

**LEARNING SUPPORT TO GRADE 4 LEARNERS WHO EXPERIENCE BARRIERS TO
ENGLISH AS LANGUAGE OF LEARNING AND TEACHING**

by

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Summary

The advent of democracy in South Africa in the early 1990's led, due to choice or circumstances, to the influx of numerous learners whose home language is an indigenous language, into school environments where the language of learning and teaching (LoLT) is English. These learners are confronted with the challenge of mastering the curriculum content while simultaneously learning English in which it is couched and instructed.

When the LoLT differs from learners' home language, this difference can be an educational barrier, which if not addressed timeously and effectively, may become a major challenge to a fully inclusive education system. The main aim of this research was to investigate whether Grade 4 English second language learners who experienced barriers to English as LoLT were supported in all subjects. The research also probed how effectively these learning support strategies were being implemented under the guidance of SBSTs at mainstream schools.

Key concepts

Language of learning and teaching (LoLT); Home language; English second language; Barriers to learning; Grade 4 learners; Mainstream education; Inclusive education; Curriculum content ; Learning support; School Based Support Team (SBST).

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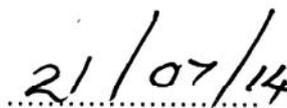
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I declare that **LEARNING SUPPORT TO GRADE 4 LEARNERS WHO EXPERIENCE BARRIERS TO ENGLISH AS LANGUAGE OF LEARNING AND TEACHING** is my own work and that all the sources that I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by means of complete references.



SIGNATURE
(Mrs B D MacKay)



DATE

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION TO THE RESEARCH

1.1 Introduction

We have made serious errors in relation to languages of learning and teaching.

-Mary Metcalfe: *Sunday Times* January 13, 2008

The article, from which this quotation is taken, highlights the South African debate about whether a learner's home language or an additional language, such as English, should be used as the language of learning and teaching (LoLT) in the Foundation Phase (Grade 1–3). According to the author, Mary Metcalfe, the pressure for learners whose home language is not English, to be taught in English, arises from a view in our communities that socio-economic class goes hand-in-hand with fluency in English. Metcalfe instead urges that in this multilingual country of ours “urgent action must be taken to promote instruction in languages best supporting learning” (*Sunday Times*, January 13, 2008:10). She calls, inter alia, for reading materials in all languages; more speakers of African languages to be trained as Foundation Phase educators; educators trained to teach literacy and numeracy in multilingual classrooms and more educators fluent in more languages.

An article under the heading “Languages bedeviling teaching” published as part of a report by the National Education Evaluation and Development Unit, highlights learners' first three years of school. The report focused on learners' language challenges in this crucial phase of schooling and found that: “When learners do not speak the language of instruction, they find learning difficult and academic achievement is undermined” (*The Times*, May 9, 2013:6). Basic Education Minister, Angie Motshekga, expressed the sentiment that learners can be expected to “achieve higher levels of literacy when using a home language in schools” (*The Times*, October 16, 2013:9).

Many children in South Africa start using English as LoLT only in Grade 4. This implies that a high level of proficiency in English must be attained by the end of Grade 3 and these learners should at this stage have the ability to read and write well in English. A recent newspaper article presented an interesting take on the LoLT. The writer, N. Maake, a research fellow at the University of South Africa, discusses among other issues, the significance of International Mother Language Day held on 21 February. The writer explains how, in accordance with the Bantu Education Act of 1955, African children were instructed in their home languages from Grade 1 up until Grade 8 and argues that “the transition was not in any way retarding the progress of learning”. Maake expresses the sentiment that Bantu education was paradoxically “in line with the universally proven pedagogy of the efficacy of

teaching the child in his or her mother tongue in the early stages of education” (*Sunday Times*, February 16, 2014: 21).

The Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS) was implemented in 2012 in the Foundation Phase. It introduced a new language policy which stipulated instruction in English as an additional first language from Grades 1 to 3. According to the CAPS, learners are “enabled to acquire knowledge, to express their identity, feelings and ideas, to interact with others and to manage their world, when they have learnt to use language efficiently” (Department of Basic Education, 2011:8).

Implementation challenges of the Revised National Curriculum Statement (RNCS) Grades R–9 (Schools) included, among others, varied interpretations of curriculum requirements, overburdening of educators with administration and underperformance of learners. These factors led to an amendment to the National Curriculum Statement Grades R to 12. A single comprehensive Curriculum and Assessment Policy document was developed in each subject to replace Subject Statements, Learning Programme Guidelines and Subject Assessment Guidelines, in Grades R to 12. The Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statements (CAPS) is not a new curriculum because it follows the same process and procedure as stated in the National Curriculum Statement Grades R to 12. For this reason, reference will be made to the RNCS in this study as CAPS builds on and updates the previous curriculum. CAPS is an adjustment to curriculum content and not to the teaching methods. Information regarding what should be taught includes: the content for each grade and the breaking up of topics into teaching terms and weeks. The prescribed assessment includes formal assessment requirements per term and examination information.

