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Another stress factor mentioned by the SBSTs, was the lack of parental cooperation in giving consent for learners to be referred to and discussed at SBST meetings. This could be because the parents were in denial that their child experienced a barrier to learning or the parents might have been ignorant about the role of the SBST, its aims and functions. Parents also only became concerned about their children's scholastic progress when their children did not meet the pass requirements and had to repeat the year. The participants also mentioned that respecting the rights of parents in their (the SBST's) attempt to support learners with barriers, as per policy, was potentially a source of much administrative work. The teachers had to complete referral forms for learners requiring extra support; but then some parents refused to sign the forms. The participants of the current study reported that some parents were reluctant to share personal, private information regarding their children. This reluctance hampered the referral process since the SBST could not discuss learners without the consent of their parents (DBE, 2014).

One participant explained that because some parents found it difficult to accept that their child had some sort of learning barrier, they hampered the referral process. The following extracts capture this sentiment:

**Participant 2:** *Daar's niks verkeerd met my kind nie. (There's nothing wrong with my child) Now the child, there's a referral form already in the child's profile. Now you in Grade 5 the child, the parents are completely in denial. ... now the child gets to Grade 7. Now the parent wants to wake up because now they must apply for a high school and the child's results is weak and then they want to play the ball game, change the ball game and they want to blame the teacher. And then there's a ... that is why there must be a paper trail. Now you see what I'm referring to, all that paper work and yet the parent refuses for the child to be discussed.*

**Participant 4:** *And the other thing ... the parent is reluctant to share the information with you; the parent is the lot of the times in denial ... "It isn't my child", "it cannot be my child". The parent is reluctant to even sign for you to just take the forms and discuss*

*with the SBST ... after the learner has repeated the grade then the parent pick up, "My child is not improving! Nou, "Waar is die juffrou met die vorms?" (Where is the teacher with the forms?)*

**Participant 2:** *..., there's a referral form already in the child's profile. Now you in Grade 5 the child, the parents are completely in denial. ... now the child gets to Grade 7. Now the parent wants to wake up because now they must apply for a high school and the child's results are weak. .... All that paper work and yet the parent refuses for the child to be discussed ... and parents are reluctant to share that little painful information with you. It's very personal...*

Maphumulo (2019) asserts that the SBSTs in South African schools include parents and caregivers, who are considered as the providers of valuable information of their children's family situation, emotional, social, personal, medical, behavioural strengths and interests, skills, health and scholastic history. When the processes of the planned intervention programmes are discussed, parents should be intentionally included in meetings. Moosa (2014) posits that parents must understand the procedures of the meetings, and that the SBSTs must arrange a translator for those who are hearing-impaired or those whose home language differs from the LoLT of the educational institution.

The participants of School A also mentioned that, when a learner was identified as experiencing barriers to learning and the parents were informed by the teacher or a member of the SBST, the parents did not really believe the teachers. However, when their children were assessed by a psychologist and the psychologist provided feedback (e.g. a report), parents seemed to consider the psychologist's views as important or meaningful. This report (depending on the content) also convinced the parents that their child had a barrier to learning.

**Participant 2** *...many of the times parents are, fill in or they agree but once you tell them that this is a report on the assessment of the school psychologists ... then you can see that they are starting to realise that there's a barrier for... about my child.*

The role of the school psychologist was valued much more than the teacher's input. This suggests a medical model belief that ranks the expertise with teachers being placed in the bottom rung. Moola (2011) asserts that work of school psychologists is collaborative in nature and may potentially include probing, the evaluation of learners,

development and implementation of intervention programmes, discussion with applicable professionals, parents and teachers. This researcher described that situational actualities necessitated moving away from the classical child-deficiency medical model towards a multi-systems and ecological model, proposing a broad range of actions and analysis. According to Kaleshi (2010) school psychologists can play an indispensable role in advocating participation between the home and the school and, as a result, affect learners' academic results. School psycho-therapists not only have a role to play in parental involvement, but they are equipped with experience, skills and knowledge to play a pivotal role in the improvement of home-school collaboration (Kaleshi, 2010).

Ntekane (2018) posits that parental participation refers to a situation where parents are directly involved in the education of their children; they fulfil their obligations as parents by ensuring that the learner is assisted in the process of learning as much as they possibly can and they are involved by the school and teachers in the learning process of their children. Parental participation does not only refer to parents showing interest in their children's academic performance, but also in conversing with their children towards having a strong connection with them, so that the process of inspiring, encouraging, mentoring and leading may be authentic. Mokala (2020) asserts that parents' concern, contribution and knowledge in the learning of their children will encourage them to welcome positive behaviour and unquestionably guide them to value education. Ntombela and Raymond (2013) strongly believe that parents or other primary caregivers are important resources in the teaching and learning process and the unavailability of parental support negatively affects children's learning.

