

Assessment of Support Strategies in Inclusive Education in the Foundation Phase in the Umlazi District

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Submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements of the degree of Masters of Education
(Educational Psychology) in the

Department of Educational Psychology and Special Education

Faculty of Education

University of Zululand

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2017

DECLARATION

Submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements of the degree of Masters of Education
(Educational Psychology)

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I, **KEMESHRI AVRIL SUBRAMONEY**, declare that

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Kemeshri Avril Subramoney

ABSTRACT

It has been 16 years since the release of Education White Paper 6 however, South Africa continues to experience challenges in implementing Inclusive Education (IE) by providing support effective for learners who experience barriers to learning. Education in society is a fundamental part of our lives and IE provides the platform to achieve a unified society. The study focused on the Foundation Phase where barriers could be identified and early intervention could be provided.

The aim of this study was to ascertain the nature of the support strategies employed by Foundation Phase teachers in two schools in the Umlazi District. It also aimed to establish if learners who experience barriers to learning as well as if the teachers and the school were adequately supported.

It was apparent that although the department of education addressed some of the challenges by providing a policy and guidelines on the implementation of inclusive education (National Strategy on Screening, Identification, Assessment and Support (SIAS) and Guidelines for responding to learner diversity in the classroom) there was little evidence of stakeholders having knowledge of the documents or applying the recommended strategies.

A mixed method design was used for this case study. The quantitative method comprised of a questionnaire constituted the initial phase of the data collection. It was then followed by the qualitative method which involved a focus group interview with selected participants. The questionnaire was completed by 21 teachers from the two schools and 5 teachers participated in the focus group interview from the first school and 8 from the second.

This study established that although teachers attempted to provide support to learners that experience barriers to learning, they found these strategies to be ineffective. The pre-service in-service training that they received to address barriers to learning was ineffective and inadequate. Support networks at the schools were dysfunctional and there was confusion about the roles and responsibilities of the various support structures. Stakeholders and external support structures were ineffective and inaccessible. The lack of communication and collaboration amongst stakeholders was evident. These findings are

common and consistent with discoveries from previous research. Contributions of the study are important for further research and implementation of the recommendations would assist in ensuring that learners receive quality education that can help them to be productive members of society.

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I wish to thank the following people without whom the completion of this study would not have been possible:

1. My supervisor, Prof. M. M. Hlongwane for his patience, encouragement and guidance.
2. My co-supervisor, Dr. D. C. Kent for his knowledge and constructive criticism.
3. The KZN Department of Education for granting permission to conduct the research.
4. The principals of the schools involved in the study for granting me permission for conducting research at their schools.
5. The teachers for their valuable contribution, cooperation and willingness to participate in the study.
6. My parents, siblings, family and friends for their prayers, patience, encouragement, love and support.
7. My friend, Shaun Ruggunan, for his guidance.
8. My dear friends, Cecilia and Basil Pillay, for their prayers, advice and constant support.

CHAPTER 1

1.1. Motivation for the study

A challenge faced by the South African education system is providing support for learners who experience barriers to learning. The strategy to address these barriers, an inclusive education and training system, was outlined in Education White Paper 6 (2001) which has its foundations deep rooted in the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa and the South African Schools Act 84 of 1996. The South African constitution advocates the right of everyone to equality, advancement and protection from unfair discrimination. Further, it prescribes that everyone has the right to basic education. According to the South African Schools Act 84 of 1996, learners are not only to be admitted to public schools but to also ensure that their educational needs are attended to without any kind of unfair discrimination (Du Plessis, 2013). The Education White Paper 6 acknowledges that all learners need support and that learners have diverse support needs. Learners with disabilities and impairments are considered as most vulnerable and require high levels of support which they would access at a special school. The needs of learners experiencing moderate to low levels of support were to be addressed at full service and ordinary schools with the assistance of special schools as resource centres (Department of Education, 2002; Department of Education, 2005). The Department of Education was to achieve this by establishing these schools and providing training for managers and teachers, establishing support structures and funding at schools and districts. In 2008, the National Strategy on Screening, Identification, Assessment and Support (SIAS) was published and subsequently revised and published as a Policy on Screening, Identification, Assessment and Support (SIAS). The purpose of this strategy was to identify and support all learners who experience barriers to learning. This was to be achieved through standardised procedures with the aim of increasing opportunities for all learners and improving the quality of education for vulnerable learners.

Unfortunately the learner dropout rate indicates that learners are not receiving the support that they require. In an interview on News 24, education researcher, Dr. Nicholas Spaul, revealed that of the 1.1 million learners that enrolled school at grade 1, only 550 000 wrote the National Senior Certificate examination. He also discovered that learners acquired learning deficits early in their schooling careers which were not addressed. Learners' literacy and numeracy achievements were found to be low in Grade 3 before the language shift to English in Grade 4 which indicated that language was not the most important barrier to learning (Spaul, 2016). There was little or no intervention for these learners in the foundation phase. The state of education report by Auditor-General Kimi Makwetu in 2015 revealed that most of the country's Grade R teachers were unqualified. In KwaZulu-Natal, 83 percent of Grade R teachers did not have the required qualifications.

According to Spaul, Van Der Berg, Wills, Gustafsoon, and Kotze (2016), the results of weak foundations are important aspects that lead to poor learning outcomes in later grades and less than half of all learners were able to read for meaning in this phase. Spaul et al. (2016) further reported that there was insufficient policy focus in early childhood development and in primary schools where quality education was not consistent. Weaknesses were discovered in the teaching and learning practices in the foundation phase classrooms which influenced learning negatively. Inequalities were eminent in school readiness which was as a result of socio-economic status, parents' education and their involvement in their childrens' schooling. South Africa fared worse in comparison to other poorer African countries which suggests that school quality can overcome socio-economic disadvantages.

The researcher teaches at a special school and also serves on the school's admission committee. Learners who require low levels of support are still seeking admission into special schools in spite of the support strategies being put in place in mainstream schools. Policies and guidelines have been provided to address learners' barriers; however a gap is evident in the implementation of these policies. There is a necessity to explore this subject in the Umlazi District as there has been little or no research done in this area. This study will contribute to literature in this arena of South African education.

1.2. Operational definitions

1.2.1. Inclusive education

Inclusive education is a process of strengthening the capacity of the education system to reach out to all learners and can thus be understood as a key strategy to achieve education for all (UNESCO, 2009).

Inclusive education refers to a system of education that acknowledges and caters for the diverse needs of all learners in the classroom.

1.2.2. Support strategies

Support strategies are used interchangeably with inclusive and intervention strategies. “Inclusive strategies of learning, teaching and assessment allow learners to demonstrate a level of competence and to achieve an outcome in a way that suit their needs. Assessment should be adapted according to the level of support that each learner needs. Different types of barriers will have to be addressed through different inclusive methods of assessment. A specific barrier may require more than one adaptation. Strategies to be applied will vary according to whether that barrier is long standing, recently acquired, fluctuating, intermittent or temporary” (DoE, 2005a).

Support strategies are the approaches used to address the barriers that learners experience to learning. It includes interventions in the education system, the school, the learner’s home or within the learner.

1.2.3. Foundation Phase

The term foundation phase refers to the first phase of formal schooling which is the General Education and Training teaching Band: Grades R, 1, 2 and 3. This phase falls within the early childhood development period. Learning programmes focus on primary learning skills, knowledge and values (Department of Education, 2003).

1.3. Statement of the problem

Policies have been introduced to address the diverse needs of learners who require low levels of support (Department of Education, 2011b). However barriers to learning experienced by the learners are not addressed with effective support strategies (Spaull, 2016). The research problem is to investigate the support strategies implemented by teachers at ordinary schools.

This study will be steered by the following research questions:

1.3.1. What support strategies are used at the school?

1.3.2. How are support strategies implemented?

1.4. Aims and objectives

The purpose of the study is to investigate the support strategies used by teachers to address learners' barriers to learning. The aim is to ascertain the nature of the support strategies, if learners who experience barriers to learning as well as the teachers and the school are being adequately supported. The information from the study would inform the special school as a resource centre of the needs of the school and the areas in which further support is required.

4.1. To identify the support strategies used at the school.

4.2. To assess the implementation of these support strategies.

1.5. Intended contribution to the body of knowledge

There has been substantial research on policies as well as the challenges in supporting learners with barriers to learning. However, it seems little has been done to implement the policies and apply the recommendations that were made in previous research. This study attempts to identify the support strategies used in the schools and assess the implementation of these support strategies. The findings from this study should be used to address the lack of support for learners with barriers to learning by assessing and creating an awareness of appropriate support strategies. It would ensure that all learners receive the relevant support in overcoming their barriers and are able to participate in learning.

1.6. Research methodology

1.6.1 Research Design

The researcher has elected to use a mixed method design for this case study. Collecting and analysing quantitative and qualitative data within one study will provide a more elaborate approach to the research problem and will produce its deeper understanding (Maree, 2010).

1.6.2 Data Sources

Data were collected from the participants from two primary schools in the Umlazi District which was in the same district as the special school. Schools were categorised into quintiles. The quintile of the school was determined by the parents of the learners that attend a school. Quintiles 1 to 3 consisted of previously disadvantaged schools where

parents are unable to pay school fees. The government funded schools in the poorer areas (Veravia, Thom, & Hodgson, 2017). Both the schools were quintile 3 schools. The participants were foundation phase teachers from the above schools. The total population of foundation phase teachers at the two schools was 31 educators. The researcher requested all 31 educators to fill in the questionnaire and educators from each school were requested to participate in focus group interviews.

1.6.3 Data collection techniques

The data collection techniques chosen for this study comprised of questionnaires and focus group interviews.

The quantitative aspect of the study comprised of a questionnaire requesting information on the respondent's biographical details, classroom support strategies that they applied and the support network available to them. The use of the questionnaire allowed the researcher to engage all the foundation phase teachers in the study.

The qualitative aspect of the research included two focus group interviews. One interview was held at each school after the questionnaires were completed and analysed. The interviews provided the researcher with the opportunity to gather more in-depth information whilst allowing the respondents to clarify issues that arose and to provide explanations for their responses in the questionnaire.

1.6.4 Sampling Techniques

Census

Each member of the population was included in a census and it gave the researcher the opportunity to gather detailed information about the entire population. The population for the

questionnaire comprised of 31 foundation phase teachers from both schools. There were 21 teachers from the first school and 11 from the second school.

Non-probability sampling

Non-probability sampling was used for the focus group interviews. Teachers from each grade in each school were requested to represent their grades at the focus group interviews. Two focus group interviews were conducted comprising of 5 teachers from the first school and 8 teachers from the second school.

1.6.5. Data analysis and interpretation

Descriptive statistics such as the mean, median, mode and the standard deviation was used to analyse the quantitative data from the questionnaires. Inferential techniques such as correlations and chi square test values were used to establish if any significant relationships of interest existed amongst the variables.

Thematic analysis was used to analyse and interpret the data collected from the focus group interviews which was the qualitative part of the study.

1.7. Ethical and safety issues

Permission to conduct research was sought from the relevant departments at the University of Zululand and the KwaZulu- Natal Department of Education. Respondents gave informed consent. They were informed about the purpose of the interview and how the research was to be used. They were also informed about how their privacy was to be protected (Henning, 2004).

The schools' and teachers' identities were protected by allowing them to remain anonymous. The participants were allocated pseudonyms or numbers to identify them.

Participants had the right to refuse to participate in the study and the option of withdrawing. Written consent was sought and granted from the KwaZulu-Natal Department of Education, the primary schools identified and the participating teachers.

Overview of the study

Chapter 1: Introduction

This Chapter provides an introduction and motivation of the study. It introduces the operational definitions, statement of the problem, aims and objectives and contributions of the study. In addition it briefly explains the methodology used and the ethical considerations.

Chapter 2: Literature review

Chapter two focuses on the understanding of inclusive education and defines barriers to learning. The underpinning theories of the study are identified and explained. The support strategies are discussed in addition to the policies and guidelines provided by the Department of Education. The chapter critiques relevant literature and important themes and concludes with a discussion on the challenges encountered in providing support for learners who experience barriers to learning.

Chapter 3: Research design and methodology

A detailed description of the research design and methodology is presented in this chapter. The selection, development, validity and reliability of the research instruments are explained. The sampling design and methods of sampling employed in the study which included the size of the samples were described. Data analysis procedures and techniques are provided. Ethical considerations were explained for each step of the study.

Chapter 4: Data analysis and interpretation

Chapter four provides the results of the study. A detailed analysis of the data is presented in the form of tables and graphs which is followed by the interpretation of the findings. Both the quantitative and qualitative findings are discussed in this chapter.

Chapter 5

The final chapter considers the limitations of the study. It provides conclusions based on the data received and presents the recommendations of the study.

Summary

Chapter one provided the rationale behind the study, operational definitions and an outline of the statement of the problem, aims and objectives and the intended contribution of the study. An introduction of the topic was provided and an outline of the state of education in South Africa. A brief summary of the research methodology and design was presented in addition to data sources, data collection instruments and sampling techniques. This was followed by a concise explanation of the data analysis and interpretation techniques that were applied. The ethical and safety issues of the study were stated. The chapter concluded with a brief description of each chapter of the study.

CHAPTER 2

Literature Review

2.1. Inclusive Education

Since the Education White Paper 6 (EWP 6) was published in 2001, there has been much discussion around inclusive education. Inclusive Education is a process of addressing the diverse needs of all learners. The Education White Paper 6 particularly addresses special needs education, focusing on building an inclusive education and training system acknowledges that all children can learn and need support. It acknowledges and respects the differences in age, gender, ethnicity, language, class disability and HIV status and promotes education as a universal human right. It also considers that learning does not only occur at school but in a child's home and community as well (Department of Education, (DoE) 2001; Lomofsky, 2001; Armstrong, 2010; Department of Social Development, (DoSD) 2016).

Structures and systems had to be changed to meet the different needs of learners. The goal of this inclusive education system was to maximise the participation of all learners and minimise the barriers they experienced to learning while providing a single education system for all learners. In order to address learners learning needs, changes had to be made in attitudes, behaviour, teaching methods, the curriculum and the environment. This included a more flexible curriculum and the development of district based support teams to support learners and teachers who required it (DoE, 2001).

Inclusive education is also viewed as the foundation for a cohesive society, where different people have the opportunity to familiarise themselves with others and find mutual interests (Bornman, 2014; DoSD, 2016;). Bornman (2014) further explains that early attitudes are

formed at school and if children are taught how to accept diversity they would grow into adults that are more accepting of a diverse society which is very important in a diverse country like South Africa.

2.3. Barriers to learning

Barriers to learning are identified as difficulties that arise within the education system as a whole, the learning site and/or within the learner him/herself - these prevent access to learning and development for learners (DoE, 2008). Barriers to learning is a term that explains why some learners do not experience success in learning (Walton, Nel, Hugo, & Muller, 2009). This author further explains that the sources of these barriers may be intrinsic or extrinsic. Intrinsic barriers are within an individual and include physical, sensory, neurological and developmental impairments as well as chronic illnesses and differing intellectual ability. Extrinsic barriers are aspects that exist outside an individual that influences their learning. External barriers to learning may include the following: Socio-economic factors; risk factors such as abuse, violence and HIV/AIDS; attitudes; inflexible curriculum at schools; language and communication; inaccessible and unsafely built environments; inappropriate and inadequate provision of support services; lack of parental recognition and involvement; disability and lack of human resource development strategies (DoE, 2008; Engelbrecht, Nel, Nel, & Tlale, 2015). According to Bornman (2014), teachers' attitudes to inclusion are also been identified as a barrier that could be overcome if teachers are willing to challenge outdated beliefs and practices.

Cultural barriers were also identified as having a negative effect on the education of learners. There needs to be a change of attitude in the community. Parents are influenced by the community and they feel that it is safer to enrol their children, who experience barriers to learning, in separate schools due to the intolerant attitude of other learners and staff. There are still stigmas attached to learners with barriers at schools. There is a delay in

access to intervention because traditional help is sought first (Bornman, 2014; Meltz, Herman, & Pillay, 2014).

2.4. Theoretical framework on providing support in inclusive education

In order to identify the barriers to learning and the support strategies used to address the needs of learners who experience barriers to learning the following underpinning theories have been identified.

The first theory, Bronfenbrenner's bioecological model of development, explains the support structures in a child's life as various systems that exist within other systems. Activities within these systems can affect a child directly or indirectly and provide the context that shapes development and learning. The model assists in understanding how learners develop in a multifaceted system of relationships and the implementation of inclusive education in specific environments by identifying the interconnectedness within and between the systems (Engelbrecht et al, 2015). Nel, Tlale, Engelbrecht, & Nel, M (2016) explains how the key strategies from Education White Paper 6 are clearly placed within Bronfenbrenner's ecological model. Firstly, the theory could be applied to identify the systems in the child's life that pose barriers and thereafter interventions could be applied within the systems to provide effective support to the child (Woolfolk, 2014; Engelbrecht et al, 2015).