The main changes include:

- Instructional time has been increased in the Foundation Phase.
- A First Additional Language has been added to the Foundation Phase (one language must be the LoLT).
- In the Intermediate Phase, the eight learning areas have been changed to six subjects.
- All grades now use a seven point rating scale.
- Learning outcomes and assessment standards have been removed (Department of Basic Education, 2011: 2).

The Foundation Phase (Grades R–3) and Grade 10 Further Education and Training (FET), implemented CAPS in January 2012. The Intermediate Phase and Grade 11 implemented it in January 2013 and the Senior Phase and Grade 12 (FET) put it into practice in January 2014 (Department of Basic Education, 2011).

According to the *RNCS Grades R–9 (Schools)*, languages are central to our lives. We communicate and understand our world through language. Language thus shapes our identity and knowledge. Languages serve a variety of purposes such as communicative, educational and cultural. Language contributes to the curriculum in the following ways:

- It develops reading and writing, the foundation for other important literacies.
- It is the medium for much of the other learning in the curriculum.
- It encourages intercultural understanding, access to other views, and a critical understanding of the concept of culture (*RNCS Grades R–9 (Schools)* Department of Education: 2002: 5).

According to the RNCS it is advisable that all learners learn their home language (the first language a child acquires in the home) and become competent in at least one additional official language. Any language that is learned after the home language can be referred to as an additional language.

The Department of Education's language-in-education policy underpins the Languages Learning Area as described in the *RNCS Grades R–9*. This policy aims to encourage the promotion of African languages by empowering learners to choose the language in which they want to be taught. It promotes bilingualism by making at least two languages compulsory (learners' home language and at least one additional official language) for the attainment of the Further Education and Training (FET) certificate, which has replaced the matric (Grade 12) certificate. The policy also promotes the practice of learners, especially in the Foundation Phase, to be taught in their home language. This language policy is also referred to as the Additive Approach to Multilingualism and School Governing Bodies are given the responsibility of choosing school language policies that are appropriate for their circumstances and in line with the additive approach (RNCS, 2002:4).

The findings of a survey on social attitudes by the Human Sciences Research Council (HSRC) in 2008 were particularly interesting (Pather, 2008: 12). The researcher, Mbithi wa Kivilu examined the trends in the preferred language of instruction. The findings showed that even though the general public

thought children should be taught in their home language until Grade 3, most learners said they prefer to study in English. According to Naledi Pandor, Minister of Education at the time, “The major obstacles we face in promoting mother-tongue learning are that many parents still prefer their children to be taught through the medium of English language” and she quoted as evidence, the 2006 HSRC survey of South African social attitudes in which most South Africans said they preferred the use of English as the language of instruction from Grade 1 (Pandor, 31 July 2006).

The Minister of Basic Education, Angie Motshekga, reiterates the idea that our curriculum is based on the same values and principles which inspired our constitution. Principles such as human rights and inclusivity are encompassed in the general aims of the South African school curriculum. One aim specifically states that “inclusivity should become a central part of the organisation, planning and teaching at each school. This can only happen if all educators have a sound understanding of how to recognise and address barriers to learning and how to plan for diversity ” (Department of Basic Education, 2011:5).

With the concept of inclusive education being fairly “new” in its adoption as policy and in its implementation in South Africa – one can surely expect major challenges in enabling this inclusive approach. The *RNCS*, which was introduced into all South African schools in 2002, expects educators to “accommodate learner diversity”. Inclusive education is the ultimate acceptance of diversity. “It places the major responsibility for meeting special educational needs on the shoulders of mainstream educators rather than special education educators” (Engelbrecht, Green, Naicker & Engelbrecht, 1999:11).

All learners in an inclusive classroom are important, but learners who experience barriers to learning and for the purpose of this study; barriers to English as a second language (ESL) as the LoLT, should have their special educational needs addressed by the educator. Learners who have a limited English proficiency have difficulty in understanding and using English and educators have to address the special needs of these learners by providing learning support. This learning support should not be limited to the English Learning Area but should cover all learning in the curriculum. In so doing, the educator makes it easier for learning to take place (Engelbrecht et al, 1999).

Given the exodus of learners from historically African township schools, where educators both understood and used home language as a language of instruction, to schools outside of these areas where the home language of learners is seldom understood or used by educators to instruct, the

concept and practice of *inclusiveness* takes on added and urgent significance. Language, as illustrated in a wide literature, can be a barrier to learning and act to exclude learners from the mainstream (Education White Paper, 2001: 6–7). While not widely regarded as disabling in practical education circles and thus not treated as such in learning support terms, it does, however, pose a significant barrier to the kind of inclusive system envisaged for education in South Africa.