**g) Support by the DBST**

SIAS (DBE, 2014) declares that the DBST is the next level to ensure the provision of extra support if the SBST is unable to arrange high level support in an organised, cost effective and practical way. It is the function of the DBST to determine the strengths of the SBST, support needed by the SBST, assist the SBST to recognise further community-based support and to investigate ways in which more support can be acquired, and also support and interdependence through the Care and Support for Teaching Learning (CSTL) structure.

According to the DBE (2019) DBSTs play a pivotal role to the execution, observation and analysis of CSTL. They supply an interrelated professional assistance that utilise proficiencies in tertiary learning and local neighbourhoods. The predominant purpose is the capacity building of schools (and other educational institutions) to assist them in the recognition and support of addressing barriers to learning and the accommodation of a variety of educational needs. DBSTs are also obliged to organise school-based support in cooperation with provincial education departments and are responsible for the provision of access to adequate and appropriate pre-service and in-service training, education and professional support services.

Nene (2017) avers that the crucial component for integrated Care and Support for Teaching and Learning (CSTL) is its immediate effect on fundamental academic results - particularly attainment results and not repeating an academic year. Simply put, school-based support provided by teachers enables the early recognition of vulnerable learners and allows service providers to ascertain the needs that may not be addressed otherwise (DBE, 2014).

However, both schools reported there were often challenges in working with the DBST concerning learners with serious barriers to learning. Accessing the specialist support that a learner may need is problematic as it may not be readily available due to a lack of human resources. It appeared that the DBST was often unable to ensure “well-coordinated and collaborative support to the institution” (DoE, 2005:37) according to its mandate.

When asked about how the DBST supports the SBSTs and how the DBST could support them better, the participating members were initially very diplomatic in their responses. This was possibly because they feared that their principals or the district officials would get to hear about what they had shared during the study. I reminded them about the confidentiality and anonymity principles related to the research. The two teams however stated that teachers needed practical training sessions with regard to the administrative part of the referral process and pedagogical strategies on how to support learners who experienced barriers to learning. This was evident in the following responses:

**Participant 4:** *Okay Miss speaking as an educator, now not as part of the SBST, as an educator you know what... uhm when the forms are filled in, we explain the barriers be there to support me when filling in the form, because if I'm not trained as I said to you I don't know what to write where, what barrier does this child have...? Uhm, how now? And also, teachers regularly need to have workshops with regards to identifying barriers. Barriers change all the time and... I don't always know if this child just needs that extra year, is the child a late bloomer or is this child a..., is there a problem? Test..., come test the children regularly!*

The participants reported that when a referral was made to the DBST, specifically to a psychologist, it was problematic as there was a long waiting list or one was just not available. The DBST services were not easily accessible when learners needed higher levels of support because the school-based strategies were ineffective. The following responses were provided by the participants:

**Participant 2:** *SIAS is where the teacher identifies ... but most times the, the, the problem of the child is of such a nature that you as a class teacher cannot help, we on the SBST are also not equipped to help that child, neh. Then we go to the department, we got the school psychologist and then there's a waiting list. There's children that's been discussed in Grade R for example, the child is in Grade 3 already, the child hasn't been assessed by a psychologist yet, you understand?*

**Participant 3:** *Ons in nou sonder 'n psychologiest... Sy's nou weer af siek, daar het een gekom, maar sy's nou afsiek weer.*

The participants also posited that the referral process to the DBST, after it was determined that intervention at school level was ineffective, was an administrative burden, very time consuming and ineffective. This was evident in the following responses:

**Participant 2:** *En dan as ons sien daar is nie soos byvoorbeeld, daai een, ek gaan nou een voorbeeld maak, een leerder wat nou, wat nou die class teacher sien waar daar glad nie vordering is nie dan sal die SBST besluit maak, okay hier is 'n probleem so ons gaan verder die DBST inkry, en verder verwys na 'n special school of 'n OT so iets as ons nie op die skool kan nie. (And then if we see, for example, that one, I am going to make an example, a learner, who the class teacher notices ...who does not make any progress, then the SBST will make a decision, okay, this is a problem that needs to be*

*referred to the DBST, and a further referral will be made to a special school or an OT, things we can't do at school level.)*

The participants acknowledged that the DBST wanted to assist where they were needed. They realised that insufficient resourcing at district level did not meet the demands made on the district office for more specialised support. This sentiment is evident in the following responses.

**Participant 7:** *I just think that they are under resourced, they don't have enough people to actually maintain the quality of service that we require from them so uhm you know they just, they just, they just can't...*

**Participant 9:** *... So I understand that, I understand their limited resources. I understand that we think our problems are serious but there are many other schools that have many more much serious problems. So I understand that, but uhm, it has been a little bit frustrating uhm, sometimes that they not as available as we would like them to be. They, when they manage to come, so they were here yesterday, all 3 of them, but it was the first time all 3 of them has been this year and they were extremely helpful, they were really very able to contribute.... But it doesn't happen quite as often as we would like it to. ...we followed the pathway and asked for the (District-based) support team's assistance and, uhm, you know it's not that they don't want to, sometimes it takes a long time uhm yah, not as effective as it could be.*

Participants also mentioned that the ineffective support from the DBST gets them in trouble with frustrated parents who blame the teachers and are not always patient and understanding.