The model consists of five systems. The outer most layer is the macrosystem which contains the exosystem. Embedded in the exosystem is the mesosystem which contains the inner most layer known as the microsystem . All of these systems are influenced by a chronosystem. (Woolfolk, 2014; Engelbrecht et al, 2015).

The microsystem is the child's immediate relationships which are reciprocal. These relationships include a child's relationships at home, relationships in the neighbourhood as

well as peer and school relationships. At this level the child has direct contact with these systems (Geldenuys, 2013; Woolfolk, 2014). A study by Geldenuys (2013) revealed that the implementation of inclusive education was negatively influenced by a non-supportive home environment for learners who experienced barriers to learning due to various reasons. Some learners are orphans and others had parents with low literacy levels who could not provide support at home. Findings at school showed that these learners were discriminated against, rejected and labelled by their peers. It was also discovered that the school lacked the appropriate resources and trained educators to address their needs. To prevent a learner with barriers to learning from being further disadvantaged, it is imperative that support begins at this level for the learners as well as the adults in their immediate environments.

The mesosystem contains all the systems of the microsystems. Functions of the mesosystem include the interactions among the elements of the microsystems. Like the microsystem, these relationships are reciprocal. The learner is not directly involved at this level however, these relationships influence the learner's development. It is therefore vital that there is effective collaboration between these micro-systems. Support is essential, as the reciprocal relationships between the above-mentioned role-players contribute to the optimal development of the child. For the learner, the interrelations between the home, school, neighbourhood and peer group constitute this level. Findings at this level included a lack of collaboration between the microsystems (Geldenuys, 2013). In some cases parents believe that the education of their children was the responsibility of the school and places pressure on the educators. In other situations the schools had not established and maintained an effective relationship with the parent and parental contact was limited to selected school events.

The exosystem comprised of the microsystem and the mesosystem. Woolfolk (2014) included the parent's workplace, child's school, community services and mass media in this level and explained it as the social settings that the child is not a direct member of but which had an impact on the child's schooling or education. Geldenuys (2013) further identified the school management team (SMT), the institutional level support team (ILST) , the school

governing body (SGB) and the district based support team (DBST) as support systems that influenced the implementation of inclusive education support strategies. Findings indicated that the SMTs lacked commitment towards supporting strategies for learners who experienced barriers to learning, the ILST were dysfunctional, lacked training and knowledge and were ineffective in providing support to educators and learners; the SGB did not ensure that policies promoting inclusive practices were present at the school and did not provide support material and finally the DBST were dysfunctional and did not provide guidance and support to the schools.

The macrosystem is the outer structure or larger society which comprises of cultural values, laws, national policies, conventions and traditions (Woolfolk, 2014; Nel et al. 2016). It informs the microsystems, mesosystem and exosystem. Geldenhuys (2013) identified the Constitution of South Africa, South African Schools Act, Education White Paper 6 (DoE, 2001) and the Curriculum and Assessment Policies as elements that exist in the macro system. Findings revealed that although the constitution prohibits discrimination against any person it was not applied to learners who experienced barriers to learning at the schools. The South African School's Act promoted equitable and quality education for all learners however, this was not implemented at the schools. The Education White Paper 6 was not embraced by educators and was in conflict with the Curriculum and Assessment Policy which was too rigid and made no provision for learners with barriers to learning. Nel et al. (2016) further identified the Screening, Identification, Assessment and Support Strategy (SIAS) (DoE, 2014a) and Guidelines for Inclusive Learning Programmes (DoE, 2010) amongst other policies that influenced the implementation of inclusive education.

All development was affected by changes that occurred and took place in a time period. These changes may occur in any of the systems. Support structures are to consider these changes to provide effective support for learners (Geldenhuys, 2013; Woolfolk, 2014; Nel et al 2016).

The second theory, Vygotsky's Sociocultural Perspective, maintains that learning is an active process that takes place in cultural settings and acknowledges learning that occurs in shared activities while social practices form learning and thinking. Like the bioecological model, this theory acknowledges the contribution that society makes to the development of an individual. The theory emphasises the fact that learning occurs through the learners' interaction with other people where the learner first engages in a learning activity with another person and is later able to perform that task independently. Two concepts related to this theory include scaffolding and the zone of proximal development.

The use of scaffolding and the zone of proximal development assisted in developing support strategies for learners (Woolfolk, 2014). Scaffolding refers to the support provided by the teacher or peer in the form of guidance or to learners with diverse learning needs find it difficult to work independently. (DoE, 2011) It involves breaking down assessment standards or tasks into manageable units or steps (DoE, 2005a). Similarly, Woolfolk (2014) describes scaffolding as support for learning and problem solving where the learner is provided with clues, encouragements, steps and examples to assist them to work towards independence.

The zone of proximal development is the space between the learner's existing level of development and their potential or level that they could achieve with assistance or the use of scaffolding (Woolfolk 2014). In the implementation of inclusive education and support strategies thereof, teachers are required to determine the level at which learners are functioning and are then expected to assist them to achieve the next level through assisted learning.

2.5. Support strategies in inclusive education

Research by Mzizi and Rambuda (2014) emphasised the necessity for Foundation Phase teachers to be able to differentiate the curriculum to address the diverse needs of learners

who experience barriers to learning. According to this study, the importance of these strategies in the foundation phase and teachers acquiring the appropriate skills to address diversity in the classrooms is seen as a preventative measure against learners being placed in special school. The Department of Education introduced the following guidelines and support strategies to ensure that learners barriers are addressed.

a) Policy on Screening, Identification, Assessment and Support

The Department of Education developed the National Strategy on Screening, Identification, Assessment and Support (SIAS) which provided a process of providing support for learners with both intrinsic and extrinsic barriers to learning. The aim of the SIAS strategy is to screen and identify learners with barriers to learning and to provide support to address those barriers (DoE, 2008; Dalton, McKenzie, & Kahonde, 2012). Subsequently the strategy was revised and published as a policy. In addition to identifying and providing support for learners with barriers, the policy aims at preventing learners from dropping out of school (DoE, 2014b).

The SIAS process consists of three stages. Stage 1 requires the school and teacher to gather information on every learner to understand their basic needs, talents and aspirations. This information assists the school in screening for learners that may be at risk and who may need a more proactive approach to prevent further problems.

Stage 2 applies to learners that have been identified as experiencing difficulties with learning. The learners intrinsic and extrinsic barriers are documented and an individual support plan is developed. This individual support plan helps the teacher to track the support provided as well as the progress noted. Support is provided at school level.

Stage 3 is coordinated by the DBST and is a formal assessment and review of the information gathered in stages 1 and 2. A multi-disciplinary approach is used and the level of support that is required is determined (DoE, 2014a).

The levels of support are determined to ensure that the learner receives additional support at the appropriate institution as well as the nature of intervention by the DBST. Levels 1-2 comprises of learners that require low levels of support and will be supported at ordinary and full service schools. Intervention for these learners would include short term support. Level 3 refers to learners that require moderate levels of support and will also be supported at ordinary and full service schools. Their interventions would be more specific medium term consultative support. Levels 4-5 comprises of learners that require high intensive and very intensive support. These learners will be supported at full service and special schools. Their interventions would be intensive, frequent and be specific (DoE, 2010).

Further, the SIAS strategy provides guidelines on the roles and responsibilities of all the stakeholders. These include the Institutional Level Support Team (ILST) / School Based Support Team (SBST), educators, parents and the District Based Support Teams (DBST).

b) Guidelines for responding to learner diversity in the classroom

In 2011, the guidelines for responding to learner diversity in the classroom were published. The purpose of these guidelines was to provide all relevant stakeholders with strategies on how to respond to learner diversity through the curriculum and to support curriculum differentiation in the classroom. It encourages teachers to be innovative in their teaching. It guides teachers on understanding learner diversity and how to respond to diversity in the classroom. It further explains differentiation of the curriculum and assessments and provides teachers strategies like groupings and multi-level teaching. Sample lesson plans are also included in the guidelines (DoE, 2011b).

c) Guidelines for full service / inclusive schools

Full service schools are ordinary schools that are specially equipped to address a full range of barriers to learning in an inclusive education setting (DoE, 2008). These schools promote respect for all and have skilled teachers that have the capacity to address the diverse needs of learners including learners with disabilities. There is provision of education support to teachers and learners and they engage in flexible teaching and learning and curriculum differentiation. There is collaboration with and support for other schools in the area and they welcome teachers for training in specialised areas. The roles of the relevant stakeholders are clearly defined.

d) Guidelines to ensure quality education and support in special schools and special school resource centres

The Department of Education developed the Guidelines to Ensure Quality Education and Support in Special School Resource Centres with the aim of providing guidelines to ensuring that the special schools function well and offer quality education to learners and on the requirements for a special school resource centre (DoE, 2007). The guidelines allude to the importance of the support provided by special schools to full service schools and mainstream schools. The role of the special school in inclusive education can only be achieved once the standards defined in the guidelines are met.

2.6. Challenges in providing support in inclusive education

After 16 years since the release of Education White Paper 6, South Africa has still been unsuccessful in providing appropriate and effective support to learners that experience

barriers to learning. Research indicates that the reasons for learners not receiving adequate support are due to the challenges that were identified in implementing inclusive education at policy level. Bornman (2014) argues that Education White Paper 6 lacks detail and only provides broad strategies with little guidance on how to implement the policy. There is confusion with regard to the parameters of barriers to learning and how to address extrinsic barriers such as poverty and orphan-hood. White Paper 6 is not embraced by teachers and is in conflict with curriculum and assessment. The curriculum and assessment policies are rigid and have no provisions for learners with barriers to learning (Geldenhuys, 2013).

Funding constraints were identified which affect the availability of resources. This has resulted in overcrowded classrooms which prevented the implementation of quality teaching. Funding needed to be increased to effect changes to the infrastructure (Engelbrecht et al, 2015).

Challenges also exist within the support structures and include the district based support teams which were found to be dysfunctional. They did not provide adequate support and guidance to schools (Geldenhuys, 2013). At the school level, the management team lack commitment towards learners who experience barriers to learning. The school based support teams have been dysfunctional and the SIAS strategy has not been implemented at schools. There has been no effective support to educators and learners (Engelbrecht, 2006; Geldenhuys, 2013).

The curriculum and assessment methods were found to be rigid (Geldenhuys, 2013). Further, the curriculum poses as a barrier to many learners who are not school ready at Grade 1. Teachers are not allowed to slow down the pace or adapt the curriculum to make it accessible and manageable for the learners (Bruwer, Hartell & Steyn, 2014). Grade 1 is a part of early childhood development. The processes of early childhood intervention are important because the focus is on preventing developmental problems as well as minimising

the impact of problems once they are identified. Early intervention implies not only focusing on the needs of the child but also on facilitating the environment that the child lives in (Landsberg, 2008).

Teachers are either trained as mainstream educators or as special needs educators, who lack necessary skills. Previous studies have revealed that general educators indicated that they felt unprepared to address the diverse needs of learners (Radić-Šestić, Radovanović, Milanović-Dobrota, Slavkovic & Langović-Milicvić, 2013). Further, Engelbrecht (2015) indicates that student teachers do not have experience in working with children with disabilities in their training which questions their ability to practice what they have been taught in theory. Schools lack teachers with the capacity and knowledge to teach diverse learners in one classroom and how to individualise programmes for learners. Teachers have found in-service training useful but not sufficient. They require comprehensive training programmes (Rossi & Stuart, 2007; Magare, Kitching, & Roos, 2010; Dalton et al, 2012; Bornman, 2013; Bornman, 2014; Engelbrecht et al, 2015;). Bornman (2014) further explains that along with the teacher training, support for the learner as well as the teacher was essential.

Teachers were found to lack skills in differentiating the curriculum to address a wide range of learning needs (Dalton et al. 2012). The prescriptive approach of the CAPS curriculum restricts teachers in being flexible to address learners needs and there is more emphasis on the subject matter and completing the curriculum requirements (Engelbrecht, 2015; Bruwer et al, 2014). Teacher education programmes do not focus on deeper understanding of Inclusive Education, skills to collaborate with stakeholders, inclusive planning to anticipate high priority needs in the mainstream classroom and support learners to participate in all classroom activities. Strategies such as peer collaboration and small group work focus not only on ability but further ensure that interdependence and interpersonal skills are promoted (Engelbrecht et al, 2015). The Department of Education (2014) acknowledged that ineffective teaching methods were a challenge. Further, the need for training that is aimed at

providing teachers with the essential knowledge and skills in multi-grade teaching that will enable them to effectively and efficiently deliver the curriculum, was identified.

It also emphasises the necessity of offering appropriate professional support to teachers who are essential in promoting quality of learning in schools. Continuous Professional Development (CPD) is therefore vital to assist and equip teachers with the necessary knowledge and skills to support students in inclusive classrooms (Kempen & Steyn, 2016).

Makoelle (2014), states that collaboration of teachers is pivotal. Training should also include collaborating with stakeholders. A study by Kempen and Steyn (2016) explain how collaborative networking proved successful in improving individual and school performance.

Support from specialist resource teachers as well as collaboration and teamwork with the general educator was identified as another important factor in shaping positive attitudes to inclusion. It has assisted teachers with how to make particular subjects accessible to learners with barriers to learning. Special education teachers have differentiation skills where they adapt the curriculum to the learner's needs where the general education teacher provides content specialisation to the team (Radic-Sestic et al, 2013; Rose, 2007).

Summary

This chapter focuses on the understanding of the term 'inclusive education' and the theoretical frameworks for support. It explains the support documents provided by the department of education in the implementation of inclusive education and the challenges that are encountered. It is apparent that although the department of education addressed some of the challenges by providing guidelines on the implementation of inclusive education, there is little evidence of stakeholders having knowledge of the documents or applying the recommended strategies. Education in society is a fundamental part of our lives and IE provides the platform to achieve a unified society.

CHAPTER 3

Research Methodology and Design

3.1. Introduction

This study was intended to explore the current practices in the foundation phase classrooms of selected primary schools, to gather information and assess the support strategies implemented in addressing the needs of learners with barriers to learning. Special schools are to be converted to resource centres eventually and they would be required to provide support to the schools in their area (DoE, 2001; DoE, 2007). The primary schools selected for this study were in the vicinity of the special school at which the researcher was employed. The information obtained from this study would inform the special school of the support requirements of the selected primary schools and would be used as a guide to create outreach support programmes.

Kumar (2014) described the research design as the road map that a researcher follows during the research journey. Babbie and Mouton (2001) referred to the research design as a blue print of how a researcher intends to conduct the research and further distinguishes between research design and research methodology. Babbie and Mouton (2001) explained that the focus of the research design concentrated on the the kind of study being planned and evidence required to address the research question whereas the focus of the research methodology centred on the research process, the instruments and procedures for specific data collection, sampling and data analysis tasks that are to be used. In addition to identifying the plan and procedures for the study, the research design and methodology emphasise the importance of quality by assuring validity and reliability in the selected procedures and instruments.

The design and methodology for this study were informed and influenced by the topic, purpose, limitations, context of the study along with available time, resources and skills necessary to collect and analyse the data accurately. This chapter outlines the research

methodology and provides a detailed description of the data collection procedure and instruments.

3.2. Research Methodology

The researcher elected to use a mixed method design for this case study. According to Kumar (2014) the mixed method approach uses two or more methods from either the quantitative paradigm or qualitative paradigm or both paradigms. Maree (2010) contends that collecting and analysing quantitative and qualitative data within one study will provide a more elaborate approach to the research problem and will produce deeper understanding. Kumar (2014) further indicates that this approach enhances the accuracy, validity and reliability of the outcomes of the study. It assists in overcoming weaknesses of the individual approaches or can be used when complete information from one source is difficult to obtain.

Quantitative research involves the systematic and objective collection and analysis of numerical data (Maree, 2010). This ensures that the data are not influenced by the researcher's personal bias. Qualitative research provides in-depth descriptions and understanding in term of its specific context and furthermore provides an explanation of the underlying rational. The focus is on the process and the perspective of the participants is emphasized (Babbie and Mouton, 2001).

The methods would be mixed in the following manner. The quantitative method comprised of a questionnaire, constituted the initial phase of the data collection. It was then followed by the qualitative method which involved a focus group interview with selected participants. A mixed method design was selected for this study because it improves the quality of the research and is a valuable method in assisting a researcher to discover an explanation for findings. The findings in this case refer to the results of the questionnaire. In addition, the focus group interview contributes to ascertaining the validity of the responses in the questionnaire and explores whether the respondents interpreted and understood them as intended by the researcher.