Put differently, this study takes as one of its hypotheses (see section 1.3) that this impediment is most often viewed as a “soft” barrier to learning in our mainstream schools, and thus commands inadequate support and resources. Yet personal practical experience in the classroom, and anecdotal evidence, suggest that it can potentially be a source of wide exclusion.

Even though classroom educators are the primary resource for achieving an inclusive education system and therefore, providing support in the LoLT (White Paper 6, 2001: 18), it stands to reason that its successful implementation and enabling could never be the sole responsibility of educators when one considers the actual depth and meaning of the concept. “Inclusion is about genuine relationships” (Miles, 2000: 18). Miles argues “Unless diversity is welcomed, and relationships are consciously nurtured, there will be little change in the educational experience of disabled and other marginalized children”. The assumption is that effective and successful support strategies will lead to an improvement in learners’ English proficiency and this in turn, will lead to improved learning.

1.1.1 Barriers to learning and teaching

What is meant by the phrase “barriers to learning”? The New English Usage Dictionary, 2001 (Alswang, 2001: 59), defines a “barrier” as “an obstacle to prevent a person or thing getting to or past a place or thing”. Therefore it can be said that a barrier to learning is something that stops effective learning from taking place. The Department of Education (DOE), (Directorate of Inclusive Education) supplies a comprehensive definition of “barriers to learning” which refer to all the factors that hamper teaching and learning. These factors include:

- “factors relating to specific individuals; namely to *learners* (their specific learning needs and styles) and *educators* (personal factors as well as teaching approaches and attitudes)
- different aspects of the curriculum, such as content, LoLT, organisation and management in the classroom, teaching and assessment methods. Availability of resources such as learning materials, equipment and time

- the physical and psychosocial *environment* within which teaching and learning occurs. This refers to physical structures like buildings as well as management styles
- conditions relating to the learner's *home environment*, including issues such as family dynamics and cultural and socio-economic background
- community and social dynamics which either support or hamper the teaching and learning process" (Department of Education, 2005: 13, 14).

The medium of language opens up a world of knowledge, skills and insights to human beings. Language is the foundation of teaching and the medium for much of the other subjects in the school curriculum. Learners who experience barriers to the LoLT have difficulty in coping with all the other subjects as the languages learning area underpin all the other learning areas (RNCS, 2002: 5).

With specific reference to the school-going learner, many educators as well as academics, can attest to the fact that learners with a limited proficiency in their LoLT are more likely to underachieve academically (Engelbrecht et al, 1999; Lemmer, 2002; Theron & Nel, 2005). These learners could have difficulty listening, speaking, reading, thinking and reasoning, as well as language structure and use (Gauteng Department of Education, 2006).

"Wolff (as cited in Donald, Lazarus & Lolwana, 2006:195) argues that language is not everything in education but without language everything in education is nothing". This statement reflects the pivotal influence of language on all aspects of education. The language issue in South Africa is a very complex matter and there exists the danger that amidst all the political and social debate, the important cognitive, social, scholastic and emotional implications of language on educational development could be neglected or totally overlooked (Donald et al, 2006).

The South African Constitution makes provision for eleven official languages and instruction in a learner's home language is recommended. The reality is that a vast number of learners at our schools do not receive instruction in their home language but in a second language, which is English in most cases. When learners lack the necessary language skills, this can become a major barrier that can prevent effective learning from taking place (Landsberg, Kruger & Nel 2006).

1.1.2 Learning support

Education White Paper 6 states that the key to reducing barriers to learning – such as barriers to the LoLT – within all education and training, lies in a strengthened education support service (Department of Education, 2001: 14). District Based Support Teams (DBSTs) will be pivotal in the overall strengthening of education support services in South Africa. Their primary function is to assist education institutions to identify and address barriers to learning and promote effective teaching and learning (Department of Education, 2001).

At an institutional or school level, educators are central to addressing learner needs by providing learning support. The term “support”, could be viewed as “all the actions that educators employ to make it easier for learning to take place” (Engelbrecht et al, 1999: 129). In the case of English second-language learners (ESL), learning support should be provided to enable these learners to gain access to adequate proficiency in the LoLT. The Department of Education (DOE) states that if educators are the central agents in the process of identifying and addressing barriers to learning, they need:

- training on what barriers to learning are and how to identify them
- strategies and instruments to assist them to identify needs and barriers to learning
- access to and ongoing support from the institution-level support teams (School Based Support Teams – SBST) to assist in their problem-solving processes (Department of Education, 2005: 32).

The report by the National Commission on Special Needs in Education and Training and the National Committee on Education Support Services (NCSNET/NCESS) promotes a preventive and supportive approach to addressing barriers to learning (Theron & Nel, 2005). The education support system in South Africa is premised on the NCSNET/NCESS’ (two-prong, three-tier) approach to support in schools and other educational institutions (Engelbrecht et al, 1999). This support system includes classroom and organisational support, providing specialised learner and educator support, as well as curricular and institutional development and administrative support.