**Participant 7:** *The class teachers, the one that faces the parent at the meetings and they will ask. Why is the process taking so long if, let's say, a child needs to be assessed by the psychologist then we would say we have to wait until the school's psychologist can come to our school and then she can also do a few children now parents don't understand that, but the teacher is the one facing the parent. So there, I feel we are not being supported enough as well.*

Participants stated that, in the absence of specialist support services such as educational psychologists, social workers, etc. provided by the DBST they have to resort to outside support which is also not readily available.

**Participant 9:** *But we are well, my experience, we are very frustrated by having to deal with other government agencies so where we would have to work through the public health system, uhm social development, with social care system... We find that very frustrating because we find ourselves trying to fulfil all those roles where those agencies are not there to come to the party.*

Adewumi and Mosito (2019) posit that while teachers attempted to implement inclusion of learners with special education needs, systemic barriers were revealed. This included insufficient support from the district office due to limited staff. The availability and provision of sufficient resources and assistance determines the teachers' attitudes. The teachers will become negative when the support and resources provided are insufficient or reduced (Adewumi & Mosito, 2016).

According to Nel et al., (2016) the DBST members recognise that their functions have been modified and that they now comprise, among other things, providing resources to schools; analysing programmes and suggesting amendments; providing cooperative ordinary and academic support to educational institutions, communities, and other sectors. Nonetheless, the DBST members are experiencing difficulties in fulfilling these amended roles. The functions of the DBST are not presently effectively executed which may be the result of inadequate support received from the DBE, more specifically because there are gaps in the responsibilities of the the districts, the provincial departments and the DBE. Furthermore, there are other barriers that impede the service delivery of the DBSTs. An example is the inadequate infrastructure and facilities available to DBST members in the provision of educational support services at the district level. The limited human resources and the insufficient accessibility of transport for officials to visit schools leads to the overburdening of the available district personnel.

The educational difficulties revealed by the current research study mean that there is a negative and indirect impact on the holistic and educational development of the learner as the central focus of Bronfenbrenner's ecological model as there is insufficient support from the DBE as the exosystem of the model (Malahlela, 2017). Contextually, the expectation is that the DBE provides efficacious training for teachers and SBSTs, as well as conduct further investigation, observation and feedback of the application of IE geared towards the fulfilment of policies directives. This system (the implementation of IE) also incorporates the developmental achievements of the learner from the Foundation Phase (FP) to the tertiary level of learning. This necessitates the

chronosystem in the Bronfenbrenner's ecological model, which refers to the periods during the gradual development and growth of the learner (Malalehla, 2017).

#### **4.3.5.2 SBST successes**

Most participants reported that their SBST experienced successes during the process of implementing IE. Two primary areas emanated from their contributions and emotional responses, including that teamwork was established (as discussed under the collaboration theme) and the improvement in learner participation and performance.

The theme: *Successes* comprise one sub-theme, namely, *Improvement of learner participation and learner performance*.

##### **a) Improvement of learner participation and learner performance**

Despite admitting that they had limitations like the lack of pedagogical knowledge in effectively implementing IE, the SBST participants in this study, opined that they had largely succeeded in their roles. Participants from both schools were impressed with their successes in the support that they provided to the teachers in the teaching of learners who were experiencing barriers to learning in spite of the many challenges they had faced. Participants mentioned that all learners who were referred for additional support academically, behaviourally, psychologically, and other barriers to learning were discussed, and they (the SBSTs) gave invaluable input on how to support the learners. These learners were supported and assisted academically by the SBST and or DBST members. The DBST gave advice and provided support to the best of their abilities although the specialist support from the DBST was not readily available due to insufficient human resources at the district level. The learners received the appropriate teaching strategies, LTSM, technological devices, assessment accommodations, and extra support classes during and after school (the latter applying to School A only), despite the SBSTs facing some challenges. Participants maintained that the aforementioned learners attained learning during the periods of support, which had a positive impact on their scholastic progress. Learners who needed emotional support because of behavioural and psychological problems, suspected domestic violence, or other learning barriers were referred to the DBST to be supported by social workers, psychologists and/ or other professionals. Participants of both SBSTs also indicated

that their interventions and collaboration with DBST specialists enabled the successful transfer of some learners, requiring higher levels of support, to special schools. The participants took pride in the fact that they supported each other as members of the SBST; they worked well together as a team and with the teachers at their respective schools. As participants explained:

**Participant 9:** *Well, I think successes were like Participant 8 mentioned with that learner and, uhm, many of the children that we've found, I think we are able to help through the recommendations that we can make...*

**Participant 2:** *Uhm, some of our children are accepted to the school of skills. Some of the children are even accepted at special schools already. We have yearly been successful with our applications. Ja, so it shows that how our ...the identification of our children has been successful.*

Malahlela (2017) postulates that according to Bronfenbrenner's theory, harmonious relationships should exist between the learners and their peers, as well as between the learners and their teachers at school. These interrelations are regarded as microsystems interactivities which are the systems of the mesosystem. The mesosystem is a constructive environment which improves the learner's sense of security and self-confidence over a prolonged period. The mesosystem upholds an integrated system of education and challenges a prejudiced system of establishing parallel streams.