Triangulation

Triangulation is defined as the use of two or more methods in a study and ensures that deficits that flow from the investigator or method are overcome (Cohen, Manion, and Morrison 2007). It helps to prevent one method from biasing the researcher's picture of what is being investigated. It is one of the best ways to enhance validity and reliability in qualitative studies (Babbie and Mouton 2001). Triangulation was used in this study to ensure confidence in the researcher about the results of the findings by preventing bias and explaining the data collected more fully. Data from one method was substantiated by a second method if findings of both methods corresponded in a study. The type of triangulation used is referred to as methodological triangulation where different methods are applied on the same objective of study (Cohen et al, 2007). The method selected for this study includes content analysis, questionnaire and focus group interview which were used for complete view of educational outcomes.

3.3. The research instrument

Although a significant amount of research has been conducted on inclusive education and teacher attitudes to inclusive education (Avramidis, 2002; Bornman & Donohue, 2013); little research has been done to assess the support strategies implemented and how it is currently implemented in the foundation phase classrooms. The questionnaire was chosen as an instrument to obtain information on the support strategies implemented in the classroom and the support available to the teachers because it allowed the researcher to include all the teachers in the foundation phase from the selected schools. In addition, questionnaires are an objective, cost effective and expeditious method of acquiring information which offered anonymity to the participants.

The focus group interview was selected to obtain an in-depth understanding as well as to ascertain the effectiveness of the strategies at school. The interview provides the opportunity for the participants to clarify items that they may be misinterpreted in the

questionnaire or elaborate and explain their responses. This ensures reliability of information collected from questionnaire. To ensure an accurate assessment of the support strategies implemented at the schools, it was essential to obtain detailed information from the participants.

3.3.1. Questionnaire

A questionnaire consisted of a list of questions, the answers to which were recorded by respondents (Kumar, 2014). It included a section on biographical / personal data followed by a section of specific questions related to inclusive education and support strategies implemented at the school. The questionnaires were delivered to the participating schools and collected after a specified period for completion. A five point Likert Scale was used in the questionnaire. A Likert scale assists in determining the relative intensity of different items (Babbie, 2001). Respondents indicated the degree to which they agree or disagree with a statement (Huysamen, 2001).

A self-developed questionnaire (Appendix 3) was developed with information from previous research and the following documents published by the Department of Education: Education White Paper 6: Special Needs Education: Building an inclusive education and training system, Draft guidelines for inclusive learning programmes, Guidelines for responding to learner diversity in the classroom through curriculum and assessment policy statements and National strategy on screening, identification, assessment and support. This was to ensure that the terms and strategies were familiar to the teachers. The researcher met with all the foundation phase teachers from the selected schools. The reason for the research and the instructions were explained to the teachers who participated in the research. The researcher was available to respond to any queries. Cohen et al (2007) indicates that the advantage of the researcher being present ensures immediate clarification of queries or uncertainties.

The questionnaire consisted of 29 questions and was divided into 3 sections. Section A consisted of 9 questions based on the demographic characteristics of the participant that

was associated with gender, age, qualifications, teaching experience and number of learners experiencing barriers to learning were currently in their class.

Section B consisted of 13 questions. These questions focused on the classroom support strategies. Participants were required to answer questions about the support strategies they implemented in their classrooms. A 5 point Likert scale was used to indicate the type of support strategies used and the frequency of the support strategies where 1 = Never, 2 = Rarely, 3 = Sometimes, 4 = Usually and 5 = Always.

Section C consisted of 7 questions that were based on the support network available to the teachers and the selected schools. Participants responded to questions about the available support from the school management team, school based support team, district based support team and other relevant stakeholders namely the parents, psychologists, occupational therapists, speech therapists, universities and non-governmental organisations. A five point Likert scale was used to indicate the frequency of the support strategies received as well as the adequacy of the support where 1= Never, 2= Rarely, 3 = Sometimes, 4= Usually and 5= Always.

3.3.2. Focus Group Interview

A focus group interview is a discussion among five to twelve people with the purpose of collecting in-depth qualitative data about a group's perceptions and experiences on a defined topic (Maree, 2010). The purpose of focus group interviews is to find out the experiences and opinions of those who have collectively experienced an event or situation (Kumar, 2014). The teachers' attitudes, opinions, or perceptions towards the success of the support that is provided to learners who experience barriers to learning, was explored through a free and open discussion between the teachers and the researcher. The advantages of a focus group interview in this study are its effectiveness in its degree of specificity, low cost and speedy data generation, exploring diverse opinions and better coverage of concerns than would be possible in the questionnaire. In addition, it allowed the researcher to clarify issues that arose and provided the opportunity for participants to

elaborate on the responses (Kumar, 2014; Cohen et al, 2007; Wellman, Kruger, & Mitchell, 2005).

After the questionnaires were completed and analysed, teachers were selected from each school to participate in focus group interviews. These interviews provided participating teachers with the opportunity to explain or elaborate on their answers from the questionnaires. It allowed them to raise concerns that were particular to the needs of their school or teaching situations. The researcher prepared an interview schedule (Appendix 4) of a set of questions to guide the researcher in ensuring that all the relevant information was obtained from the teachers. The interview was based on the problem questions of the study and sought to gain an in depth understanding of the responses from the questionnaires. Probing strategies were used to ensure that the researcher had an accurate understanding of the responses and all the relevant details of the interview.

3.4. The sampling design

Data were collected from the participants from two primary schools in the same district as the special school. The participants were foundation phase teachers from the selected schools. The total population which consisted of 31 foundation phase teachers at the two schools were requested to participate in the study. All 31 educators were requested to fill in the questionnaire and 5 teachers from the first school and 8 teachers from the second school were requested to participate in the focus group interview.

A census or complete enumeration was used to select participants to complete the questionnaire. Census was used where the researcher attempted to involve the entire population in the study. This method ensures that all teachers were represented in terms of qualification, grades taught and experience. Further it provided detailed information and a true measure of the population.

Non-probability sampling is a method used when a researcher wants to target a certain group of participants. It is used in small scale research where the information is sufficient for

the study and when a researcher does not want to generalise the findings (Babbie & Mouton, 2001). Non-probability sampling was used to select participants for the focus group interviews. The type of non-probability sampling that was used is quota sampling. The significant characteristics that were targeted in this population were teachers from each grade in the foundation phase.

3.5. Data Analysis

3.5.1. Quantitative Data Analysis

Quantitative data from the questionnaires were coded, captured and analysed using descriptive and inferential statistics. Descriptive statistics refers to a number of statistical methods where numbers are used to summarize and describe data that is collected (Maree, 2010). These summaries about the sample and the measures presented data in a more meaningful way and allowed the researcher to observe patterns that emerged from the data and facilitated a simpler interpretation of the information. A measure of central tendency such as the mean, median, mode and the standard deviation was used to analyse the quantitative data from the questionnaires. Description of data were communicated through tables, graphs and statistical commentary. Inferential statistics makes predictions based on the information collected that extend beyond the immediate data alone (Cohen et al, 2007).

3.5.2. Qualitative Data Analysis

According to Cohen et al, (2007) analysing qualitative data includes consolidating, understanding and explaining the findings of a study. It further involves the generation of themes, discovery of patterns, summaries and descriptions. Samples in qualitative studies are smaller than quantitative samples and are rich in information and detail. The focus group interview constituted the qualitative aspect of the study. Thematic analysis was used to

evaluate the data. Responses were recorded and transcribed. The researcher sifted through the data and categorised it into codes. Maree (2010) explains that coding is assigning a label to indicate a specific segment. These codes were then organised into themes which were further structured to identify links that explain how the themes are connected. The next step involved interpreting the data where descriptive summaries are prepared which explain the findings of the interview. The conclusions that are finally drawn are reported with reference to the evidence obtained in the study.

3.6. Validity and reliability

According to Babbie and Mouton (2001) validity is defined as the confirmation of the instrument to measure what it claims to measure. Valid instruments ensure that relevant information about the research situation is gathered. In this study, the questionnaire was developed to determine the types of support strategies employed in the foundation phase, the frequency of the strategies and the focus group interview assisted in determining how effective the strategies are in addressing the learners' needs. Babbie and Mouton (2001) defined reliability as dependable and consistent where the instrument was able to provide similar results when administered to a similar group of respondents and continued to ensure these results over time. It refers to the accuracy of data obtained. Reliability has been associated with quantitative research due to quantitative studies replicating research. In qualitative research amongst alternative procedures used to establish reliability are trustworthiness, credibility and dependability.

The research instruments were developed based of policies and guidelines which were established by the Department of Education, on providing support for learners who experience barriers to learning. These instruments were presented to the supervisor and co-supervisor to ensure validity and reliability. Subsequently a pre-test was conducted with a sample representative of the population to be tested in the study. This was done to identify questions that were not clear to the participants, problems that may lead to bias in the answers and to ensure that the process of data collection was effective. No amendments to

the instruments were required. Further, the researcher was available to respond to queries raised by the participants and to provide clarity.

To further strengthen the validity and reliability of this study, triangulation was implemented. Triangulation offers the researcher confidence in the findings due to the fact that a second method is available to confirm or explain responses. This provides a holistic representation of the data collected. Further, the shortfalls of one method are balanced by the strengths of the second method.

3.7. Ethical consideration

The researcher applied to the University of Zululand's Research and Ethics Committee (UZREC) for approval to conduct the study and received an ethical clearance certificate. Permission was sought from the Department of Education, the sub-directorate of Resource Planning (Appendix 1), to conduct research in the two schools indicated in the request for permission form. Permission was approved for the period from 10 July 2017 to 09 July 2020. The conditions stipulated in the permission letter included that the researcher was limited to the schools that were listed in the letter and to schools within the KwaZulu-Natal Department of Education. Further, examinations, educator and learning programmes were not to be interrupted and the identities of the schools were to be protected. The selected schools were provided with a copy of the permission letter and access to the school and foundation phase teachers were negotiated with the principals.

Respondents needed to give informed consent. They had to be informed about the purpose of the interview and how the research was going to be used. They were also informed about how their privacy was to be protected (Henning, 2004). Participants were informed about the purpose of the study and presented with the ethical clearance certificate from the university. The role of the participants in the study was explained and they were cognisant that their participation was entirely voluntary and that they could withdraw from the study at any point without negative consequences. Participants were assured that their identities would remain anonymous and they were provided with the opportunity to query any areas of concern.

They further acknowledged that all the information was communicated to them in a language that they understood. An informed consent declaration (Appendix 2) containing this information was presented to the participants and was signed by the participants and the researcher. Teachers were allocated numbers to protect their identity.

3.8. Summary

This chapter outlined the research design and provided the context of the study and details about the research methodology that was selected and used. This was followed by a discussion around the research instruments as well as the rationale for the selection of the indicated instruments. A description of sampling design which included census and non-probability sampling methods for the quantitative and qualitative approaches respectively was provided. Both the quantitative and qualitative data analysis procedures were presented, measures that were taken to ensure validity and reliability were discussed and the chapter concluded with a clear explanation of the ethical considerations that were adhered to throughout the study.

CHAPTER 4

Data Analysis and Interpretation

4.1. Introduction

This chapter presents the results and discuss the findings obtained from the questionnaires and the focus group interviews in this study. The questionnaire was the primary tool that was used to collect data and was distributed to foundation phase teachers from two schools. The data collected from the responses was analysed with SPSS version 24.0. The results will present the descriptive statistics in the form of graphs, cross tabulations and other figures for the quantitative data that was collected. Inferential techniques, which were used to determine significant relationships amongst the variables, include the use of correlations and chi square test values; which are interpreted using the p-values.

The focus group interviews were transcribed and thematic analysis was used to analyse data obtained. The results will be presented according to the themes that were evident from the interviews followed by a discussion on the findings of the study. The discussion will include information collected from the questionnaires, focus group interviews and literature that was reviewed during the study.

This is done to answer the research questions:

- What support strategies are used at the school?
- How are support strategies implemented?

And to achieve the following objectives:

- To identify the support strategies used at the school.
- To assess the implementation of these support strategies.

4.2. Characteristics of the Sample

In total, 31 questionnaires were despatched and 31 were returned, which provided a 100% response rate. This section summarises the biographical characteristics of the respondents.

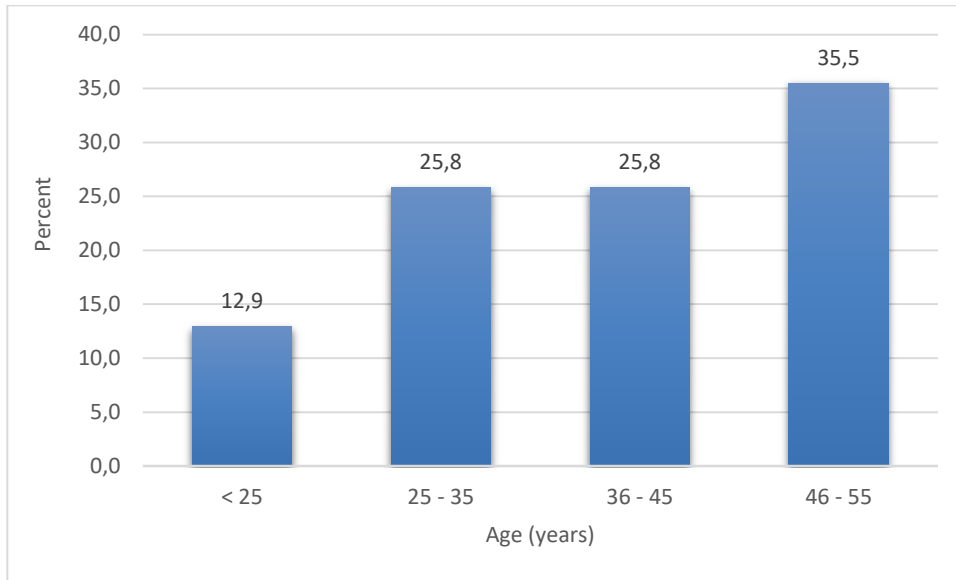
The number of respondents from each school is shown below. All of the respondents were female. This is not an unusual occurrence in primary school education globally as well as in South Africa (Moosa & Bhana, 2017a). Research indicates that teaching younger children requires nurturing and caring which is associated with women. Teachers suggested that men would be mocked for electing to teach in the foundation phase as it is not viewed as masculine profession. This seems to be an accepted practice amongst teachers and maintains gender discriminations and traditional gender roles (Moosa & Bhana, 2017b). It has also been suggested and argued against the view that feminisation at primary schools was a barrier to learning that contributed to the underachievement of male learners (Skelton, 2002).

Table 1: Number of respondents from each school

	Frequency	Percent
1	20	64.5
2	11	35.5
Total	31	100.0

There were nearly twice as many respondents from school 1 as there were from school 2 ($p = 0.106$). School 2 had a smaller foundation phase department with fewer learners and teachers.

Figure 1: Overall distribution by age.



The figure above describes the overall distribution by age. There were similar numbers of respondents in the different age categories ($p = 0.363$). The majority of respondents were more mature, with 60% being older than 35 years.

Figure 2: Education levels of the respondents.

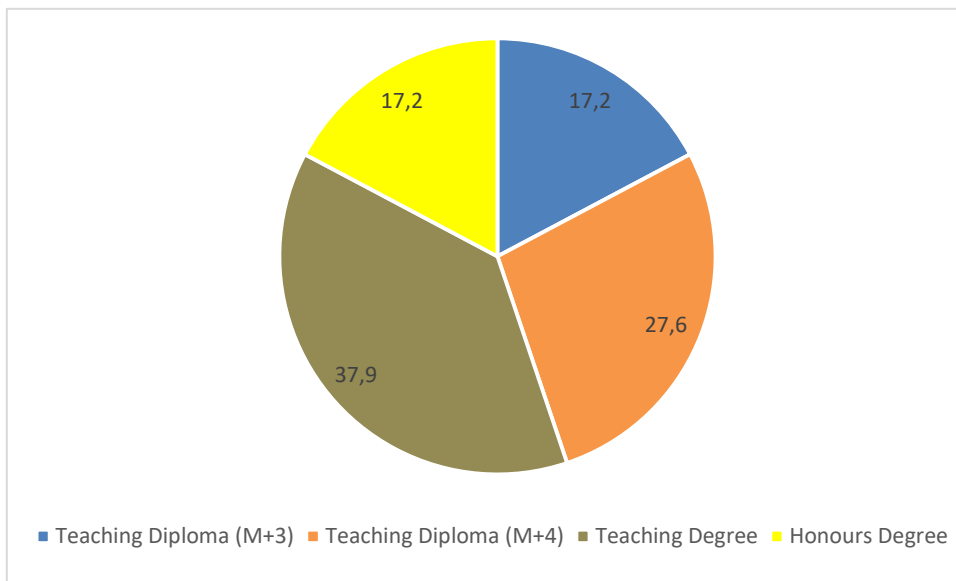


Figure 2 indicates the education levels of the respondents. All of the respondents had some level of tertiary education school qualification. Seventeen percent had a post graduate degree ($p = 0.332$). Majority of the respondents (65.5%) had a four year qualification that was either a diploma or degree.

This is a useful statistic as it indicates that a fair proportion of the respondents have a higher qualification. This indicates that the responses gathered would have been from an informed (learned) source.