1.1.3 English second language as language of learning and teaching (LoLT)

Our multicultural school scenario in South Africa demands that educators and the education system as a whole cater for the learning needs of learners from *linguistically diverse* backgrounds. Many learners are not educated in their home language and a large number of these learners experience barriers to

learning. Research findings from a survey conducted by the Human Sciences Research Council (HSRC) showed that most South African parents prefer their children to be taught in English (Pather, 2008:), even if English is their second or third language. According to Lerner, as quoted in Theron (Theron & Nel, 2005: 222), some linguistically diverse learners are truly bilingual and subsequently do not experience barriers when learning in English. However, many English second language learners have difficulty with both the receptive (the way they understand the language) and expressive (the way in which they use the language to communicate) components of the English language due to a limited exposure to English. According to Donald (Donald et al, 2006) these learners are expected to learn in a language that is unfamiliar and different from their home language, their social interaction as well as their culture. Lambert (as cited in Donald et al, 2006) refers to this kind of learning as “subtractive bilingualism”. This means it is bilingualism which entails “learning through a second language”. Subtractive refers to the fact that it places less value on the importance of the learner’s home language in formal learning (Donald et al, 2006: 196).

Many learners in South Africa come from disadvantaged home environments and lack literacy support and experience (Du Plessis, Naude & Viljoen, 2003). From personal teaching experience at a school where the LoLT is English, the researcher gained the following insights: Many learners only come into contact with or hear English during school hours. Some parents can only speak their home language and communication at home is only conducted in the learner’s home language. Learners receive little or no assistance with their school work. Homework, such as reading sheets or reading cards, is often returned without a parent’s signature, an indication that no help or supervision was provided. This causes frustration for parents, learners and educators. Parents feel embarrassed by their limited proficiency in English and consequently have limited contact with educators and the school environment in general. Crucial foundations for reading, writing and comprehension are established in Grade 1 and the lack of parental involvement and support can have a negative impact on learners’ mastery of the language. The poor socio-economic home environment of most of these learners should be added to the aspects mentioned above. After school, learners, especially those in the intermediate and senior phases, are expected to do chores and take care of younger siblings. These responsibilities leave very little time for homework. Lack of electricity, no television or unavailability of English literature such as newspapers or magazines, can further aggravate learners’ difficulty with proficiency in English and eventually cause a barrier to learning.

Furthermore, a limited English proficiency has an adverse effect on the skills learners need to perform everyday informal conversations as well as the formal more sophisticated language necessary for academic achievement (Theron & Nel, 2005). Noteworthy are the research findings indicated by Cummins (as cited in Lemmer, 2002) which states that while it may take a child approximately two years to reach second-language proficiency for everyday use, it would take five to seven years for second-language learners to gain adequate proficiency for academic and social achievement” (Lemmer, 2002: 44). ESL learners are faced with a dual challenge: learning a second language while simultaneously using this language that they are in the process of acquiring, to master curriculum or academic content (Lemmer, 2002).

1.2 Awareness of the problem

This research, in part, is motivated by the following statement from Consultative Paper No 1 on *Special education: building an inclusive education and training system, first steps* (Department of Education 1999) “Many learners are educated through the medium of a language that is not one of their home languages. This is often out of choice but in many instances because no other alternative is available. These learning difficulties are often not seen as system related, but as learner related, and such learners are often, erroneously labelled as: slow” or are referred to special classes or public schools for learners with special education needs...Every effort should be made to ensure that language support is available to those learners who require it so that they too can gain proficiency in the medium of learning and teaching of the institution. This could best be facilitated and coordinated by institution-based support teams such as academic development programmes within higher education institutions (Department of Education 1999:12-13).

South Africa has eleven official languages. Yet in many primary schools English is used as the LoLT – especially outside of the former African-designated townships. With the migration of learners from these areas to schools outside of these areas that are English medium, this challenge is becoming increasingly prevalent and may, therefore, require some concerted intervention. Some learners find themselves in a township school (where they received instruction in their home language) the one year and in a school where the LoLT is English, the next year. Often at this stage (primary school) some of these learners have not mastered English enough to adequately understand and follow instruction in English (Landsberg et al, 2005; Donald et al, 2006). Landsberg refers to a study done by Ramirez that

shows it takes more than six years for learners to develop proficiency in English when it is the second language of learning (Landsberg et al, 2006).

One of the principal barriers to learning English is the difference between the language structures of the indigenous languages and those of English. Indigenous languages, with the exception of Afrikaans, are strongly phonetic and learners, especially those with learning difficulties, have the tendency to apply the familiar language structures of their home language to English. They express their thoughts by relaying known language structures into English without changing or modifying them. Most of these learners also have limited contact with English and speak and hear English only at school. Some of their parents do not speak English and all communication at home is in their home language. Some learners also have difficulty learning their home language and expressing their thoughts and experiences – therefore they experience the same difficulties in English as a second language. Unfavourable socio-economic circumstances play a main role in the learning of English as second language. A learner raised in unfavourable socio-economic conditions usually shows a lack in *emergent literacy* - which is prior learning about reading and printed literature acquired in the home environment (Engelbrecht et al, 1999: 80).