According to Bronfenbrenner, the existing and developing relationships between the microsystems should encompass the activities, actions and connections that occur between two or more settings accommodating the developing person (Bronfenbrenner, 1994), hence the underpinning of a desegregated learning system. To create and ensure this non-discriminatory learning environment, SBST members and classroom teachers must facilitate a network of support around a specific child, prevent the isolation of any team member, and concomitantly concentrate on the child's social (association with parents and other learners) and learning needs.

#### 4.4 CONCLUSION

The purpose of the research was to the role of the School-based support team (SBST) in two primary schools in the Cape Metropole and how they perceived the support that they provide within their schools. The findings in this study reveal that SBSTs had negative and positive experiences during the implementation of IE. In this chapter, the researcher presented the results of research conducted through questionnaires and focus-group interviews with the members of the SBSTs.

Analysis of the data collected revealed that the participants in the study were largely positive and self-confident about their roles within their respective schools. They asserted that they provide adequate and sufficient support within their schools but specified the need for increased support and involvement from the parents of learners at their schools, as well as the DBST to ensure the holistic support of learners.

The members of the SBSTs requested training to improve their pedagogical knowledge and skills and to assist them in recognising learners who were in need of support. The participants further indicated that the provision of much needed Learner Teacher Support Materials (LTSM) would provide learners and teachers unique ways to approach learning tasks on various levels. It is also very evident that the amount of administrative work involved in the SIAS pathway causes much frustration for teachers and members of the different SBSTs.

The following chapter will provide the conclusions, limitations and recommendations of the study.

## CHAPTER 5

### SUMMARY OF THE FINDINGS, RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSION

#### 5.1 INTRODUCTION

As outlined in the previous chapters, this study was conducted with the aim of exploring SBSTs' understandings and experiences of IE and the provision of support in their schools. Chapter 4 presented a descriptive analysis and discussion of the data. In this chapter, a summary of the findings with regard to the main research questions posed at the beginning of the study is presented. The researcher also makes recommendations for future research and outlines the limitations of the study.

#### 5.2 SUMMARY OF THE FINDINGS

The researcher reflected on the research questions and the purpose of the study to summarise the findings of the research. The implementation of IE, and specifically the important role that the SBSTs play in providing support and addressing barriers to learning and development, was investigated. The findings of this study are summarised and various recommendations are made on the basis of the findings of the research.

##### ***5.2.1 Teachers' knowledge regarding the philosophy of inclusive education***

The SBST members in this research study were very positive about the role and function they perform within their schools. It was also evident that participants in this study had a good understanding of IE and how it should be implemented, but some of the responses indicated that participants had not shifted from the medical model or explanations of barriers to learning from a special needs education paradigm.

##### ***5.2.2 The functionality of the SBSTs***

With reference to EWP 6 on IE (DoE, 2001), the schools are following the guidelines and are mostly compliant with this policy. SBSTs perceived their role and function within schools as collaborating with teachers to support learners by strategically addressing the needs of learners who experience barriers to learning. Participants assisted teachers with problem-solving and played an advisory role in addressing the barriers to learning some learners experienced within their schools. Each participating school had a functioning SBST which provided support to the learners, teachers and parents of the

school. Participants in this study reported that, through their service in the SBST, they established good relationships with the teachers and parents of their schools. This collaboration among the teachers and the SBST members was observed and confirmed during the focus group interviews. The collaborative role that SBSTs adopted enabled them to support the learners in their schools effectively. It also allowed the SBST members the opportunity to share their knowledge and expertise with each other and with other staff members, thus supporting learners holistically.

### **5.2.3 SBST challenges**

The SBSTs of the two schools also experienced some challenges. The participants in this study posited that they, and the teachers they support, did not feel capacitated by their initial teacher training to provide quality support or assistance regarding the varied needs of the learners they are required to support. The SBST members also reported that they were overwhelmed by the numerous responsibilities they had in their daily routine as teachers, SBST and SMT members. These participants asserted that there is a dire need for sustained and comprehensive training of teachers to ensure the successful implementation of IE. The participants also raised other concerns regarding the reporting and/ or referral of the learners identified as experiencing barriers to learning. The paperwork involved in the implementation of the SIAS policy (DBE, 2014) was specifically highlighted as a bureaucratic and time-consuming process which deterred some teachers from referring learners. Participants also mentioned that the language of teaching and learning is preventing the implementation of IE in their schools. Participants reported that some of the learners did not understand the language of instruction, and this resulted in these learners being denied access to the curriculum content and participation in class activities.