Table 2: Grades that are being taught

	Frequency	Percent
Grade R	4	12.9
Grade 1	7	22.6
Grade 2	10	32.3
Grade 3	10	32.3
Total	31	100.0

Table 2 above illustrates the grades that are being taught. There were similar numbers of respondents that are currently teaching grades 2 and 3 ($p = 0.363$).

Table 3: Time spent teaching the different grades

What grade are you teaching currently?	N	Mean	Median	Std. Deviation
Grade R	3	1.4333	.7000	1.35769
Grade 1	5	5.9400	2.0000	10.11276
Grade 2	10	3.2500	1.2500	4.13152
Grade 3	10	2.4100	1.5000	2.29804
Total	28	3.2357	1.2500	4.97045

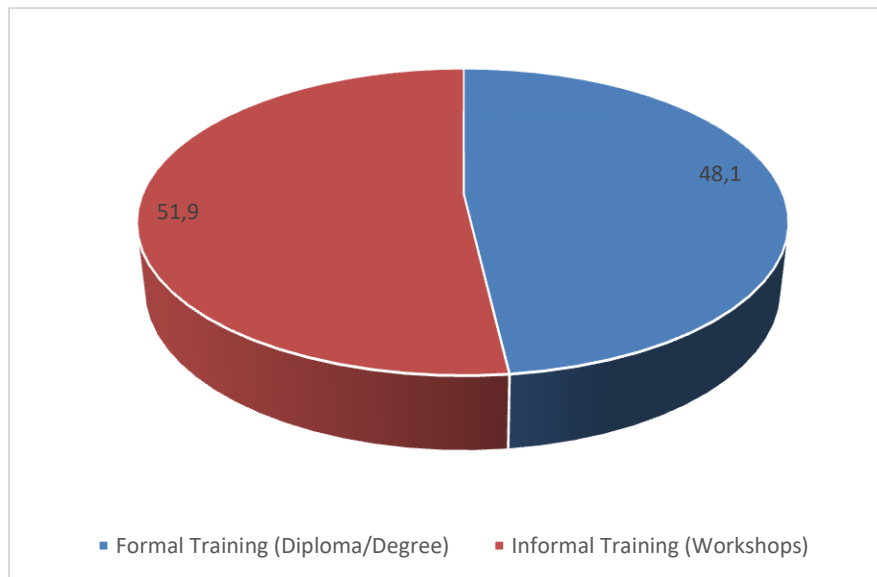
The table above is a summary of the time spent teaching the different grades. The highest average is for Grade 1 with the smallest being for Grade R.

Table 4: Average length of service of the respondents

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Number of years teaching	28	0.50	30.00	10.9179	10.48258

Respondents indicated a minimum of 6 months of teaching experience to a maximum of 30 years with an average of approximately 10 years.

Figure 3: Training in teaching learners with barriers to learning



All the teachers indicated that they had some training in teaching learners with barriers to learning. A slightly higher number of respondents (51.9%) indicated that they received formal training in the form of a Diploma or Degree than (48.1%) that indicated that they received informal training in the form of workshops. Although they were all exposed to some

form of training, teachers indicated that it was insufficient in providing effective support for the learners.

Table 5: Number of learners in your class

What grade are you teaching currently?	N	Mean	Median	Std. Deviation
Grade R	4	60.7500	69.0000	17.17314
Grade 1	6	47.0000	47.0000	8.76356
Grade 2	10	55.9000	60.5000	10.02719
Grade 3	10	59.3000	75.0000	21.58214
Total	30	55.9000	59.0000	15.59255

Table 5 above is a summary of the number of learners there are in each class. The highest average (60.75) is for Grade R and the lowest (47) is for Grade 1. Although the Department of Education aimed at achieving a learner-to-teacher ratio of 40:1 in ordinary primary schools, it is evident at this ratio has not been realised at these schools.

Table 6: Number of learners that experience barriers to learning

What grade are you teaching currently?	N	Mean	Median	Std. Deviation
Grade R	4	3.5000	3.5000	2.08167
Grade 1	5	5.0000	4.0000	2.91548
Grade 2	10	5.1000	5.0000	2.18327
Grade 3	10	11.3000	9.0000	12.58791
Total	29	7.0000	5.0000	8.03119

Learners who experience barriers to learning were identified in every classroom by the teachers, as shown in Table 6 Grade R classes recorded the lowest average (3.5) and Grade 3 had the highest average (11.3). There were an increased number of learners identified with barriers in the later grades. Twice as many learners with barriers were recorded in Grade 3 than there were in Grades 1 and 2 and thrice as many as in Grade R.

When combined with the information from table 5, an average Grade 3 class of 59.3 learners would consist of 19% (11.3) learners who experience barriers to learning.

4.3. Findings and discussions

4.3.1. Quantitative findings

4.3.1.1. The Research Instrument

The research instrument consisted of 45 items, with a level of measurement at a nominal or an ordinal level. The questionnaire was divided into 6 questions which measured various themes as illustrated below:

- 1 Biographical data
- 2 Support Strategies
- 3 Support Network

4.3.1.2. Reliability Statistics

The two most important aspects of precision are **reliability** and **validity**. Reliability is computed by taking several measurements on the same subjects. A reliability coefficient of 0.70 or higher is considered as “acceptable”.

The table below (Table 7) reflects the Cronbach’s alpha score for all the items that constituted the questionnaire.

Table 7: Cronbach’s Alpha for Support Strategies

Reliability Statistics	
Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
0.882	13

Table 8: Cronbach’s Alpha for Support Network

Reliability Statistics	
Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
0.903	7

The reliability scores for all sections exceed the recommended Cronbach’s alpha value. This indicates a degree of acceptable, consistent scoring for these sections of the research.

4.3.1.3. Factor Analysis

Why is factor analysis important?

Factor analysis is a statistical technique whose main goal is data reduction. A typical use of factor analysis is in survey research, where a researcher wishes to represent a number of questions with a small number of hypothetical factors. You need not believe that factors actually exist in order to perform a factor analysis, but in practice the factors are usually interpreted, given names, and spoken of as real things.

The matrix tables is preceded by a summarised table that reflects the results of KMO and Bartlett's Test. The requirement is that Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy should be greater than 0.50 and Bartlett's Test of Sphericity less than 0.05. In all instances, the conditions are satisfied which allows for the factor analysis procedure.

Factor analysis is done only for the Likert scale items. Certain components divided into finer components. This is explained below in the rotated component matrix.

KMO and Bartlett's Test

Table 9: KMO and Bartlett's Test Support Strategies

KMO and Bartlett's Test		
Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.		0.576
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	194.403
	Df	78
	Sig.	0.000

Table 10: KMO and Bartlett's Test Support Network

KMO and Bartlett's Test		
Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.		0.762
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	123.972
	Df	21
	Sig.	0.000

All of the conditions are satisfied for factor analysis.

That is, the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy value should be greater than 0.500 and the Bartlett's Test of Sphericity sig. value should be less than 0.05.

Rotated Component Matrix

Table 11: Rotated Component Matrix for Support Strategies

Support Strategies	Component			
	1	2	3	4
1. Do you use assisted learning, peer-teaching and scaffolding?	0.415	0.147	0.849	-0.166
2. Does teaching to cater for multiple intelligences in the classroom?	0.169	-0.163	0.831	0.397
3. Are Individualised Education Programmes (IEPs) planned for learners who experience barriers to learning?	0.655	0.517	0.208	0.249
4. Is the curriculum content differentiated to address the needs of the learners?	0.880	-0.007	-0.059	0.239
5. Are the teaching methods (multi-level teaching), learning and teaching support material differentiated to address the needs of the learners?	0.707	0.471	0.273	0.091
6. Are learning tasks differentiated?	0.781	0.207	0.044	-0.117
7. Are learning assessments differentiated? (reading the task to the learner, allowing oral response, spelling concessions)	0.741	0.049	0.211	0.296
8. Are concessions provided for learners who require them (e.g. a scribe, extra time for tests, when marking, handwriting concessions are made for learners who experience barriers to learning)	0.610	0.514	0.177	0.267
9. Is there differentiation in the classroom and school environment: physical (e.g. seating arrangements, lighting etc.) and psycho-social (Interpersonal cooperation)?	-0.150	0.437	0.611	-0.154
10. Do learners who experience barriers to learning receive non-standard or modified termly reports?	0.102	0.328	0.337	0.796
11. Do you use technology to benefit learners who experience barriers to learning (video clips, learning apps, word processors)?	0.217	0.723	-0.135	0.340
12. Do learners who experience barriers to learning use assistive devices (e.g. FM systems, Braille translators, augmentative and alternative communication)?	0.243	0.188	-0.231	0.845
13. Do you use the Screening, Identification, Assessment and Support Strategy (SIAS)?	0.187	0.785	0.157	0.120

Table 12: Rotated Component Matrix for Network support

Support Network	Component
	1
1. How often do you receive support from the school management team (SMT)?	0.714
2. Is the support received from the school management team (SMT) adequate?	0.856
3. How often do you receive support from the institutional level support team (ILST) or school based support team (SBST)?	0.816
4. Is the support received from the institutional level support team (ILST) or school based support team (SBST) adequate?	0.839
5. How often do you receive support from the district based support team (DBST)?	0.831
6. Is the support received from the district based support team (DBST) adequate?	0.772
7. How often do you receive support from other relevant stakeholders e.g. parents, psychologists, social workers, occupational therapists, speech therapists, universities and non-government organisations?	0.759

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.

** 1 component extracted.*

As mentioned earlier, factor analysis is a statistical technique whose main goal is data reduction. A typical use of factor analysis is in survey research, where a researcher wishes to represent a number of questions with a small number of hypothetical factors. With reference to the table above:

- The principle component analysis was used as the extraction method, and the rotation method was Varimax with Kaiser Normalization. This is an orthogonal rotation method that minimizes the number of variables that have high loadings on each factor. It simplifies the interpretation of the factors.
- Factor analysis/loading show inter-correlations between variables.
- Items of questions that loaded similarly imply measurement along a similar factor. An examination of the content of items loading at or above 0.5 (and using the

higher or highest loading in instances where items cross-loaded at greater than this value) effectively measured along the various components.

The statements that constituted Support Network loaded perfectly along a single component. This implies that the statements that constituted this section perfectly measured what it set out to measure.

It is noted that the variables that constituted Support Strategies loaded along 4 components (sub-themes). This means that respondents identified different trends within the section. Within the section, the splits are colour coded. Sub-theme 1: Individual curriculum support, sub-theme 2: Holistic approach, sub-theme 3: Reports and assistive devices and sub-theme: 4 Technology and SIAS.

4.3.1.4. Section Analysis

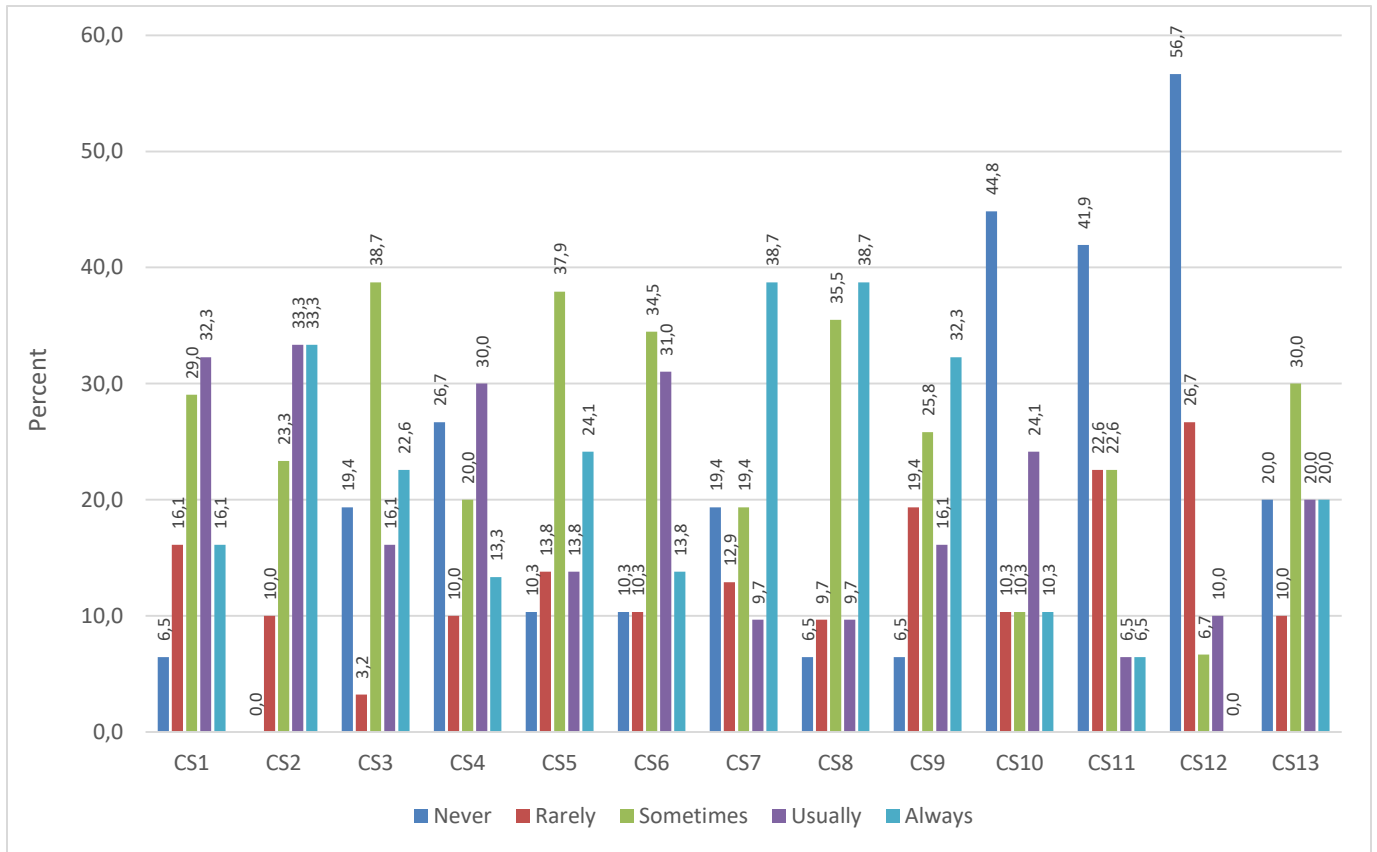
The section that follows analyses the scoring patterns of the respondents per variable per section. The results are first presented using summarised percentages for the variables that constitute each section. Results are then further analysed according to the importance of the statements

Section B - Support Strategies

Table 13: Section Analysis of Support Strategies

		Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Usually	Always	Chi Square
		n (%)	n (%)	n (%)	n (%)	n (%)	p-value
Do you use assisted learning, peer-teaching and scaffolding?	CS1	2(6.5)	5 (16.1)	9 (29.0)	10 (32.3)	5 (16.1)	0.141
Does teaching to cater for multiple intelligences in the classroom?	CS2	0(0.0)	3 (10.0)	7 (23.3)	10 (33.3)	10 (33.3)	0.221
Are Individualised Education Programmes (IEPs) planned for learners who experience barriers to learning?	CS3	6(19.4)	1 (3.2)	12 (38.7)	5 (16.1)	7 (22.6)	0.038*
Is the curriculum content differentiated to address the needs of the learners?	CS4	8 (26.7)	3 (10.0)	6 (20.0)	9 (30.0)	4 (13.3)	0.363
Are the teaching methods (multi-level teaching), learning and teaching support material differentiated to address the needs of the learners?	CS5	3 (10.3)	4 (13.8)	11 (37.9)	4 (13.8)	7 (24.1)	0.117
Are learning tasks differentiated?	CS6	3 (10.3)	3 (10.3)	10 (34.5)	9 (31.0)	4 (13.8)	0.089
Are learning assessments differentiated? (reading the task to the learner, allowing oral response, spelling concessions)	CS7	6 (19.4)	4 (12.9)	6 (19.4)	3 (9.7)	12 (38.7)	0.096
Are concessions provided for learners who require them (e.g. a scribe, extra time for tests, when marking, handwriting concessions are made for learners who experience barriers to learning)	CS8	2 (6.5)	3 (9.7)	11 (35.5)	3 (9.7)	12 (38.7)	0.004*
Is there differentiation in the classroom and school environment: physical (e.g. seating arrangements, lighting etc.) and psycho-social (Interpersonal cooperation)?	CS9	2 (6.5)	6 (19.4)	8 (25.8)	5 (16.1)	10 (32.3)	0.204
Do learners who experience barriers to learning receive non-standard or modified termly reports?	CS10	13 (44.8)	3 (10.3)	3 (10.3)	7 (24.1)	3 (10.3)	0.010*
Do you use technology to benefit learners who experience barriers to learning (video clips, learning apps, word processors)?	CS11	13 (41.9)	7 (22.6)	7 (22.6)	2 (6.5)	2 (6.5)	0.010*
Do learners who experience barriers to learning use assistive devices (e.g. FM systems, Braille translators, augmentative and alternative communication)?	CS12	17 (56.7)	8 (26.7)	2 (6.7)	3 (10.0)	0 (0.0)	0.000*
Do you use the Screening, Identification, Assessment and Support Strategy (SIAS)?	CS13	6 (20.0)	3 (10.0)	9 (30.0)	6 (20.0)	6 (20.0)	0.558

Figure 4: Section Analysis of Support strategies



The following patterns are observed from Table 13 and Figure 4:

- Some statements show (significantly) higher levels of occurrence whilst other levels of frequency are lower
- 3 statements indicate higher levels of low occurrence
- The significance of the differences is tested and shown in the table.

