periods) the learners with specialised needs from the mainstream classes temporarily and return them to their classes as soon as possible after they have received the necessary support.
  - If there are a few learners in a school who cannot be supported effectively in the above-mentioned ways, the ELSN educator can keep them with her or him in a core group, but these learners must join the mainstream classes as often as possible.

For further clarity regarding the above-mentioned working methods, please contact the learner support co-ordinator and facilitator at your EMDC.

4. The EMDC director concerned will, at his or her discretion and taking the needs of the school which loses or will lose the post into account, utilise the post in terms of paragraph 3 above and paragraph 3 of the above-mentioned circular. This vacant post will be advertised in the Vacancy List in the customary way and the EMDC will be solely responsible for the filling of this post in terms of the prescribed processes. A school served by the post may also be implicated in this process.
5. Schools which have a need for ELSN posts must submit written requests to their EMDC director concerned for consideration if and when such posts become available.
6. Please bring the contents of this circular to the attention of all governing bodies.

**SIGNED: J.H. HURTER**

**HEAD: EDUCATION**

**DATE:** 2003:11:13

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Meld asseblief verwysingsnommers in alle korrespondensie / Please quote reference numbers in all correspondence /

Nceda ubhale iimombolo zesalathisa kuyo yonke imbalelwano

Grand Central Towers, Laer-Parlementstraat, Privaatsak X9114, Kaapstad 8000

Grand Central Towers, Lower Parliament Street, Private Bag X9114, Cape Town 8000

**Close this circular**

**Maak omsendbrief toe**

**Buyela emva**



UNIVERSITY *of the*  
WESTERN CAPE

## APPENDIX 2

### INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR FOCUS GROUPS

**1. What do Itinerant Learning Support Educators regard as challenges in supporting learners with barriers within the context of an Inclusive Education framework?**

- 1.1 What would you regard as challenges in your role as itinerant learning support educator?
- 1.2 Describe the length of the support sessions for the groups and what is the maximum amount of learners in a group?
- 1.3 Describe the support structures available for LSEN educators.

**2. How do Itinerant Learning Support Educators perceive their role within the Inclusive Education framework?**

- 2.1 What does an Itinerant Learning Support Educator do?
- 2.2 What is an average day at your base school?
- 2.3 What is an average day at each school?
- 2.4 Describe your role at your base school. What is your role?
- 2.5 Do you find that your “other” duties at your schools distract you from your role as Learning Support Educator?
- 2.6 Explain what you think the difference is between a remedial educator and an itinerant learning support educator.
- 2.7 In what ways are your duties different from working as a remedial educator?
- 2.8 Describe your role in the ILST.

**3. What do Itinerant Learning Support Educators regard as successes in supporting learners with barriers within the context of an Inclusive Education framework?**

- 3.1 What would you regard as successes in your role as itinerant learning support educator?
- 3.2 Describe the framework of macro and micro planning in learning support in the District?

## APPENDIX 3

### COPY OF CONSENT FORM

**STUDENT** : Ms. Agnetha Arendse  
9 Chelsea Avenue  
London Village  
Mitchells Plain  
Tel : 021 374 3991 (h)  
082 941 5260 (c)  
[aarendse@vodamail.co.za](mailto:aarendse@vodamail.co.za)

**SUPERVISOR** : Mrs. Sindiswa Stofile  
UWC  
Bellville  
Tel : 021 959 3819 (w)  
083 650 3819 (c)  
[sstofile@uwc.co.za](mailto:sstofile@uwc.co.za)

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Date : March 2008

Dear Colleague

My name is Agnetha Arendse. I was an itinerant learning support educator at Harvester Primary and Lantana Primary Schools. I am currently a Masters' Degree :Education Psychology student at the University of the Western Cape. I am currently busy with a research project and would like you to participate.

The research will involve 20 Learning Support Educators from EMDC-Metropole South.

The research attempts to investigate the challenges facing itinerant learning support educators in the context of inclusive education in the EMDC-Metropole South. This research question is one that is pertinent within the discussions amongst learning support educators and I thought that it would be beneficial to research this topic of concern.

**Aims of the Research :**

This study aims to investigate the challenges facing itinerant learning support educators in the context of inclusive education, in the EMDC-Metropole South.

You have been selected to participate in this research for the following reasons :

- You are an itinerant learning support educator
- I would be able to obtain valuable insight about the challenges facing itinerant learning support educators in the context of inclusive education.

I would like you to be interviewed in a group of itinerant learning support educators and would like you to complete a questionnaire as well. Both processes will be confidential and under no circumstance will your identity be revealed. The recordings will be in such a manner that you cannot be identified and after I have recorded and analyzed the information, the tape recordings will be destroyed. During the course of the research, I will take utmost care that no information will be available to anyone except myself.

The following is very important :

- You should volunteer to participate.
- All relevant information regarding the research will be available to you.