Appropriate and adequate resources and infrastructure are necessary for the effective implementation of the IE policy. This study found that School B's infrastructure was not conducive for the implementation of IE as it was not wheelchair accessible. This study also found that School B would benefit more from having their own LST and not having to share the LST with a neighbouring school. The role of the LSTs is to actively participate in the ILST (SBST) structure, to provide continuous support to teachers and to assist in developing and strengthening their knowledge, abilities and skills on

strategies for supporting learners (Mahlo, 2011). Not having a full-time LST caused frustration for the participants of School B and hampered the implementation of IE.

It was apparent from the focus-group interviews that the SBST of School A had more collaboration with parents, community members and NGOs than School B that was inadvertently following a special needs education approach. School B had good contact with district officials, but little to no collaborative relationships with parents and other community members. The participants indicated that they would like more parental involvement as this would lead to learners being more motivated to learn and there could also be the provision of extra support to learners who experience barriers to learning. Many factors led to parents not actively participating in school activities or being readily available to assist with their children's school work. Parents were often in denial about the barriers to learning their children experienced as they did not want to acknowledge or accept that their child needed support.

SBST members expressed their frustrations caused by the inadequate participation and assistance provided by DBSTs. Moolla and Lazarus (2014) state that collaboration within the schooling sector is vital if schools are to be effectively empowered and supported to provide quality education to their learners. District personnel, parents and SBSTs and other stakeholders are thus called upon to cooperate in order to provide learners with the support they need. The importance of intersectoral collaboration, where partnerships are developed between all role-players in order to work towards a common purpose is thus emphasised (Moolla & Lazarus, 2014).

The data revealed that the participating SBSTs need the guidance and assistance of support staff or specialist staff such as psychologists and social workers to address barriers to learning within their schools. These teams indicated that access to these support specialists would be beneficial and would aid the SBSTs and teachers to appropriately and adequately support the learners

The members of the SBSTs indicated that increased involvement from the DBST would make the learner referral process easier and better, as DBSTs can make decisions regarding learners based on prior knowledge about the learner and their current situation. In addition, participants indicated that involvement by the DBST would potentially assist in accessing professionals and specialists who could assess learners.

#### **5.2.4 SBST successes**

SBST members alluded that, because different team members are representing the different phases, it increases the effectiveness of the team by enhancing collaboration of the group during meetings where the support of learners is discussed. The main purpose of these meetings is to discuss the improvement of learning and teaching in the classroom to benefit all the learners with various abilities. The feedback to the referring teacher and/ or class teacher results in appropriate support provided to the learner experiencing a barrier to learning. This, in turn, leads to improved learner participation, progress and ultimately, better learner performance. Participants in this study acknowledged that because IE supported the values of equality, human rights and the recognition of diversity, it is an educational strategy that could contribute to a democratic society. The SBST members believed that, if IE was enacted the way it was intended, every learner would have the opportunity to reach his or her full potential.

### **5.3 RECOMMENDATIONS BASED ON THE FINDINGS**

Based on the findings of the present study and the literature reviewed, the researcher recommends the following strategies for improving the functioning of the SBSTs and the implementation of IE in mainstream schools:

#### **5.3.1 Developing communities of practice**

It is imperative that district personnel and the DBE investigate ways in which teachers, particularly SBST members, could be supported more effectively. The provincial and national departments of education also need to explore ways of facilitating closer cooperation between SBSTs and DBSTs. This will ensure that the SBSTs function optimally, which will enable them to support the learners and the teachers more efficaciously.

SBSTs and SGBs should be motivated to initiate language intervention and enrichment programmes to increase the acquisition and development of the language of teaching and learning (LoLT). This will ensure that the LoLT does not impede the implementation of IE in their schools.

### **5.3.2 Enhancing teachers' inclusive education pedagogical skills**

These educational departments, in collaboration with educator training institutions, should arrange more in-service training for teachers and SBSTs through workshops that specifically address improving teachers' knowledge regarding the philosophy of IE, and how to deal with emotional and social problems within schools. This will bring about a paradigm shift in their understanding of IE, and enhance their knowledge of strategies and skills that relate to their role of supporting their colleagues, and the learners experiencing barriers to learning. This could also reduce the schools' need for assistance from support specialists, such as social workers and psychologists to assist in addressing barriers to learning within their schools. It is recommended that the DBE explore and review ways to expedite the provision of specialist support services which will subsequently support the learners and the SBST members in the execution of their duties.

Teachers should also be encouraged to take responsibility for their own education by attending upgrading and reskilling courses on the latest developments in inclusive practices. Teachers should be motivated to form clusters and to conduct seminars and conferences on IE.

It is also advised that SBSTs continue to create settings where decision-making and problem-solving are executed in a cooperative and participative manner.

### **5.3.3 Networking with other role players to improve infrastructure**

In the event that the DBSTs lack the capability to provide continuous support to schools, it is recommended that they guide SBSTs and make them aware of community resources that could be accessed for assistance.

To ensure that the appropriate and adequate resources and infrastructure necessary for the implementation of the IE policy is acquired, it is recommended the DBE conducts a survey and prioritise the upgrading of schools that are not equipped with appropriate and accessible infrastructure and other resources to accommodate learners with physical disabilities. Schools must be encouraged to explore community resources and support to compliment the DBE's efforts by finding creative ways to involve skilled people from the community. There are, for example, people in communities with relevant skills, such as construction workers who can be approached to volunteer to build ramps without charge or at minimal cost to the school.