When responding to CS 3: ‘Are Individualised Education Programmes (IEPs) planned for learners who experience barriers to learning?’ respondents indicated a significantly high occurrence (0.038) of the use of IEPs. Respondents further indicated a significantly high occurrence (0.004) of the provision of concessions when responding to CS 8: ‘Are concessions provided for learners who require them (e.g. a scribe, extra time for tests, when marking, handwriting concessions are made for learners who experience barriers to

learning)?' CS 3 and CS 8 were identified in sub-theme 1: Individual curriculum support in the factor analysis.

Significantly high levels of low occurrence were indicated in CS 10: "Do learners who experience barriers to learning receive non-standard or modified termly reports" (0.010), CS 11: "Do you use technology to benefit learners who experience barriers to learning (video clips, learning apps, word processors)?" (0.010) and CS 12: "Do learners who experience barriers to learning use assistive devices (e.g. FM systems, Braille translators, augmentative and alternative communication)?" (0.000). CS 10 and CS 12 were identified in sub-theme 3: Reports and assistive devices and CS 11 was identified in sub-theme: 4 Technology and SIAS of the factor analysis. This is consistent with the schools being quintile 3 schools which are completely dependent of government funding.

To determine whether the scoring patterns per statement were significantly different per option, a chi square test was done. The null hypothesis claims that similar numbers of respondents scored across each option for each statement (one statement at a time). The alternate states that there is a significant difference between the levels of agreement and disagreement.

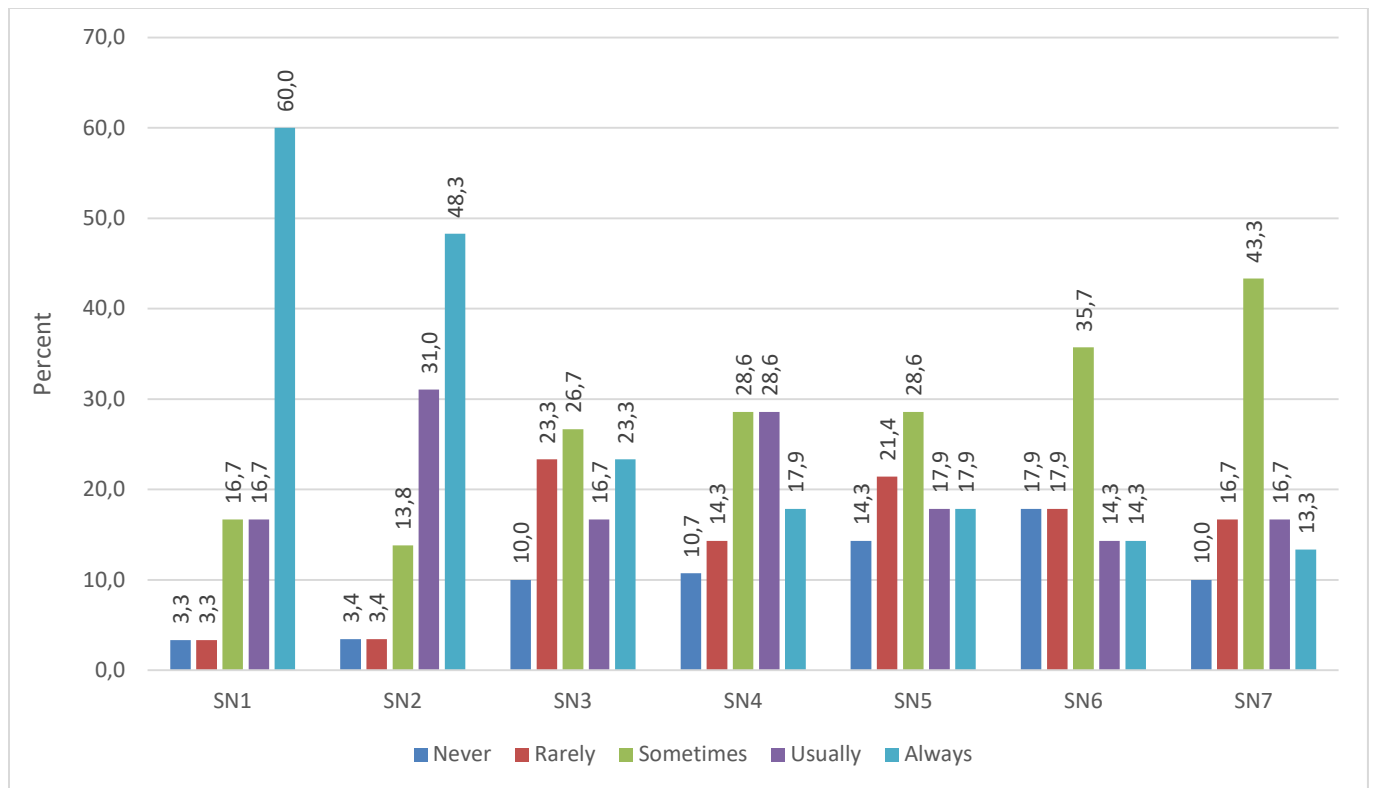
The results are shown in the table (Table 13). The highlighted sig. values (p-values) are less than 0.05 (the level of significance), it implies that the distributions were not similar. That is, the differences between the way respondents scored (Never, Rarely, Sometimes, Usually, Always) were significant.

Section C - Support Network

Table 14: Section Analysis of Support Network

		Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Usually	Always	Chi Square
		n(%)	n(%)	n(%)	n(%)	n(%)	p-value
How often do you receive support from the school management team (SMT)?	SN1	1 (3.3)	1 (3.3)	5 (16.7)	5 (16.7)	18 (60.0)	0.000*
Is the support received from the school management team (SMT) adequate?	SN2	1 (3.4)	1 (3.4)	4 (13.8)	9 (31.0)	14 (48.3)	0.000*
How often do you receive support from the institutional level support team (ILST) or school based support team (SBST)?	SN3	3 (10.0)	7 (23.3)	8 (26.7)	5 (16.7)	7 (23.3)	0.615
Is the support received from the institutional level support team (ILST) or school based support team (SBST) adequate?	SN4	3 (10.7)	4 (14.3)	8 (28.6)	8 (28.6)	5 (17.9)	0.436
How often do you receive support from the district based support team (DBST)?	SN5	4 (14.3)	6 (21.4)	8 (28.6)	5 (17.9)	5 (17.9)	0.801
Is the support received from the district based support team (DBST) adequate?	SN6	5 (17.9)	5 (17.9)	10 (35.7)	4 (14.3)	4 (14.3)	0.343
How often do you receive support from other relevant stakeholders e.g. parents, psychologists, social workers, occupational therapists, speech therapists, universities and non-government organisations?	SN7	3 (10.0)	5 (16.7)	13 (43.3)	5 (16.7)	4 (13.3)	0.031*

Figure 5: Section Analysis of Support Network



As illustrated in Table 14 and Figure 5, respondents indicated high levels of high occurrence of adequate support received from the SMT when responding to SN 1: ‘How often do you receive support from the school management team (SMT)?’ (0.000) and SN 2: “Is the support received from the school management team (SMT) adequate?” (0.000) High levels of respondents receiving support from stakeholders “sometimes” was indicated when asked SN 7: “How often do you receive support from other relevant stakeholders e.g. parents, psychologists, social workers, occupational therapists, speech therapists, universities and non-government organisations?” (0.021).

4.3.1.5. Crosstabulations

The traditional approach to reporting a result requires a statement of statistical significance. A **p-value** is generated from a **test statistic**. A significant result is indicated with " $p < 0.05$ ".

A second Chi square test was performed to determine whether there was a statistically significant relationship between the variables (rows vs columns).

The table summarises the results of the chi square tests. All values p-values more than 0.05 do not have a significant relationship. Tables (15 to 27) indicate significant relationships that were identified.

Table 15: Relationship between “Do you use assisted learning, peer-teaching and scaffolding?” and “Qualification”

Do you use assisted learning, peer-teaching and scaffolding?					
	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Usually	Always
Qualification	n (%)	n (%)	n (%)	n (%)	n (%)
Teaching Diploma (M+3)	0 (0,0)	0 (0,0)	1 (20,0)	3 (60,0)	1 (20,0)
Teaching Diploma (M+4)	0 (0,0)	0 (0,0)	6 (75,0)	1 (12,5)	1 (12,5)
Teaching Degree	1 (9,1)	3 (27,3)	0 (0,0)	4 (36,4)	3 (27,3)
Honours Degree	0 (0,0)	2 (40,0)	1 (20,0)	2 (40,0)	0 (0,0)

The p-value between “Do you use assisted learning, peer-teaching and scaffolding?” and “Qualification” is 0.032. This means that there is a significant relationship between the variables. That is, the qualification of the respondent did play a significant role in terms of how respondents used the various techniques. Teachers with the lower qualification tended to use the strategies more frequently.

Table 16: Relationship between “Are Individualised Education Programmes (IEPs) planned for learners who experience barriers to learning?” and “Qualification”

Are Individualised Education Programmes (IEPs) planned for learners who experience barriers to learning?”				
	Never	Sometimes	Usually	Always
Qualification	n (%)	n (%)	n (%)	n (%)
Teaching Diploma (M+3)	0 (0,0)	3(60,0)	0 (0,0)	2(40,0)
Teaching Diploma (M+4)	4 (50,0)	3 (37,5)	1 (12,5)	0 (0,0)
Teaching Degree	0 (0,0)	5 (45,5)	2 (18,2)	4(36,4)
Honours Degree	2 (40,0)	1 (20,0)	2 (40,0)	0 (0,0)

Table 16 has a p-value of 0.047 which indicates that there is a significant relationship between “Are Individualised Education Programmes (IEPs) planned for learners who experience barriers to learning?” and “Qualification”. It shows that teachers with teaching degrees plan IEPs more frequently.

Table 17: Relationship between “Are learning assessments differentiated? (reading the task to the learner, allowing oral response, spelling concessions)” and “Qualification”

Are learning assessments differentiated? (reading the task to the learner, allowing oral response, spelling concessions)					
	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Usually	Always
Qualification	n (%)	n (%)	n (%)	n (%)	n (%)
Teaching Diploma (M+3)	3 (60,0)	1 (20,0)	0 (0,0)	0 (0,0)	1 (20,0)
Teaching Diploma (M+4)	1 (12,5)	1 (12,5)	3 (37,5)	0 (0,0)	3 (37,5)
Teaching Degree	0 (0,0)	2 (18,2)	2 (18,2)	0 (0,0)	7 (63,6)
Honours Degree	2 (40,0)	0 (0,0)	0 (0,0)	3 (60,0)	0 (0,0)

The p-value of 0.003 indicates that there is a significant relationship between “Are learning assessments differentiated? (reading the task to the learner, allowing oral response, spelling concessions)” and “Qualification”. Teachers with Teaching Degrees tend to differentiate learning assessments more frequently.

Table 18: Relationship between “How often do you receive support from the school management team (SMT)?” and “Qualification”

How often do you receive support from the school management team (SMT)?					
	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Usually	Always
Qualification	n (%)	n (%)	n (%)	n (%)	n (%)
Teaching Diploma (M+3)	0 (0,0)	0 (0,0)	1 (20,0)	0 (0,0)	4 (80,0)
Teaching Diploma (M+4)	1 (12,5)	1 (12,5)	4 (50,0)	1 (12,5)	1 (12,5)
Teaching Degree	0 (0,0)	0 (0,0)	0 (0,0)	1 (9,1)	10 (90,0)
Honours Degree	0 (0,0)	0 (0,0)	0 (0,0)	2 (50,0)	2 (50,0)

Table 18 indicated a significant relationship between “How often do you receive support from the school management team (SMT)?” and “Qualification” with a p-value of 0.004. Teachers with Teaching Degrees were inclined to receive support from the school management team more often.

Table 19: Relationship between “Are Individualised Education Programmes (IEPs) planned for learners who experience barriers to learning?” and “Age”

Are Individualised Education Programmes (IEPs) planned for learners who experience barriers to learning?					
	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Usually	Always
Age	n (%)	n (%)	n (%)	n (%)	n (%)
< 25	0 (0,0)	0 (0,0)	1 (25,0)	0 (0,0)	3 (75,0)
25 – 35	0 (0,0)	0 (0,0)	3 (37,5)	4 (50,0)	1 (12,5)
36 – 45	6 (54,5)	1 (12,5)	4 (50,0)	1 (12,5)	2 (25,0)
46 – 55	6 (19,4)	0 (0,0)	4 (36,4)	0 (0,0)	1 (9,1)

The p-value between “Are Individualised Education Programmes (IEPs) planned for learners who experience barriers to learning?” and “Age” is 0.005. This means that there is a significant relationship between the variables. That is, the age of the respondent did play a significant role in terms of how respondents used the various techniques. Teachers aged 36-45 were less inclined to plan IEPs for learners who experience barriers to learning.

Table 20: Relationship between “Do learners who experience barriers to learning receive non-standard or modified termly reports?” and “Age”

Do learners who experience barriers to learning receive non-standard or modified termly reports?					
	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Usually	Always
Age	n (%)	n (%)	n (%)	n (%)	n (%)
< 25	1 (25,0)	0 (0,0)	0 (0,0)	2 (50,0)	1 (25,0)
25 – 35	3 (42,9)	2 (28,6)	0 (0,0)	1 (14,3)	1 (14,3)
36 – 45	1(12,5)	0 (0,0)	3 (37,5)	3 (37,5)	1(12,5)
46 – 55	8 (80,0)	1 (10,0)	0 (0,0)	1 (10,0)	0 (0,0)

Table 20 has a p-value of 0.027 which indicates that there is a significant relationship between “Do learners who experience barriers to learning receive non-standard or modified termly reports?” and “Age.” It shows that teachers between the ages of 46 - 55 were less inclined to provide modified termly reports for learners who experience barriers to learning.

Table 21: Relationship between “Are learning assessments differentiated? (reading the task to the learner, allowing oral response, spelling concessions)” and “Age”

Are learning assessments differentiated? (reading the task to the learner, allowing oral response, spelling concessions)					
	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Usually	Always
Age	n (%)	n (%)	n (%)	n (%)	n (%)
< 25	0 (0,0)	0 (0,0)	1 (25,0)	0 (0,0)	3 (75,0)
25 – 35	0 (0,0)	2 (25,0)	0 (0,0)	2 (25,0)	4 (50,0)
36 – 45	1(12,5)	0 (0,0)	2 (25,0)	1 (12,5)	4 (50,0)
46 – 55	5 (45,5)	2 (18,2)	3 (27,3)	0 (0,0)	1 (9,1)

Table 21 indicated a significant relationship between “Are learning assessments differentiated? (reading the task to the learner, allowing oral response, spelling concessions)?” and “Age” with a p-value of 0.046. Teachers between the ages of 46 - 55 were less inclined to differentiate learner assessments by providing concessions for learners.

Table 22: Relationship between “Do you use the Screening, Identification, Assessment and Support Strategy (SIAS)?” and “Age”

Do you use the Screening, Identification, Assessment and Support Strategy (SIAS)?					
	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Usually	Always
Age	n (%)	n (%)	n (%)	n (%)	n (%)
< 25	0 (0,0)	1 (25,0)	1 (25,0)	1 (25,0)	1 (25,0)
25 – 35	0 (0,0)	0 (0,0)	2 (25,0)	2 (25,0)	4 (50,0)
36 – 45	1 (14,3)	0 (0,0)	3 (42,9)	3 (42,9)	0 (0,0)
46 – 55	5 (45,5)	2 (18,2)	3 (27,3)	0 (0,0)	1 (9,1)

The p-value between “Do you use the Screening, Identification, Assessment and Support Strategy (SIAS)?” and “Age” is 0.046. This means that there is a significant relationship between the variables. That is, the age of the respondent did play a significant role in terms of how respondents used the various techniques. Teachers aged 46 - 55 were less inclined to use SIAS.