Research by Mahabeer indicates that contextual, language, school and intrinsic factors are linked to problems that Foundation Phase English second-language learners experience in acquiring English reading and spelling skills. Mahabeer found that learners whose home language is isiZulu and whose language of instruction is English experienced difficulties in reading, comprehension and spelling. These learners had either inadequate or no exposure to English before entering school (Mahabeer, 2003: 2).

This problem is further aggravated when the educator is not literate in the African language, for example isiZulu, and has little or no training in bilingual teaching. Educators are also not always familiar with the diverse ethnic, cultural, social customs and beliefs of our society that learners, whose home language is a language other than English, represent. Some of these learners come from families with different views on child raising, development and expectations for their children. If parents and educators' expectations cannot be reconciled, it can adversely affect learners' adjustment and transition between home and the early childhood classroom (Mahabeer, 2003).

Mahabeer cites Okagaki and Diamond who found that some parents of ESL learners do not have adequate proficiency in English. Thus, whatever has been taught in the classroom cannot be sufficiently reinforced at home (Mahabeer, 2003: 5).

Where such difficulties in learning English as a second language emerges in a school environment where English is the LoLT, this can become a barrier to learning generally and learning support is therefore required. A classroom educator is primarily responsible for the identification and addressing of such barriers to learning because “identification and intervention lie at the heart of inclusive education and must always be accompanied by appropriate support for the learner” (Department of Education, 2006: 52). Learning support can be defined as all the activities that enable the school to meet the different needs of learners who experience barriers to learning – activities that make it “easier for learning to happen” (Engelbrecht et al, 1999: 129). The classroom educator can employ a variety of intervention strategies.

An educator may experience difficulty in addressing a barrier to learning with a learner, especially after a number of intervention strategies have been tried, and even after employing assistance from other grade educators. In such a case the head of the phase should refer the matter to the School Based Support Team (SBST) with documented proof of strategies already implemented. The SBST might, in consultation with the referring educator, identify and facilitate a process of developmental programmes. The implementation of the support or developmental programme is essentially the responsibility of the educator. If the support programme developed by the SBST is unsuccessful, the case is referred to the DBST. The DBST will give advice on further intervention to meet the learning needs of the learner. All relevant stakeholders (parents, learner, referring educator) should be kept informed of the learner’s progress.

The composition of the SBST depends on the size and the needs of the school and also on the number of educators available. The roles and functions of the SBST are:

- to support and assist the educator to plan appropriate intervention strategies in the classroom
- recommend proposals for the placement of a learner at another school where his or her needs will be met, to the district support team
- to develop a resource network with non-governmental organisations, welfare, health and justice departments
- to facilitate and encourage educators to share their human and material resources

- to ensure that parents of learners who experience barriers to learning, are involved in the planning of intervention strategies

The SBST is required to hold meetings at least once each term, or as the need arises. The school can develop its own policy concerning internal referrals and frequency of meetings. It is very important that the performance of a learner receiving learning support be recorded daily. All intervention strategies and their outcomes should be recorded (Department of Education, 1997: 34, 35, 36).

As a primary school educator in the Intersen Phase (combination of Intermediate and Senior Phases at primary school level: Grade 4 to Grade 7) for twenty years, the researcher has observed that an increasing number of learners, especially Grade 4 learners whose home language is an African language, experience grave difficulties in decoding, understanding and constructing messages in English in all six subjects. Needless to say, the instruction of English is a total nightmare to these learners. The researcher has been teaching Natural Sciences for almost twenty years and have noticed that learners with a language barrier struggle to make sense of ordinary instructions, like “cut and paste”, let alone grasping the meaning of key concepts and principles of the subject. These learners show poor listening skills and always seem distracted or inattentive. They experience extreme difficulty in following a lesson sequence and do not take part in class or group discussions. Usually they avoid eye contact to prevent being asked to respond to questions. Due to a limited vocabulary, when communicating they do not complete sentences or they mumble inaudible words. Learners who experience a language barrier are reluctant to read out loud in class. Their written work is slow paced because they have difficulty with sentence construction. Some of these learners even copy information incorrectly from the board. Experience has taught the researcher never to assume that all learners understand simple and basic communication in English. The researcher’s limited knowledge of African languages makes code switching futile and employing other learners to help is time-consuming and one can never guarantee that exact or precise translations take place!