It was evident from the focus-group interviews that, although School A received some support from NGOs, the SBST of School B needed more collaborative relationships with parents and other community members. It is therefore suggested that the DBSTs investigate strategies that SBSTs can utilise to create cooperative partnerships with parents and community members or organisations. SBSTs should also find creative ways to build collaborative relationships between parents and other community members. It is recommended that schools be encouraged to conduct a needs analysis with NGOs, parents and community members to ascertain how they could be of assistance to schools, and how a relationship between these different stakeholders could be fostered.

#### **5.4 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY**

It is hoped that this study will help SBSTs to develop policies, approaches and plans to support teachers with the implementation of IE by working collaboratively with relevant roleplayers to gain indepth knowledge of IE in service to schools, the education fraternity and entire communities. Various ways of improving the delivery of IE may be developed, including by supporting teachers who are struggling to support learners with barriers to learning. The study's research results may be informative to policymakers, and may help programme designers develop intervention strategies that support teachers and strenghten their teaching methods in supporting learners of various capabilities in a mainstream classroom. The different stakeholders, such as the parents, teachers, psychologists and social workers should work cooperatively in order to form a strong relationship. The data and recommendations of this study may serve to compliment the existing literature on IE and enhance teaching in an inclusive classroom.

#### **5.5 LIMITATIONS OF STUDY**

Only two schools were sampled in this research study and this study is therefore limited in scope. It may be worthwhile to ascertain if the experiences of SBSTs in this study are comparable to those responding to the same matters in homogenous schools in the Western Cape Province, and in South Africa as a whole. It was difficult to generalise the findings to the whole population of teachers at schools in South Africa where IE is

implemented because the sample size of this study was small, and that was another limitation of this study.

Qualitative data cannot assure external validity, and because this study is of a qualitative nature, the researcher cannot generalise the findings to a broader context (De Vos, Strydom, Fouche & Delport, 2005). This research is only applicable to two SBSTs in the Cape Metropole in the Western Cape and the research findings can therefore not be generalised to other schools.

Another limitation of this study was that, while some participants were hesitant to express their experiences or their perspectives on the questions raised by the researcher during the the focus-group discussions, other members of the SBSTs were very vocal about their experiences. The reluctance of the participants to express their opinions and share their experiences and ideas may be attributed to the interactive nature of focus-group interviews. Pearson and Vossler (2016) assert that, when conducting and analysing focus groups, the nature of the group dynamic also plays an important role. The participants who regard themselves as experts and other participants who are controlling talkers may discourage the rest of the group to participate in the discussions. During focus groups, the group dynamics, including the potential for some personal opinions and experiences being withheld for the sake of conformity which could diminish the researcher's ability to obtain a more nuanced view with divergent voices. Participants may not always have had the time to express their opinions in detail, so the amount of time allocated for the researcher to conduct the focus-group interviews could also be perceived as a limitation of the study.

Finally, in an attempt to guarantee triangulation, various sources of knowledge or processes were used, namely, questionnaires in addition to focus-group interviews. In addition, in order to guarantee that the explanations of the participants were original, verbatim statements and quotes from the data collected were used. This was done to ensure the credibility of the information. Coherence in the data was achieved by the supervisor checking the researcher's findings. Reciprocity was realised by facilitating the discussions and allowing the participants to lead the way during the focus group interviews. Simplified questions were also presented to verify explanations based of what research participants had said. Noble and Heale (2019) posit that triangulation has

limitations, but it also offers simplicity and richness to investigative studies. When used as a method for integrating research methodologies, triangulation may not be consistently achieved. Triangulation consequently adds to the complexity of research, making it more time-consuming. In addition, researchers may not sufficiently explain their method for merging results and there may be times when a comparison of the findings of two sources are irreconcilable. Triangulation does not always sufficiently alleviate problems in a chosen research methodology and triangulation procedures may furthermore need a skilled analyst, as they are complex, and the value of triangulation may be overstated in some studies (Noble & Heale, 2019).

## **5.6 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH**

The sample for this study was drawn from schools in different socio-economic backgrounds in the Cape Metropole. These two primary schools are in the same school district. Further investigation could comprise participants from different provinces' school districts as well as schools situated in townships or rural areas within South Africa. Research on the experiences of SBSTs from different regions of South Africa regarding the support that they provide within their schools is also considered as worthy and potentially fruitful as this would provide data that could be compared with that of the current study.