Table 23: Relationship between “Do you use the Screening, Identification, Assessment and Support Strategy (SIAS)?” and “School”

Do you use the Screening, Identification, Assessment and Support Strategy (SIAS)?					
	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Usually	Always
School	n (%)	n (%)	n (%)	n (%)	n (%)
School 1	1 (5,0)	1 (5,0)	8 (4,0)	6 (30,0)	4 (20,0)
School 2	5 (50,0)	2 (20,0)	1 (10,0)	0 (0,0)	2 (20,0)

Table 23 indicated a significant relationship between “Do you use the Screening, Identification, Assessment and Support Strategy (SIAS)?” and “School” with a p-value of 0.006. School 1 tended to use SIAS more frequently. It is also evident that School 2 was less inclined to use SIAS.

Table 24: Relationship between “How often do you receive support from the school management team (SMT)?” and “School”

How often do you receive support from the school management team (SMT)?					
	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Usually	Always
School	n (%)	n (%)	n (%)	n (%)	n (%)
School 1	0 (0,0)	0 (0,0)	1 (5,3)	4 (21,1)	14 (73,7)
School 2	1 (9,1)	1 (9,1)	4 (36,4)	1 (9,1)	4 (36,4)

Table 24 has a p-value of 0.019 which indicates that there is a significant relationship between “How often do you receive support from the school management team (SMT)?” and “School”. It shows that school 1 tended to receive support from the SMT frequently.

Table 25: Relationship between “Is the support received from the school management team (SMT) adequate?” and “School”

Is the support received from the school management team (SMT) adequate?					
	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Usually	Always
School	n (%)	n (%)	n (%)	n (%)	n (%)
School 1	0 (0,0)	0 (0,0)	0 (0,0)	7 (36,8)	12 (63,2)
School 2	1 (10,0)	1 (10,0)	4 (40,0)	2 (20,0)	2 (20,0)

The p-value between “Is the support received from the school management team (SMT) adequate?” and “School” is 0.002. This means that there is a significant relationship between the variables. That is, School 1 received adequate support from the SMT frequently.

Table 26: Relationship between “How often do you receive support from the institutional level support team (ILST) or school based support team (SBST)?” and “School”

How often do you receive support from the institutional level support team (ILST) or school based support team (SBST)?					
	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Usually	Always
School	n (%)	n (%)	n (%)	n (%)	n (%)
School 1	0 (0,0)	2 (10,5)	6 (31,6)	5 (26,3)	6 (31,6)
School 2	3 (27,3)	5 (45,5)	2 (18,2)	0 (0,0)	1 (9,1)

0,007

Table 26 indicated a significant relationship between “How often do you receive support from the institutional level support team (ILST) or school based support team (SBST)?” and “School” with a p-value of 0.007. School 1 tended to receive support from the ILST frequently. School 2 was less inclined to receive support from the ILST.

Table 27: Relationship between “Is the support received from the institutional level support team (ILST) or school based support team (SBST) adequate?” and “School”

Is the support received from the institutional level support team (ILST) or school based support team (SBST) adequate?					
	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Usually	Always
School	n (%)	n (%)	n (%)	n (%)	n (%)
School 1	0 (0,0)	1 (5,3)	6 (31,6)	8 (42,1)	4 (21,1)
School 2	3 (33,3)	3 (33,3)	2 (22,2)	0 (0,0)	1 (11,1)

The p-value between “Is the support received from the institutional level support team (ILST) or school based support team (SBST) adequate?” and “School” is 0.004. This means that there is a significant relationship between the variables. That is, the school of the respondent did play a significant role in terms of the support that was received from the ILST. School 1 was more inclined to receive adequate support from the ILST. However the

table indicates that teachers from School 2 were less inclined to receive adequate support from the ILST.

4.3.1.6. Correlations

Bivariate correlation was also performed on the (ordinal) data. The results indicate the following patterns.

Positive values indicate a directly proportional relationship between the variables and a negative value indicates an inverse relationship. All significant relationships are indicated by a * or ** where * indicates * that correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed) and ** indicates that that correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed). All the correlations identified in this study had positive values.

Table 28: Correlation 1 – Classroom Strategies

	Do you use assisted learning, peer-teaching and scaffolding?	Does teaching to cater for multiple intelligences in the classroom?	Are Individualised Education Programmes (IEPs) planned for learners who experience barriers to learning?	Is the curriculum content differentiated to address the needs of the learners?	Are the teaching methods (multi-level teaching), learning and teaching support material differentiated to address the needs of the learners?
Does teaching to cater for multiple intelligences in the classroom?	.677**	1.000			
Are Individualised Education Programmes (IEPs) planned for learners who experience barriers to learning?	.612**	.385*	1.000		
Is the curriculum content differentiated to address the needs of the learners?	0.262	0.096	.612**	1.000	
Are the teaching methods (multi-level teaching), learning and teaching support material differentiated to address the needs of the learners?	.370*	0.124	.501**	.459*	1.000
Are learning tasks differentiated?	0.285	0.031	.460*	.505**	.278**
Are learning assessments differentiated? (reading the task to the learner, allowing oral response, spelling concessions)	.382*	.413*	.584**	.460*	.396*
Are concessions provided for learners who require them (e.g. a scribe, extra time for tests, when marking, handwriting concessions are made for learners who experience barriers to learning)	.403*	0.255	.614**	.584**	.701**
Is there differentiation in the classroom and school environment: physical (e.g. seating arrangements, lighting etc.) and psycho-social (Interpersonal cooperation)?	.377*	0.190	0.272	.614**	0.248
Do learners who experience barriers to learning receive non-standard or modified termly reports?	.406*	.527**	.493**	0.272	0.227

The correlation value between “Do you use assisted learning, peer-teaching and scaffolding?” and “Does teaching to cater for multiple intelligences in the classroom?” is .677. This is a directly related proportionality. Respondents indicate that the more teaching caters for multiple intelligence, more assisted learning, peer-teaching and scaffolding is used, and vice versa. Similar correlations have been identified between “Do you use assisted learning, peer-teaching and scaffolding?” and “Are Individualised Education Programmes (IEPs) planned for learners who experience barriers to learning?”(.612), “Are the teaching methods (multi-level teaching), learning and teaching support material differentiated to address the needs of the learners?”(.370), “Are learning assessments differentiated? (reading the task to the learner, allowing oral response, spelling concessions)”(.382), “Are concessions provided for learners who require them (e.g. a scribe, extra time for tests, when marking, handwriting concessions are made for learners who experience barriers to learning)”(.403), “Do learners who experience barriers to learning receive non-standard or modified termly reports?”(.377) and “Is there differentiation in the classroom and school environment: physical (e.g. seating arrangements, lighting etc.) and psycho-social (Interpersonal cooperation)?” (.406).

Table 29 indicates correlations between classroom strategies with other classroom strategies as well as support networks. For example, the correlation value between classroom strategies, “Do you use technology to benefit learners who experience barriers to learning (video clips, learning apps, word processors)?” and “Are Individualised Education Programmes (IEPs) planned for learners who experience barriers to learning?” is .462. Respondents indicated that the more technology is used, more IEPs are planned to address the needs of learners with barriers to learning.

An example of the positive correlation between classroom strategies and support network is “Are learning assessments differentiated? (reading the task to the learner, allowing oral response, spelling concessions)” and “How often do you receive support from the district based support team (DBST)?” which has a correlation value of (.507).

Table 29: Correlation 2 – Classroom strategy and support network

	Are Individualised Education Programmes (IEPs) planned for learners who experience barriers to learning	Is the curriculum content differentiated to address the needs of the learners?	Are the teaching methods (multi-level teaching), learning and teaching support material differentiated to address the needs of the learners?	Are learning assessments differentiated? (reading the task to the learner, allowing oral response, spelling concessions)	Are concessions provided for learners who require them (e.g. a scribe, extra time for tests, when marking, handwriting concessions are made for learners who experience barriers to learning)
Do you use technology to benefit learners who experience barriers to learning (video clips, learning apps, word processors)?	.462**	0.272	.381*	0.322	.380*
Do learners who experience barriers to learning use assistive devices (e.g. FM systems, Braille translators, augmentative and alternative communication)?	0.304	0.355	0.299	0.335	0.265
Do you use the Screening, Identification, Assessment and Support Strategy (SIAS)?	.711**	0.299	.386*	.436*	.499**
How often do you receive support from the school management team (SMT)?	.588**	0.365	0.364	0.165	0.261
Is the support received from the school management team (SMT) adequate?	.750**	.580**	.484*	.437*	.471**
How often do you receive support from the institutional level support team (ILST) or school based support team (SBST)?	.439*	0.203	.407*	0.233	0.287
Is the support received from the institutional level support team (ILST) or school based support team (SBST) adequate?	0.363	0.267	.606**	0.234	0.362
How often do you receive support from the district based support team (DBST)?	.640**	.480*	.420*	.507**	.419*
Is the support received from the district based support team (DBST) adequate?	.456*	.579**	0.326	.532**	0.311
How often do you receive support from other relevant stakeholders?	0.336	.499**	.512**	.421**	0.332

Table 30: Correlation 3- Support network and classroom strategy

	Do learners who experience barriers to learning receive non-standard or modified termly reports?	Do you use technology to benefit learners who experience barriers to learning (video clips, learning apps, word processors)?	Do learners who experience barriers to learning use assistive devices (e.g. FM systems, Braille translators, augmentative and alternative communication)?	Do you use the Screening, Identification, Assessment and Support Strategy (SIAS)?	How often do you receive support from the school management team (SMT)?
Do you use technology to benefit learners who experience barriers to learning (video clips, learning apps, word processors)?	.387*	1.000			
Do learners who experience barriers to learning use assistive devices (e.g. FM systems, Braille translators, augmentative and alternative communication)?	.631**	.449*	1.000		
Do you use the Screening, Identification, Assessment and Support Strategy (SIAS)?	0.252	.508**	0.164	1.000	
How often do you receive support from the school management team (SMT)?	0.346	0.317	0.219	.488**	1.000
Is the support received from the school management team (SMT) adequate?	.429*	.461*	.391*	.729**	.638**
How often do you receive support from the institutional level support team (ILST) or school based support team (SBST)?	0.234	0.277	.430*	.545**	.599**
Is the support received from the institutional level support team (ILST) or school based support team (SBST) adequate?	0.066	0.338	0.264	.425*	.466*
How often do you receive support from the district based support team (DBST)?	.603**	.455*	.498**	.629**	.560**
Is the support received from the district based support team (DBST) adequate?	.407*	0.324	.588**	.426*	0.297
How often do you receive support from other relevant stakeholders e.g. parents, psychologists, social workers, occupational therapists, speech therapists, universities and non-government organisations?	.473*	0.298	.458*	.397*	.402*

Table 31: Correlation 4 - Support network

	Is the support received from the school management team (SMT) adequate?	How often do you receive support from the institutional level support team (ILST) or school based support team (SBST)?	Is the support received from the institutional level support team (ILST) or school based support team (SBST) adequate?	How often do you receive support from the district based support team (DBST)?	Is the support received from the district based support team (DBST) adequate?
Is the support received from the school management team (SMT) adequate?	1.000				
How often do you receive support from the institutional level support team (ILST) or school based support team (SBST)?	.610**	1.000			
Is the support received from the institutional level support team (ILST) or school based support team (SBST) adequate?	.616**	.852**	1.000		
How often do you receive support from the district based support team (DBST)?	.630**	.641**	.486*	1.000	
Is the support received from the district based support team (DBST) adequate?	.558**	.426*	.387*	.839**	1.000
How often do you receive support from other relevant stakeholders e.g. parents, psychologists, social workers, occupational therapists, speech therapists, universities and non-government organisations?	.474**	.546**	.568**	.660**	.694**

Correlations indicated in tables 30 and 31 are between support networks with other support networks. For example “Is the support received from the school management team (SMT) adequate?” and “Is the support received from the institutional level support team (ILST) or school based support team (SBST) adequate?” has a correlation value of (.616). The more adequate the support from the SMT, more adequate support is received from the SBST.

4.4. Qualitative findings

The focus group interviews consisted of seven questions. Five out of a total population of twenty teachers participated in the interview from School 1 and eight out of eleven teachers from School 2. The findings of the qualitative study will be discussed in themes and subthemes that emerged from the focus group interviews.

Barriers to learning

In the questionnaire, participants indicated the number of learners that experienced barriers to learning. In the focus group interview, participants were asked about the various barriers to learning that their learners experienced and how they supported these learners. Both intrinsic and extrinsic barriers were identified. Some of the barriers were common to both schools whereas others were specific to each school.

Environment / socio economic / psychosocial

Teachers identified the environmental and socio economic status of the learners as barriers to their learning. They reported that the psycho-social problems that learners experienced affected their learning and the learners' behaviour.

Teacher 3 (School 1): I personally think that they are environmentally affected because they come from an underprivileged environment, sometimes they come from very abusive families. So obviously that child cannot cope at school. They are very...they fight a lot. They steal things, all this stuff and those children, most of them come from underprivileged families. I think that this really affects them. And there's nothing we can change about this.

Teacher 2 (School 2): I think one is the economic background. Most of them come from poor economic backgrounds

Language

School 1 identified language as a barrier experienced by their learners and the teachers. The language of learning and teaching in the foundation phase can be provided in the learner's home language however at this English medium school these learners do not have the opportunity to be taught in their mother tongue.

Teacher 1 (School 2): *The main barrier here is the language. This is an English medium school. The children are isiZulu speaking mainly...*

We are English speaking and don't understand Zulu very well.

Teacher 3 (School 2): *Children who come from schools that use Zulu as a medium of instruction have a problem understanding English.*

Teacher 8 (School 2): *The main one is the language. It's actually hard with the language for us to teach where you get children who do not understand what you are trying to tell them.*

Curriculum

The pace of the curriculum posed as a barrier. From the responses of the teachers, it was evident that the curriculum was not differentiated and adapted to the level of the learners.

Teacher 6 (School 2): *My problem is the curriculum itself. The CAPS curriculum is a bit too fast paced. In the previous, in the traditional system the concepts like especially in mathematics the number concepts it was spread out throughout the year so we spent plenty of time consolidating concepts and we could do justice to them and the children were well prepared before we move on. Now with the CAPS it is so fast paced you are expected to finish all those concepts within the term.*

Teacher 1 (School 2): *CAPS does not cater for these learners.*

Unidentified Barriers

There were barriers that teachers could describe but were unable to identify. They were unsure of what was the cause or diagnosis of the problem.

Teacher 1 (School1): You can talk to that child and he will understand for that time and then you'll find that ...I don't know what you call that I don't know what symptoms he has but I don't know what diagnosis he has but he will be running around the class and you know not normal behaviour for a child.

I don't know what they call it but he writes backwards. Even if he cannot copy something properly on the board....

Teacher 2 (School 1): This child she really doesn't do anything in class. She has the potential maybe to do well but she just doesn't. She walks around the class. I gave her a pencil. She didn't have a pencil. She just holds the pencil she doesn't want to write.

Then I have another learner who just doesn't do anything. He sits. He can have the book. He can have all the resources right there by him but he will never do anything. If you talk to him he will just stare at your face. Like blankly. I even changed his place. I put him right at the front but there is still no difference.

Teacher 4 (School 1): They don't have any interest. You can call them in front to explain whatever. If I give them an activity a few hours they are like playing, they look (over) around, borrowing pencils, sharpen the pencils. Even there okay they look on the board to do but still it takes time. I don't know what's wrong. If I go to the desk and ask him why ... do your work. When I take my eyes away from them if I go back there, they are playing. So I don't know what's wrong.

Classroom support strategies

After providing examples of the barriers the learners presented they explained how they supported these learners. Teachers at both the schools address the barriers by providing learners with extra time and individual attention where possible. They use code-switching and learners' peers as interpreters to address the language barrier. It is evident from the examples that were provided that the teachers do not use the strategies provided by the DoE although they indicated in the questionnaire that they do use those strategies.

Teachers were unfamiliar with the strategies on multi-level teaching and differentiation and answered the questionnaire based on their interpretation of the strategies. Further, their interpretation of an Individual Educational Programme (IEP) was providing individual attention and extra time for a learner and did not have an actual programme that was designed for the specific learner. Strategies used by the teachers are just what they try but are not structured or even informed by a proper diagnosis of the problem. The strategies that the teachers indicated that they use in the questionnaire are not used consistently and have not been effective in addressing barriers that the learners experience. The statements of the teachers that follow provide examples of how they support learners in the classroom. Teachers also indicated that the strategies that they use are not effective.