Sadly, learners who experience English as a barrier to learning, rewrite the questions in tests and examinations instead of answering the questions. In many instances failure to succeed in their schoolwork leads to frustration and a further lack of motivation. This often leads to behavioural problems, which find an outlet in aggression, negativity and destructiveness.

Educators teaching in the Intersen Phase, especially Grade 4 educators, often feel that they are not adequately trained and lack skills needed to support learners who experience a barrier to the LoLT.

These learners need support in phonics and reading and have real difficulty in comprehension of concepts taught in the various subjects. Grade 4 educators are of the opinion that Foundation Phase educators are more capable of supplying learners with necessary support in phonics and reading. Another restricting factor is curriculum content that must be covered within a certain time frame. Educators complain that there is simply not enough time to divert from the prescribed curriculum or work at a slower pace to accommodate learners with a LoLT difficulty. The SBST at schools support and assist educators to enable them to provide learning support to learners who experience barriers to learning. Subject policies also advise educators to employ various intervention strategies, such as differentiated teaching methods and curriculum adaptation. The SBST at the researcher's school conducts workshops where basic training in reading and phonics support is provided to educators. Educators feel that these efforts are inadequate in arming them with much needed skills to provide support to learners with a language barrier.

Educators are expected to support all learners with a barrier to English as LoLT in the specific subject that they teach, by devising and drawing up learning support programmes. Only learners with extreme learning disabilities are referred to the SBST. These cases are normally referred to the District Based Support Team (DBST). In theory educators are not expected to devise a whole new curriculum when providing learning support, but to adapt the existing curriculum to meet the needs of all learners. It is precisely with this "adaptation" that educators have a problem. Some educators are of the opinion that no amount of "simplification" of curriculum content can compensate for a lack of proficiency in the LoLT. High educator to learner ratios makes learning support even more difficult. Many educators find it difficult to work with and control learners with behavioural problems. Consequently many learners get ignored and left out of the learning set up. This is a type of exclusion in a supposedly inclusive system. Many of these learners eventually become "push-outs" or "drop-outs". Unfortunately, not much is being done about this situation.

1.3 Problem statement

1.3.1 Background to the problem

Traditionally the learning support of learners with barriers to learning lay with specially trained individuals. As a result some of these learners were taught in special schools in the past. The only task the school had was to identify the learners with special educational needs and refer them to the

Educational Support Services section or special schools. However the new inclusive approach differs quite radically. It proposes that class and subject educators themselves should, as far as possible, provide the learning support. Therefore, the term “First Phase assistance” is used because educators are expected to try and solve the difficulty themselves in class. If it persists, additional assistance is needed from the SBST. If these intensive attempts still do not resolve the learners’ difficulties, a regional consultant should be involved. In some cases it may be necessary to call in professional individuals like social workers or speech therapists (Education White Paper 6, 2001: 19).

The responsibility for providing effective educational support cannot solely be left to educators. The efficient organization of educational support services is vital in this regard. The training provided by district support services “will focus on supporting all learners, educators and the system as a whole so that the full range of leaning needs can be met” (Education White Paper 6, 2001: 19).

1.3.2 Main problem

The main research problem was to investigate whether Grade 4 learners who experienced a barrier to English as LoLT were supported in all their subjects in their regular classes and explore how effective these learning support measures or strategies were.

An increasing number of learners with an indigenous language (which could be described as African languages as well as Afrikaans) as home language, are experiencing grave difficulties in comprehending concepts and knowledge transferred through the instruction of English, which is a “foreign language” to many. They are confronted with the double challenge of mastering the curriculum content while simultaneously learning the language (English) in which it is couched.

The advent of democracy in the early 1990s led to a break with the past of discrimination and exclusion in the education system, but many learners whose home language is an African language were moved due to choice or circumstance into school environments where the LoLT is English. When the LoLT differs from learners’ home language, this difference can be an educational barrier, which if not addressed timeously and effectively, can turn into a major obstacle in an education system. Indeed, it can become a major cause of exclusion that may drive up failure rates and undermine the system. This barrier should be addressed by the educators, especially in Grade 4.

1.3.3 Sub-problems

From the main problem the following sub-problems could be derived:

- Grade 4 learners find themselves in a challenging phase of their school life due to an increase in subjects; workload and they are expected to work much more independently.
- The language barrier challenge to inclusion is often not recognised as a mainstream barrier or disability in the education setting and is often viewed as a “soft” barrier, and thus does not command the kind of resources and attention that it should, both at the level of policy and in the classroom. This has the potential to become a major challenge for the education system as a whole, and the successful implementation of inclusion.
- Educators at primary schools address this problem differently, resulting in different outcomes. Some outcomes are more successful than others.
- SBSTs supporting the teaching and learning process by identifying and addressing the needs of the learner, educator and school, may also function differently or not at all and therefore influence the outcome of support differently.