Research investigating the experiences of the SBSTs and the support that they provide in special schools as resource centres or inclusive schools could be another area of research. The research findings of these studies would provide invaluable knowledge for additional guidance, training and support for SBSTs. Research to investigate the support skills and knowledge required by both SBSTs and teachers in general, also needs to be conducted. The results of this research could provide insight into possible intervention strategies to support learners that experience barriers to learning. The research participants in this study were all teachers at primary schools. It may also be engrossing and advantageous to compare the experiences of high school teachers to that of their colleagues in primary schools while implementing IE. It would be interesting to compare and contrast the level of transition of learners with SEN between these educational levels. It is also vital to establish whether supporting learners experiencing barriers to learning in conventional classrooms has determinable benefits for teachers

and for all learners – those with or without barriers to learning. The level of training and education of the participants could be another interesting discourse.

In conclusion, it would be valuable to conduct research into the support provided to schools by the DBSTs, as well as the experiences of parents and caregivers as role-players within schools. These research findings may identify the challenges that DBSTs and parents experience while initiating cooperative relationships with members of the SBSTs.

## **5.7 CONCLUSION**

This chapter summarised the findings and recommendations for this study which aimed to explore the experiences of members of the SBST's in providing support in their schools. The research questions which intended to determine what IE means to members of the SBSTs; what their roles are and how they implement IE in their schools; what challenges they have experienced as well as the successes that they have achieved when implementing IE, was answered by this study.

This study indicated that for the effective implementation of IE, education support services must be strengthened from the Ministerial level to SBST level in schools. It is also imperative that the DBST continuously empower and support SBSTs.

## **5.8 CONCLUDING REFLECTIONS**

As a member of my own school's SMT and SBST, the identification and support of learners experiencing barriers to learning is of utmost importance to me. I also acknowledge that the implementation of IE, in particular the SIAS process, has a profound influence on a teacher's day-to-day teaching experiences. While conducting this research study, I was very impressed with the attitudes of the participants in how they perceived their roles and responsibilities in their different SBSTs. This study recognises that the majority of teachers are devoted and committed professionals whose goal is to help their learners to progress and achieve. The participants' passion for teaching and their dedication in providing support was evident, and I was distinctly aware that I was dealing with competent, caring professionals. Teachers are exposed to challenges over and above those of just teaching and learning on a daily basis, and it is

thus imperative that they are supported, empowered and consulted regarding the successful implementation of inclusive education.



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**APPENDIXES**

**Appendix A: Questionnaire for schools**

|  |
|--|
| <h2>QUESTIONNAIRE FOR<br/>SCHOOLS</h2> |
|--|

**Indicate your answer with an X in the appropriate block.**

1.1 What is your gender? 

|        |      |                   |
|--------|------|-------------------|
| Female | Male | Decline to select |
|--------|------|-------------------|

1.2 What is your age? 

|            |            |           |             |
|------------|------------|-----------|-------------|
| 20 – 30yrs | 30 – 40yrs | 40 -50yrs | 50 and over |
|------------|------------|-----------|-------------|

1.3 Teaching experience? 

|                   |              |               |                    |
|-------------------|--------------|---------------|--------------------|
| Less than 5 years | 5 – 10 years | 11 – 20 years | More than 20 years |
|-------------------|--------------|---------------|--------------------|

1.4 Number of years at this school: 

|                   |              |               |                    |
|-------------------|--------------|---------------|--------------------|
| Less than 5 years | 5 – 10 years | 11 – 20 years | More than 20 years |
|-------------------|--------------|---------------|--------------------|

1.5 Which of the following positions do you hold in the school? 

|         |    |        |           |      |                 |  |
|---------|----|--------|-----------|------|-----------------|--|
| Teacher | DH | Deputy | Principal | LSEN | Other (specify) |  |
|---------|----|--------|-----------|------|-----------------|--|

1.6 What is your role in the SBST? \_\_\_\_\_

1.7 List the training workshops, related to Inclusive Education and/ or the functioning of the SBST, that you have attended.

\_\_\_\_\_ offered by \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ offered by \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ offered by \_\_\_\_\_

1.8 Specify all formal/ informal training that you have received in Remedial Education/ Special Education other than the ones mentioned in 1.7

\_\_\_\_\_ offered by \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ offered by \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ offered by \_\_\_\_\_

**Appendix B: Focus group interview questions for schools**

**FOCUS GROUP INTERVIEW QUESTIONS FOR  
SCHOOLS**

**What does inclusive education mean to members of the School Based Support Team (SBST)?**

1.1 What does inclusive education mean to you?

.....  
.....

1.2 Explain how your school implements inclusive education.

.....  
.....

**2. How do members of the SBST perceive their roles and responsibilities in providing support?**

2.1 Who are the members of the SBST and how were these members chosen to serve on the SBST?

.....  
.....

2.2 What is your understanding of the role and function of the SBST?

.....  
.....

2.3 How does the SBST support the teachers in your school?

.....  
.....

**3. How is inclusive education implemented at your school?**

3.1 When do your SBST meetings take place and how often do you meet?

.....

3.2 What types of cases have been referred to the SBST?

.....  
.....

3.3 As the SBST, explain how you respond to cases referred to you?

.....  
.....

3.4 Was the learner monitored during the referral and support process? If yes, how?

.....  
.....  
.....