Teacher 1 (School 1): *But we try to accommodate those children because we have been taught about literacy and learning and as teachers we try to accommodate them but I don't think that we have come to a level that we can actually assist them properly but we try and do our best.*

Teacher 4 (School 1): *In my class I just call them. Those that have that problem. They must sit here with me. So I always tell them do your work, how to write, all the time I have to be after them.*

Teacher 2 (School 2): *So we try and keep them in after school, give them maybe extra work and try and get in touch with parents to know exactly if there is family support...*

Teacher 3 (School 2): *I just give a remedial, extra time to explain and code switch.*

Teacher 4 (School 2): *I think it's pretty much the same in every classroom. But we do have remedial classes for the slow learners for reading and maths.*

Support networks

Parents

Lack of support from parents was a common barrier at both schools. Parents were not available to meet with teachers regarding the problems that their children had at school. Some parents did not live with the child who was cared for by a grandparent. Parents did not ensure that support was provided at home by assisting children with their homework. Considering the socio-background of this community some parents were reported to be unable to assist the child due to a poor literacy level. Other parents were unable to accept that their child had difficulties learning. They tended to blame the teachers and the school for the child not being able to perform well. Parents failed to communicate important information like the child being on medication. Teachers reported that they found learners were sleeping in class every day only to find out from a sibling eventually that the learner is on medication.

Teacher 2 (School 2): *Trying to speak to parents and explain to them the importance of speaking to their children in English because it will help them but sometimes parents are set in their ways as well and do not want to change.*

Teacher 7 (School 2): *In my class most of the learners they can't read properly. It's a grade 1 class. And when I give them homework they don't do the homework. The parents come home late. Coming home tired and they are very young. Their parents are very young. They don't care about their children. Grannies take care of the learners and grannies can't read. They don't know English. So they have a problem, our learners. They are willing to learn but they don't have that support at home.*

Teacher 8 (School 2): *And just to add on that with the parent issue. Some of the parents can't even read themselves so how would they be able to help their children at home with their homework so it all the same things.*

Teacher 2 (School 1): *...the parent she feels that it's the fault of the teacher that the child is not doing well so she had to change schools because she believed that the child is a bright learner.*

Teacher 3 (School 1): *Like even when we try to speak to their parents sometimes you wrote maybe 10 letters but they don't come to school. Whatever you try even if you are trying to phone them, they can promise you that okay its fine mam I'll come tomorrow then you'll find that they are not coming.*

As these teachers explain, that the lack of co-operation from the parents pose as huge barrier to getting the support that the learner needs.

SMT and SBST

Both schools indicated that they receive adequate support from the SMTs at the school. School 1 indicated that they had an effective SBST that provided support whenever they requested it. School 2 did not have a proper SBST established. The following response explains the situation at the school.

Teacher 1 (School 2): *Not a fully functioning school based support team. I'm the school based support team, on my own. It's true.... It's only in the last meeting that I went to where we were told that management actually forms the school based support team.*

I don't think I have the capability to deal with the issues properly. I have a class. I have a full teaching load. All I do is so far ...I have been assisting the educators in filling in the form and submitting and things like that. The fact of the matter is that none of us here are trained to deal with these issues. We are educators and we do not know much when it comes to psychological problems and things like that. So it's like throwing us into the deep end and expecting us to take the lead from there. It's not very fair on us because we all have our own work to do in school now you expect us to become psychologists, nurses, doctors, therapists and everything else at the same

time. And I really feel it's just a matter of department trying to shift the work onto the level 1 teachers which is what is what seems to happen from every department, everybody expects the teachers to take on the work. We have not been trained to do so. So psychological services should take on the work because that's what they are supposed to be there for.

DBST

Teachers from School 1 could not comment on support received from the DBST because they could not recall receiving any assistance from the district. School 2 did receive support from the DBST however they were not satisfied with the support that they received.

Teacher 1 (School 2): They assessed a few children and made a few recommendations and it ends there. There is no such thing as they come and do a follow up and speak to the teacher and say this is what maybe you should try and whether it's workingNo. like I said with the example of (Learner's name). The report came that the child should go on Ritalin. I gave the letter to the parent. And it ended there.

Training

Although all the teachers who completed the questionnaire indicated that they received formal training (Degree/ Diploma) or informal training (workshops) in addressing barriers to learning, teachers revealed in the interviews that the training they received was ineffective and inadequate to provide support to the learners in their classrooms.

This was prevalent at both schools. It was the sentiments of all the teachers and is summed up in the comments by the teachers below.

Teacher 1 (School 2): There is no training. There's no support offered. We are told we are supposed to now have inclusive education, we are supposed to have these learners in our class. But there is no support structure, no training of

any sort. So all these things are just handed down to us with no support structure at all.

Teacher 1 (School 2): we need intensive training. Not just a training session...maybe a day or even a few hours which they can record and say that we had training. I think a lot of workshops and training which is done for our teachers is just a matter of records to say we had a workshop.

Teacher 3 (School 2): Like she said, we need training...Inclusive training.

Lack of Communication

SIAS and Department Guidelines

When asked about SIAS and Guidelines teachers were unaware of these. Teacher once again answered based on their interpretation of the strategies but had no clear understanding of the documents and were unable to provide details about how it is implemented. SIAS was referred to as “those forms that we fill” and a teacher that attended SIAS training reported that it was on how to fill the forms. There was no clear communication on how to implement the strategies that were developed. Teachers at School 1 indicated no knowledge of SIAS.

Teacher 1 (School 2): Only when I went to the workshop this term I think ...the last term, that I knew that we could refer learners who presented other problems, other than learning difficulties. We were not aware of that before because we were not told about it previously. And even with that when the child has a problem, we can't be expected to keep that learner in school because I do know of another learner who has been referred and the child was still left here.

We don't even have the proper SIAS forms. The forms that came from psychological services, the workshop that we attended was in such a bad condition. I had pages missing, I had pages repeated in the same document,

parts of the pages cut-off. So far there's been no proper workshop even with regard to SIAS.

Support and referral procedures

Teachers were confused about the support structures that they had to establish within the school as well as the role of these structures. They were also not clear about the support that are available to them from the District and other stakeholders. They received instructions from the Superintendent of Education (SEM) to refer learners to the full service school in the district however at a training session on SIAS they were instructed to refer learners to a special school and not to the full service school. The teachers were not aware of the different levels of support that were provided at the different types of schools and that special schools provided support for learners who require high levels of support. It was also evident that there was no clear criteria on which the decision to refer learners were based. There was no proper diagnosis of the learner's problem and no evidence of sound interventions before the decision to refer the child out of the school.

Teacher 4 (School 2): They said we must apply for them to special schools not to (Full service school). It's a full service school for their children only.

Teacher 1 (School 2): That doesn't make sense to us because Mr. (Name of SEM) told us that these children were supposed to be sent to (Full service school).

Teacher 4 (School 2): They said we must observe the child in the first term and then we must continue filling this form until parents and teachers decide to refer...but NOT to (Full service school). They said we must send to special school not (Full service school).

Remedial and Special Teachers

It is now 16 years since Education White Paper 6 was published and teachers still were of the belief that children who experience barriers to learning should be removed from their classrooms and taught in a special or remedial class. This was evident at both the schools. The rationale behind Inclusive Education and the human rights issues were not communicated to these teachers and were not understood by them.

Teacher 6 (School 2): I think we need remedial specialist where the children that are having barriers to learning go. They should be pulled out of the classroom and helped by the remedial specialist and once they are able to get back into mainstream. This remedial teacher has more time, more personal contact with the learner and she is better equipped to deal with these learners.

Teacher 3 (School 1): And another thing this is a mainstream school so we don't have a special class like in other school maybe in grade 1 they have one special class and grade 2 they have another special class all that stuff and we don't have such things in our school.

4.5. Discussion

In Chapter 2 the underpinning theory of the study, Bronfenbrenner's bioecological model, was introduced and discussed. The findings of the study are discussed according to the systems identified in the theory.

Microsystems

The following systems are at the micro-level which consists of a child's home and school.

4.5.1. Lack of parental involvement and support at home

Findings of the study showed that learners lacked support from their parents. Teachers attempted to contact parents repeatedly but they would not respond. Some parents do respond but have difficulties accepting that their child has a problem. In other cases parents

are unable to assist the school due to their own low literacy level. Some learners live with a grandparent who also lacks the ability to assist the learner with homework. Teachers reported regular absenteeism from school with no explanation from home. At times learners would come to school and fall asleep in class regularly because they are on medication which is further information that the parent fails to provide to the school. Similar findings were reported in previous studies (Geldenhuys, 2013; Mahlo, 2017)

4.5.2. Identification of barriers

Teachers were able to observe that the learners presented with difficulties in learning. They were however unable to identify the specific barrier. They were able to describe the problems in the focus group interviews but indicated that they did not know what the problem was. It is an important skill for teachers to possess. In order to provide appropriate and effective support, teachers have to know what the actual problem is. Teachers are unable to identify learning barriers accurately because they were not exposed to working with the various barriers in their pre-service training (Engelbrecht, 2015).

4.5.3. Classroom Support

The findings in the study indicate that teachers are using assisted learning, peer teaching and scaffolding in the classroom. They also cater for multiple intelligences in their teaching. Unfortunately teachers indicated that the support strategies are not effective. Individual educational programmes were reported to have been used in the questionnaire however the focus group interviews revealed that the teachers did not have the knowledge and skills to develop the programmes. Instead they referred to additional time and individual attention as an Individual Educational Programme and not a programme that was developed by relevant stakeholders. Content differentiation was not a common practice at the schools and the differentiation of learning and teaching support material and learning tasks was done but not consistently.

Teachers also reported providing concessions for the learners but here again it was their interpretation of the concessions. They were unaware of the process of applying for concessions for learners with evidence supporting their diverse needs. The guidelines and

support strategies provided by the DoE (DoE, 2011b; DoE, 2014) are available but it was evident that teachers had little or no knowledge of its existence.

It was evident that reports were not modified for the learners who experience barriers and technology and assistive devices was never used in most cases or rarely in others. This was conceivable considering that both these schools were quintile 3 schools and did not have access to sufficient funding and resources.

4.5.4. Large classes

Findings of the quantitative study indicated class sizes of an average of 60 in a Grade R class, 47 in Grade 1, 55 in Grade 2 and 59 in Grade 3. The learner-teacher ratio that the DoE aimed at was 40:1. This has been a barrier that was identified years ago (Geldenhuys, 2013) and has not been addressed. Inclusive education promotes quality education for all learners. Teachers are experiencing difficulties in providing this quality education because of the large number of learners in the class. Further, the foundation phase is a critical period in a learner's school career where the basis for learning is established and provides an opportunity for the early identification of learning difficulties (Landsberg, 2008; Mahlo, 2017). Unfortunately due to the large numbers in the classroom, the teachers are not able to effectively address the diverse needs of all the learners.

4.5.5. Training

Teachers have indicated that they have been exposed to either informal or formal training on addressing barriers to learning but have found the training to be insufficient. Similar findings were reported in many studies (Geldenhuys, 2013; Dalton et al, 2012; Bornman J. D., 2014; Engelbrecht P & D, 2015; Mahlo, 2017). Training for pre-service and in-service teachers does not provide opportunities for teachers to work with children with diverse needs. They are not trained to identify and support the learning problems that the learners present. Teachers in the study were not aware of the different levels of support that learners required in order to determine placement of the learner (DoE, 2002; DoE, 2005b; DoE , 2010). They were willing to refer learners who required low levels of support out of the

school. It was evident that they had no experience with learners who required high levels of support. Teachers in the study were aware that they required appropriate training to support the learners effectively and revealed a positive attitude towards such training opportunities.

Mesosystem

Support at the meso-level requires interaction between the systems at the micro-level and the forming of reciprocal relationships. It further involves effective collaboration between these stakeholders. It is evident from the discussion above that there is a lack of effective communication and collaboration between the microsystems in the lives of the learners at the selected schools. This is consistent with other studies (Geldenhuys, 2013).

Exosystem

As mentioned in Chapter 2, the exosystem comprises of the microsystem and the mesosystem. Further the learner is not a direct member at this level but decisions and actions taken impact on the learner. The school management team (SMT), the school based support team (SBST), the district based support team (DBST) and other relevant stakeholders are discussed as the support network that form the exosystem.

4.5.6. Support network

Both schools indicated that they receive adequate support from the SMT however it was evident that the SMTs of both schools were not adequately informed about providing effective training and support for the learners and teachers in the foundation phase. SMTs at the schools lacked a proactive approach to addressing diversity at the school and based on the responses from the teachers, seemed to respond only when approached. There was no evidence of communication and collaboration with the community, social services and other relevant stakeholders such as non-governmental organisations that could contribute in areas where the DoE has failed to provide support. It was evident that the SMTs also required appropriate training in Inclusive Education and support strategies. Previous research presented similar findings (Geldenhuys, 2013).

SBST was not fully functional at one school and teachers from the second school did report that they received support from the SBST at the school. Teachers were unclear as to who constituted the SBST and lacked knowledge on the roles and responsibilities of the team. The extent of the support reported at the one school was a discussion on a learner where the teacher received advice on how to teach the learner. There was no evidence of the development of support plans that should have been developed.

The DBST was not very active and involved in the schools. Schools were unsure of the support that could be obtained from the DBST and found the DBST to be inaccessible. There was no evidence of the provision of effective training, no proper guidance, consistent monitoring and support for the schools and the little assistance that schools did receive was not sufficient. This was also not an uncommon finding and was reported in previous studies (Geldenhuys, 2013; Nel et al, 2016).

It was clear that the schools functioned almost in isolation. There was little or no evidence of collaboration between teachers and other stakeholders like special and remedial teachers, psychologists, speech therapists and occupational therapists. The schools did not have a support network that included social service for the pscho-social issues that the teachers reported. Collaboration within these networks and support structures are essential encouraging inclusive practices and in providing effective support (Dalton et al, 2012; Makoelle, 2014).

Macrosystem

As explained in Chapter 2, the macrosystem is the outer structure and informs the micro-, meso-. It informs the microsystem, mesosystem and exosystem. The Constitution of South Africa, South African Schools Act, Education White Paper 6 (DoE, 2001), the Curriculum and Assessment Policies, the Policy on Screening, Identification, Assessment and Support (SIAS) (DoBE, 2014) and Guidelines on responding to learner diversity in the classroom through curriculum and assessment policy statement (DoE, 2011a) exist in the macrosystem in IE. Teachers had insufficient knowledge of the documents. The policies were not accessed and implemented appropriately.

4.5.3. SIAS

It was revealed that SIAS was viewed as 'forms to fill' to refer learners out of the school to a special or full service school. Many of the teachers were unaware of SIAS and had not received appropriate training. SIAS is a process that involves gathering information on all learners to assist in identifying barriers and in some cases contribute to the teacher preventing learning difficulties for a child (DoE, 2014a). This information could also ensure that teaching can be planned around the diverse needs of the learner. If a learner requires more than an individual support plan at an ordinary school, a multidisciplinary team attends to the case and determines and recommends the appropriate level of support required and the appropriate placement of the learner.

Chronosystem

All development is affected by changes that occur and takes place in a time period. These changes may occur in any of the systems or in individuals. Support structures are to consider these changes to provide effective support for learners (Geldenhuys, 2013; Woolfolk, 2014; Nel et al 2016). Teachers in the study identified the effects of the environment on the learners and the problems that they experienced but lacked the skills and support network to address these difficulties.

4.6. Summary

This chapter sought to answer the research questions of the study and achieve the outlined objectives. It involved the analysis and exploration of both the quantitative and qualitative data that was collected. The support strategies that are applied in the foundation phase classrooms of the selected schools were identified and the implementation of these strategies were assessed.

The findings in this chapter indicated that although support strategies are being implemented in the foundation phase, they are not effective in providing adequate support for the learners who experience barriers to learning. Teachers require training and support from support structures at school, the district and the community.

The next chapter outlines the limitations of this study, discusses recommendations and conclusions.

CHAPTER 5

Limitations, Recommendations and Conclusion

5.1. Introduction

This study intended to ascertain if learners who experience barriers to learning as well as the teachers and the school are being adequately supported. The literature in the study presented a definition of IE (Inclusive Education) and what it set out to achieve. Policies and guidelines on the implementation of IE were introduced and discussed and the challenges on providing effective support were presented. Findings of this study were consistent with previous research in revealing that the support provided was not effective. It was very clear that although there are policies and guidelines to address the challenges that were identified in previous research, they were not communicated effectively and neither were they implemented successfully.

The focus of this chapter is on the recommendations for improvement of support based on the results of the study, limitations of the study, recommendations for future research and a conclusion.

5.2. Recommendations for improvement of support provided

The results of this study provide important considerations for all stakeholders involved in basic education. The challenges that were identified in the different systems need to be addressed.

5.2.1. Home

Support in a learner's home is essential for success at school. It is of great concern that learners lack that vital support. On enrolment of their children to the schools, parents have to be educated by the school about their role in their child's education and the expectations of the school of them. In cases where parents are unable to read and

provide assistance to the child, with the consent of the guardian, another family or community member should be identified to ensure that the child is supported.

5.2.2. School

The relationship between the parent and the school is very significant in the kind of support that a child receives. Both parties in this relationship need to be cognisant of the fact that they are a team with the same goal, which is in the best interest of the child. It has to be a relationship of mutual trust, collaboration and effective communication. An obvious lack of effective communication between these systems was discovered in the study.