Hence this research took on a case study approach by investigating learning support at two different schools representing different social and economic circumstances. The research probed the strategies which were applied at the two schools. The effectiveness of the remedial measures at both schools were also be scrutinised. Moreover, it investigated what the deciding factors were.

1.4 Aim of the research

The main aim of this research was to investigate whether Grade 4 learners who experienced a barrier to English as the Language of LoLT were supported in all subjects in their regular classes and explore how effective these learning support measures or strategies were.

The research was, therefore, aimed at investigating how mainstream schools handled the challenge posed by the LoLT as a barrier to learning, what support was offered to Grade 4 learners with this challenge and what barriers constrained educators from providing adequate support in this area or what factors enhanced the ability and willingness of educators to undertake this crucial task.

1.4.1 Research question

Main research question: Is learning support being provided to grade 4 learners who experience barriers to English as the LoLT?

Sub research questions:

- How seriously do educators consider language as a barrier to learning where English is a learner's second or third language and also the LoLT?
- What methods of support are being provided to ameliorate its impact?
- What can we learn (both from the positive and negative experiences of educators) that might help strengthen support in this area?
- How effective is the SBST in supporting the teaching and learning process by identifying and addressing the needs of the learner, educator and school?

1.5 Theoretical framework

The theoretical framework of this study is positioned in the field of Education and therefore also anchored in literature based on the research topic. “A theoretical framework facilitates the dialogue between the literature and research study” (Henning, Van Rensburg & Smit, 2009: 26). The research process involved continuous contemplative consideration of interrelated main concepts of this research study. Henning states that a theoretical framework leads to a specific *conceptual framework*, which can also be described as “an alignment of the key concepts of the study” (Henning et al, 2009: 26).

This study followed a mixed method approach within a pragmatist framework, since pragmatism as a research paradigm supports the use of a mix of different research methods. A mixed method study merges characteristics of both quantitative and qualitative approaches to research. This mix could accentuate one set of attributes or the other (McMillan & Schumacher, 2014). Pragmatism embraces both interpretivism and positivism with the assumption that these approaches are not mutually exclusive but aid us in understanding the social world. Quantitative and qualitative approaches can be defined on two levels of dialogue. At one level, they refer to distinctions about the nature of knowledge: how one understands the world and the eventual purpose of the research. On another level, these terms refer to research methods- how data are collected and analysed, as well as the types of generalisations and representations obtained from the data (McMillan & Schumacher, 2014).

Grade 4 learners were required to write a standardised English proficiency test during the third school term. The assumption was that if learning support has been applied effectively, learners' test results should have confirmed this. Verification moves from a hypothesis described as a proposition, to quantitative proving. The interpretive approach recognises the shortcoming of measurement and therefore promotes the use of a variety of data, sources and methods of analysis in order to secure validity. Data collection techniques employed in the study included observation, questionnaires, standardised tests and semi-structured interviews.

Knowledge frameworks and policy concerned with LoLT, inclusion, barriers to learning, learning support and their interaction with social influences, were under scrutiny. An attempt to understand the phenomenon of learning support to Grade 4 learners who experience a barrier to English as LoLT, was made through the meaning that key role players such as educators, school principals and SBSTs assigned to it. Therefore attitudes, beliefs and values of these key role players were also probed.

The methodological approach of the research is positioned ideologically with reference to the ongoing South African debate on "language that best supports learning". The medium of language opens up a world of knowledge, skills and insights to human beings. Language is the foundation of teaching and the medium for much of the other learning in the school curriculum. Learners who experience barriers to the LoLT have difficulty in coping with all the other subjects, as the languages learning area underpin all the other learning areas (RNCS, 2002:5). When the LoLT differs from learners' home language, this difference could be an educational barrier which, if not addressed timeously and effectively, could turn into a major cause of exclusion and hamper learners' progress.

In a mixed method approach, knowledge is diffused and spread out. To fully grasp the meaning of a phenomenon, the researcher has to investigate different things and different settings. Therefore, the research probed learning support strategies to Grade 4 learners who experienced a barrier to the LoLT applied at two different primary schools. The investigation was undertaken in the learners' natural settings at the two schools, in order to collect significant situational or contextual data. Educators at primary schools may address the problem differently, resulting in different outcomes, with different success rates.

1.6 Explanation of key concepts

This section sets out and explains the main concepts in inclusive education.

1.6.1 Mainstreaming

Mainstreaming is about getting learners to “fit into” the “normal” classroom routine and giving some learners extra support to enable them to “fit in” or be integrated into this particular existing system. Mainstreaming and integration focus on changes that need to take place in learners and not changes or adaptations that should take place in the environment, to meet the needs of each learner. In South Africa mainstreaming refers to learners who attend schools that do not usually tend to needs of learners who experience a barrier/s to learning (Education White Paper 6, 2001: 17).