**4. What successes and challenges do you experience in implementing inclusive education?**

4.1 What are the challenges/ frustrations/ problems that your school's SBST has to deal with?

.....  
.....

4.2 What successes has your school's SBST achieved?

.....  
.....

4.3 How does the SBST collaborate with agencies/ professionals outside the school?

.....  
.....

4.4 Are there issues related to confidentiality that your SBST had to deal with?

.....  
.....

4.5 How does the DBST support you?

.....  
.....

4.6. In your opinion, what can the DBST do to support the SBST of your school, and ultimately the learners of your school better?

.....  
.....



## Appendix C: Letter of permission from WCED to conduct research in schools

[Audrey.wyngaard@westerncape.gov.za](mailto:Audrey.wyngaard@westerncape.gov.za)

tel: +27 021 467 9272

Fax: 0865902282

Private Bag x9114, Cape Town, 8000

wced.wcape.gov.za

**REFERENCE:** 20181126–9093

**ENQUIRIES:** Dr A T Wyngaard

Mrs Caroline Agulhas

11 Mikro Street

Goodwood

7460

**Dear Mrs Caroline Agulhas**

### **RESEARCH PROPOSAL: THE ROLE OF SCHOOL-BASED SUPPORT TEAM (SBST) IN TWO PRIMARY SCHOOLS IN THE CAPE METROPOLE**

Your application to conduct the above-mentioned research in schools in the Western Cape has been approved subject to the following conditions:

1. Principals, educators and learners are under no obligation to assist you in your investigation.
2. Principals, educators, learners and schools should not be identifiable in any way from the results of the investigation.
3. You make all the arrangements concerning your investigation.
4. Educators' programmes are not to be interrupted.
5. The Study is to be conducted from **01 February 2019 till 27 September 2019**
6. No research can be conducted during the fourth term as schools are preparing and finalizing syllabi for examinations (October to December).
7. Should you wish to extend the period of your survey, please contact Dr A.T Wyngaard at the contact numbers above quoting the reference number?
8. A photocopy of this letter is submitted to the principal where the intended research is to be conducted.
9. Your research will be limited to the list of schools as forwarded to the Western Cape Education Department.
10. A brief summary of the content, findings and recommendations is provided to the Director: Research Services.
11. The Department receives a copy of the completed report/dissertation/thesis addressed to:

**The Director: Research Services  
Western Cape Education Department  
Private Bag X9114  
CAPE TOWN  
8000**

We wish you success in your research.

Kind regards.

Signed: Dr Audrey T Wyngaard

**Directorate: Research**

**DATE: 12 April 2019**

## Appendix D: Ethics clearance



### OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR: RESEARCH RESEARCH AND INNOVATION DIVISION

Private Bag X17, Bellville 7535  
South Africa  
T: +27 21 959 2988/2948  
F: +27 21 959 3170  
E: [research-ethics@uwc.ac.za](mailto:research-ethics@uwc.ac.za)  
[www.uwc.ac.za](http://www.uwc.ac.za)

26 February 2018

Mrs C Agulhas  
Faculty of Education

**Ethics Reference Number:** HS18/1/5

**Project Title:** The role of the school-based support team (SBST) in two primary schools in the Cape Metropole.

**Approval Period:** 17 February 2018 – 17 February 2019

I hereby certify that the Humanities and Social Science Research Ethics Committee of the University of the Western Cape approved the methodology and ethics of the above mentioned research project.

Any amendments, extension or other modifications to the protocol must be submitted to the Ethics Committee for approval.

Please remember to submit a progress report in good time for annual renewal.

The Committee must be informed of any serious adverse event and/or termination of the study.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Josias', is written over a white rectangular box.

*Ms Patricia Josias  
Research Ethics Committee Officer  
University of the Western Cape*

**PROVISIONAL REC NUMBER - 130416-049**

**Appendix E: Confirmation from editor**

*Margaret Farred*  
*Language Editing Service*

082 899 3783

[felicitas@mwweb.co.za](mailto:felicitas@mwweb.co.za)

This serves to certify that the MASTERS OF EDUCATION (M. Ed) Thesis titled:

**THE ROLE OF THE SCHOOL-BASED SUPPORT TEAMS IN PROVIDING  
SUPPORT AT TWO PRIMARY SCHOOLS IN THE CAPE METROPOLE**

by:

**CAROLINE AGULHAS**

was duly edited by me.

I am an experienced editor and have previously edited a range of different publications, including academic journal articles, Research and Annual Reports, Dissertations, Theses and books.

Please note that all editing is done in *Track Changes*, and I therefore have no control over what is accepted or rejected by the author. Furthermore, I have no control over text added at a later stage.

Should there be any queries, please contact me on the number provided above.



Margaret Farred  
Professional Editors' Guild  
Membership Number FAR007

## Appendix F: Turnitin report

THE ROLE OF THE SCHOOL-BASED SUPPORT TEAMS IN PROVIDING SUPPORT AT TWO PRIMARY SCHOOLS IN THE CAPE METROPOLE.

### ORIGINALITY REPORT

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