Another area of concern is that teachers still believe that what is best for a child that experiences barriers to learning is for them to be removed from the classroom and educated separately. This violates the child's right to equality and protection from unfair discrimination. Although these teachers may have the best intentions, there is an urgent need for a mind shift on this matter.

Teachers need to be familiar with the legislation and policies that govern their profession. This would provide teachers with a better understanding of the rationale behind these policies and how it would benefit the learner. Fortunately, we live in a time where information is easily accessible through the use of technology. Teachers should be encouraged to access the documents on the DoE website and acquaint themselves with the necessary information.

5.2.3. Training

Teachers displayed a positive attitude towards training and indicated that they require appropriate skills to be more effective in supporting the learners. They also indicated that training thus far has been insufficient and ineffective because it was too brief and they lacked monitoring and support after the training sessions. Comprehensive training should be provided for all teachers. Although the teachers are able to identify learners that experience barriers to learning, they are unable to provide effective interventions.

This early intervention and support would further ensure that the difficulties that learners experience are not exacerbated.

It was reported that pre-service training did not provide opportunities for teachers to work with learners with barriers to learning. This resulted in them being inadequately prepared to teach all learners. It is recommended that pre-service training include exposure to learners that require low, moderate and high levels of support. It was clear from the study that there was confusion with regard to the placement of learners where learners with learning difficulties was to be referred to special school without determining the reason for the difficulties and the appropriate level of support required by the learners.

5.2.4. Support Structures

The SMTs should adopt a proactive approach and establish effective support structures at the school and communicate the specific roles and responsibilities of that structure. All members of the SMT should receive intensive training to ensure that they are prepared to provide leadership to the rest of the staff, learners and stakeholders. The support strategies and tools should be reviewed regularly and deficits addressed to ensure quality support. They are to ensure that support is easily accessible and consistent.

The SMTs should ensure that the school establishes a functional SBST. The SBST should receive thorough training and the roles, responsibilities and support provided by each component of the SBST should be clearly communicated to the whole school.

The SMTs should establish a support network for the school. This could include parents, social workers, psychologists, speech therapists, occupational therapists non-governmental organisations and other relevant stakeholders. A team approach to support may be required for some learners and having access to this support network could prove beneficial.

Special schools could duplicate or repeat this study with schools in their areas to establish what support is being provided and what skills are needed. As a part of their outreach programme, special schools could address the needs identified that are within their area of expertise. For example, special school educators could provide training on developing and implementing individual educational programmes. Special schools have Human Resources like occupational therapists and speech therapists that could assist schools with training and support.

Access to educational psychological services is essential to all schools. As the teachers indicated in the study, they were unable to diagnose the learners' problems. Educational psychologists could assist in diagnosing and providing intervention programmes for the learners. They could also provide training for the staff based the schools' support needs.

Considering the socio-economic and psychosocial background of learners mentioned in the study and many learners in South Africa, another essential service is social services. SBSTs should include social workers in their support network and be able to access prompt support from the social workers without difficulties.

Stakeholders should be proactive and develop prevention programmes to ensure that systemic barriers that exist within the school are eliminated where possible.

5.2.5. DBST

The DBST should ensure that the strategies and guidelines developed by the DoE are clearly communicated to the teachers accompanied by effective training and post training monitoring and support. This should include directives on applying for concessions for learners.

5.3. Limitations of the study

A small sample was selected to provide an in-depth understanding of the support strategies used, how they were implemented and assess the effectiveness of the interventions. Due to the small sample size, the results of the study cannot be generalised. Further both the schools in the study belonged to Quintile 3. Schools from other quintiles may produce different results.

Another limitation that concerned the questionnaire was that respondents answered some questions in the questionnaire according to their interpretation of what specific strategies were and not based on the true description of the strategy. For example teachers referred to Individual Education Programmes as the individual attention and time that they would provide the learner with in the classroom and not on a programme that they developed in collaboration with other relevant stakeholders. This shortfall in this study was addressed by the focus group interview which allowed the respondents to clarify their responses. The strategies could have been supported by a more detailed description to clarify the definition of the strategy in that context.

5.4. Recommendations for further research

This study has revealed a gap in the implementation of the policies and guidelines that have been provided to address barriers to learning the learners' experience. Further, it was discovered that although similar challenges were common in both schools in the study, there were challenges that were particular to the individual schools. Suggestions for further research to address this aspect in Inclusive Education are as follows:

- The study has shown that each school may have unique challenges in the provision of effective support in Inclusive Education. This research needs to be duplicated at other districts to establish the particular support needs of the school.

- Alternatively, if there are challenges in duplicating the study due to time and cost constraints, the questionnaire could be used with a larger population. Information of the current support practices and the support needs of a few schools could be established simultaneously. The data received could then be used to provide effective support plans for each school.
- Research is required in the effectiveness of SIAS and DoE support guidelines. Schools that are implementing these strategies need to be identified and assessed.
- The study revealed challenges in the different structures in the learners' lives. For example the insufficient support from parents and caregivers and the lack of community involvement and collaboration with the schools. Research needs to be conducted at each level to identify challenges and programmes need to be developed to address these challenges.

5.5. Conclusion

This study established that although teachers attempted to provide support to learners that experience barriers to learning, they found these strategies to be ineffective. The pre-service in-service training that they received to address barriers to learning was ineffective and inadequate. Support networks at the schools were dysfunctional and there was confusion about the roles and responsibilities of the various support structures. Stakeholders and external support structures were ineffective and inaccessible. The lack of communication and collaboration amongst stakeholders was evident. These findings are common and consistent with discoveries from previous research. Contributions of study are important for further research and implementation of the recommendations would assist ensuring all learners receive quality education that can help them to be productive members of society.

APPENDICES

Appendix 1 - Application for Permission to Conduct Research in KwaZulu-Natal Department of Education Institutions



Application for Permission to Conduct Research in KwaZulu Natal Department of Education Institutions

1. Applicants Details

Title: Prof / Dr / Rev / Mr / Mrs / Miss / Ms Surname: SUBRAMONEY

Name(s) Of Applicant(s): KEMESHRI AVRIL Email: kemeshri@gmail.com

Tel No: 031-2625887 Fax: 031-261-2174 Cell: 0822662600

Postal Address: P. O. BOX 2343, DURBAN, 4000

2. Proposed Research Title:

Assessment of support strategies of inclusive education in the foundation phase in the Umlazi District

3. Have you applied for permission to conduct this research or any other research within the KZNDoe institutions?

If “yes”, please state reference Number:

Yes No

4. Is the proposed research part of a tertiary qualification?

<u>Yes</u>	No
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If “yes”

Name of tertiary institution: UNIVERSITY OF ZULULAND

Faculty and or School: FACULTY OF EDUCATION

Qualification: MASTERS IN EDUCATIONAL PSYCHOLOGY

Name of Supervisor: PROF. M. M. HLONGWANE **Supervisors Signature** _____

If “no”, state purpose of research: _____

5. Briefly state the Research Background

A challenge faced by the South African education system is providing support for learners that experience barriers to learning. The strategy to address these barriers, an inclusive education and training system, was outlined in Education White Paper 6 (2001). The Paper acknowledges that all learners need support and that learners have diverse support needs. The Department of Education was to achieve this by establishing these schools and providing training for managers and teachers, establishing support structures and funding at schools and districts. In 2008, the National Strategy on Screening, Identification, Assessment and Support (SIAS) was published. The purpose of this strategy was to identify and support all learners who experience barriers to learning. Learners who require low levels of support are still seeking admission into special schools in spite of the support strategies being put in place. Policies have been provided to address learners’ barriers however a gap is evident in the implementation of these policies.

6. What is the main research question(s) :

- What supports strategies are used at the school?
- How are support strategies implemented?

7. Methodology including sampling procedures and the people to be included in the sample:

The researcher has elected to use a mixed method design for this case study. The data collection techniques chosen for this study comprises of questionnaires and focus group interviews. The questionnaire would provide the quantitative data for the study and the focus group interview would provide the qualitative data.

Census sampling, would be used to select participants for the questionnaires and non-probability sampling, namely quota sampling, would be used to select participants for the focus group interviews. Data would be collected from the participants from two primary schools in the Umlazi district.

8. What contribution will the proposed study make to the education, health, safety, welfare of the learners and to the education system as a whole?:

There has been substantial research on policies as well as the challenges in supporting learners with barriers to learning. However little has been done to implement the policies and apply the recommendations that were made in previous research. This study attempts to address the lack of support for learners with barriers to learning by assessing and creating an awareness of appropriate support strategies. It would ensure that all learners receive the relevant support in overcoming their barriers and are able to participate in learning.

KZN Department of Education Schools or Institutions from which sample will be drawn – If the list is long please attach at the end of the form

XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX

XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX

9. Research data collection instruments: *(Note: a list and only a brief description is required here - the actual instruments must be attached):*

The data collection techniques chosen for this study comprises of questionnaires and focus group interviews. It would include a section on biographical / personal data followed by a section of specific questions related to inclusive education and support strategies implemented at the school. A five point Likert Scale would be used in the questionnaire. The focus group interviews would provide participating teachers with the opportunity to explain or elaborate on their answers in the questionnaires.

10. Procedure for obtaining consent of participants and where appropriate parents or guardians:

Written consent would be sought from the Department of Education, the primary schools identified and the participating teachers.

11. Procedure to maintain confidentiality (if applicable):

The school's and teachers' identities would be protected by them remaining anonymous. The participants would be allocated pseudonyms or numbers to identify them. Participants would have the right to refuse to participate in the study and the option of withdrawing.

12. Questions or issues with the potential to be intrusive, upsetting or incriminating to participants (if applicable):

N/A

13. Additional support available to participants in the event of disturbance resulting from intrusive questions or issues (if applicable):

The researcher will inform the participants about the research and remove any harmful effects or misconceptions by explaining and debriefing the participants by discussing the concerns and feelings they have on any issues.

14. Research Timelines :

The research will be conducted from April 2016 to May 2017. Kindly refer to the attached work schedule for details.

14. Declaration

I hereby agree to comply with the relevant ethical conduct to ensure that participants' privacy and the confidentiality of records and other critical information.

I KEMESHRI AVRIL SUBRAMONEY declare that the above information is true and correct



Signature of Applicant

Date

16. Agreement to provide and to grant the KwaZulu Natal Department of Education the right to publish a summary of the report.

I/We agree to provide the KwaZulu Natal Department of Education with a copy of any report or dissertation written on the basis of information gained through the research activities described in this application.

I/We grant the KwaZulu Natal Department of Education the right to publish an edited summary of this report or dissertation using the print or electronic media.

Signature of Applicant(s)

Date

Return a completed form to:

Sibusiso Alwar

The Research Unit; Resource Planning; KwaZulu Natal Department of Education

Hand Delivered:

Office G25; 188 Pietermaritz Street; Pietermaritzburg; 3201

Or

Ordinary Mail

Private Bag X9137; Pietermaritzburg; 3200

Or

Email sibusiso.alwar@kzndoe.gov.za

Appendix 2 - Informed consent declaration

INFORMED CONSENT DECLARATION

(Participant)

Assessment of support strategies of inclusive education in the foundation phase in the Umlazi District

Kemeshri Avril Subramoney from the Department of Educational Psychology and Special Education, University of Zululand has requested my permission to participate in the above-mentioned research project.

The nature and the purpose of the research project and of this informed consent declaration have been explained to me in a language that I understand.

I am aware that:

1. The purpose of the research project is to investigate the intervention strategies used by teachers to address learners' barriers to learning.
2. The University of Zululand has given ethical clearance to this research project and I have seen / may request to see the clearance certificate.
3. By participating in this research project I will be contributing towards ensuring that learners who experience barriers to learning as well as the teachers and the school are being adequately supported.
4. I will participate in this research project by completing a questionnaire and may volunteer / be selected to participate in a focus group interview.
5. My participation is entirely voluntary and at any stage should I wish to withdraw from participating further, I may do so without any negative consequences.
6. I will not be compensated for participating in this research.
7. There may be risks associated with my participation
8. The researcher intends publishing the research results in the form of a dissertation and journal articles. However, confidentiality and anonymity of records will be maintained and that my name and identity will not be revealed to anyone who has not been involved in the conduct of the research.
9. I will receive feedback in the form of a report regarding the results obtained during the study.
10. Any further questions that I might have concerning the research or my participation will be answered by K. A. Subramoney (0822662600).

11. By signing this informed consent declaration I am not waiving my legal claims, rights or remedies.

12. A copy of this informed consent declaration will be given to me, and the original will be kept on record.

I _____ have read the above information / confirm that the above information has been explained to me in a language that I understand and I am aware of this document's contents. I have asked all questions that I wished to ask and these have been answered to my satisfaction. I fully understand what is expected of me during the research.

I have not been pressurised in any way and I voluntarily agree to participate in the above-mentioned project.

Participant's signature

Date

Appendix 3 - Questionnaire

University of Zululand

P. O. Box X1001

KwaDlangezwa

3886

Dear Mr. / Mrs.

I'm doing a Master's dissertation and researching the support strategies implemented in the foundation for learners who experience barriers to learning. Your contribution to this study is essential so please complete this questionnaire.

Section A: Biographical Details

Gender

Male	
Female	

Age

Below 25	
25-35	
36-45	
46 -55	
55+	

Qualification

Teaching Diploma (M+3)	
Teaching Diploma (M+4)	
Teaching Degree	
Honours Degree	
Master's Degree	

Teaching Experience

What grade are you teaching currently?

Grade R	
Grade 1	
Grade 2	
Grade 3	

Number of years teaching this Grade _____

Number of years teaching _____

Training in teaching learners with barriers to learning

Formal Training (Diploma or Degree)	
Informal Training (Workshops)	

Number of learners in your class _____

Number of learners that experience barriers to learning _____

Section B: Classroom interventions

No	Support Strategies	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Usually	Always
1	Do you use assisted learning, peer-teaching and scaffolding?					
2	Does teaching to cater for multiple intelligences in the classroom?					
4	Are Individualised Education Programmes (IEPs) planned for learners who experience barriers to learning?					
5	Is the curriculum content differentiated to address the needs of the learners?					

No	Support Strategies	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Usually	Always
6	Are the teaching methods (multi-level teaching), learning and teaching support material differentiated to address the needs of the learners?					
7	Are learning tasks differentiated?					
8	Are learning assessments differentiated? (reading the task to the learner, allowing oral response, spelling concessions)					
9	Are concessions provided for learners who require them (e.g. a scribe, extra time for tests, when marking, handwriting concessions are made for learners who experience barriers to learning)					
10	Is there differentiation in the classroom and school environment: physical (e.g. seating arrangements, lighting etc.) and psycho-social (Interpersonal cooperation)?					
11	Do learners who experience barriers to learning receive non-standard or modified termly reports?					
12	Do you use technology to benefit learners who experience barriers to learning (video clips, learning apps, word processors)?					
13	Do you use the Screening, Identification, Assessment and Support Strategy (SIAS)?					

Section C: Support Network

No	Support	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Usually	Always
1	How often do you receive support from the school management team (SMT)?					
2	Is the support received from the school management team (SMT) adequate?					
3	How often do you receive support from the institutional level support team (ILST) or school based support team (SBST)?					
4	Is the support received from the institutional level support team (ILST) or school based support team (SBST) adequate?					
5	How often do you receive support from the district based support team (DBST)?					
6	Is the support received from the district based support team (DBST) adequate?					
7	How often do you receive support from other relevant professionals e.g. psychologists, social workers, occupational therapists, speech therapists?					

Appendix 4 – Focus group interview schedule

Focus Group Interview Schedule

TOPIC: Assessment of support strategies of inclusive education in the foundation phase in the Umlazi District

Greetings and introduction of all participants in the room. Ensure that all have signed the consent forms and that all are aware that the session will be recorded. Explain the reason for the recording and establish that there are no objections.

I'm very grateful to you all for sparing time to talk to us today. The purpose of this focus group is to establish the support strategies and support structures available at your school for learners who experience barriers to learning. There are no right or wrong opinions. I would like you to feel comfortable saying what you really think and how you really feel. All identities and responses will remain anonymous.

- 1) What kind of barriers do you experience as a school?
- 2) Do you feel that you have had adequate training to address these barriers?
- 3) How do you address those barriers?
- 4) How do you address diversity in school to accommodate all the learners?
- 5) Which methods do you use to include all learners?
- 6) What support do you receive from the School based support team (SBST)?
- 7) What support do you receive from the District Based Support Team (DBST)?
- 8) Is there anything that you would like to add to the discussion?

Appendix 5 – Proof of language editing



This is to confirm that the thesis entitled:

Assessment of Support Strategies in Inclusive Education in the Foundation Phase in the Umlazi District

By:

Kemeshri Avril Subramoney
Student Number : 201445521

Has been language edited by:

Dr Quraisha Dawood (PhD, Director of Write on Q, Certified by the SA Writers College)
29 Nov. 17

Q. Dawood

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