1.6.2 Inclusion

White Paper 6 distinguishes between mainstreaming and inclusion in the following way: Inclusion is about recognising and respecting the differences among all learners and building on the similarities. Inclusion is about supporting all learners, educators and the system as a whole so that the full range of learning needs can be met. Inclusion focuses on overcoming barriers in the system that prevent it from meeting the full range of learning needs, whereas mainstreaming focuses on changes that need to take place in the learners to enable them to “fit” into the existing education system (Education White paper 6, 2001: 17).

1.6.3 Inclusive education

In South Africa, inclusive education means a system of education that supports all learners in their learning by responding appropriately to their learning needs (Gauteng Department of Education, 2006: 3).

White Paper 6 (2001) defines inclusive education and training as:

- acknowledging that all children and youth can learn and that they need support
- enabling education structures, systems and learning methodologies to meet the needs of all learners
- acknowledging and respecting differences in learners, whether due to age, gender, ethnicity, language, class, disability, HIV or other infectious diseases

- broader than formal schooling and acknowledging that learning also occurs in the home and community, and within formal and informal settings and structures
- changing attitudes, behaviour, teaching methods, curricula and environment to meet the needs of all learners
- maximising the participation of all learners in the culture and curriculum of educational institutions and uncovering and minimising barriers to learning (Department of Education, 2001: 6)

1.6.4 Home language

Home language can be defined as the first language that a child acquires in the home that it uses to communicate and interact with other family members. “Home Language level” means the language proficiency level that reflects mastery of interpersonal communication skills required in social situations and the cognitive academic skills essential for learning across the curriculum. This level also provides learners with a literary, aesthetic and imaginative ability that will give them the capacity to create, imagine and empower their understandings of the world they live in (National Protocol for Assessment Grades R–12, Department of Basic Education, 2011: ix).

1.6.5 Language of learning and teaching (LoLT)

The LoLT is the language chosen by a school’s governing body in consultation with parents. It is the language educators use to instruct and assess learners and the language of the textbooks provided in the school (National Protocol for Assessment Grades R–12; Department of Basic Education, 2011: ix).

1.6.6 Additional languages

A second or more languages added or learned alongside the home language (Donald, 2006: 197). “first additional language level” means the language proficiency level that reflects the basic intercultural and interpersonal communication skills needed in social situations and the cognitive academic skills essential for learning across the curriculum. The first additional language level can be used as the language of teaching and learning from the Intermediate Phase onwards (National Protocol for Assessment Grades R–12, Department of Basic Education, 2011: viii).

1.6.7 Second language

Second language refers to any language that is learned or mastered after the home language. Mahlobo (Mahlobo1999:10) defines a second language as “. . . language used by a people in addition to their native language for communication between different language groups”.

1.6.8 English as second language

English as the medium of instruction (LoLT) to learners whose home language is a language other than English (Landsberg et al, 2006: 150). Mahlobo is of the opinion that learners’ level of proficiency in English as second language should take the following social contextual factors into account, namely rural, urban, pre-dominantly black nor white and low or high socio-economic class (Mahlobo, 1999: 18).

1.6.9 Bilingualism

Bilingualism is the ability to speak two languages (Alswang, 2001: 72).

1.6.10 Barriers to learning

The New English Usage Dictionary defines a “barrier” as “an obstacle to prevent a person or thing getting past a place or thing” (Alswang, 2001: 59) “an obstacle”, “something which is in the way” (Alswang, 2001: 573). So a “barrier to learning and participation” is something that stands in the way of learning, something that stops participation or learning from progressing (Gauteng Department of Education, 2006: 24).

White Paper 6 adopts the use of the terminology “barriers to learning and development” in the place of disabilities. It retains the internationally acceptable terms of “disability” and “impairments” when referring specifically to those learners whose barriers to learning and development are rooted in organic or medical causes (Department of Education, 2001:12).

Barriers to learning can be found within the learner, within the learning environment, within the system of education or in the wider economic, social and political environment. The barriers to learning experienced include poverty, ideology, physical access, inflexible curriculum, inappropriate language, communication channels, inaccessibly built environments, lack of space or inappropriate

transport and similar factors within the system that impede access to learning (Department of Education, October 2002).

1.6.11 School Based Support Team (SBST)

This was a structure established within the school whose main function was to co-ordinate learners' and educators' support systems. The SBST identified and accommodated diverse needs of the learner, educator and the school as institution.

1.6.12 Learning support

Educators in inclusive classrooms cannot accommodate all learners effectively without support. The term "support" is used to describe both the learning support provided by educators to individual learners in the classroom and structures and arrangements beyond the classroom, which make it possible for educators to do this. When educators provide learning support, they make it easier for learning to happen.

The NCSNET/ NCESS report promotes the following approach to support to schools:

- Interventions aimed at facilitating transformation of the institutions and curriculum through institutional and curriculum development initiatives to address the diverse needs of the learner development population and barriers to learning and development in a preventative and health-promotive way.
- Additional support that will be required by some learners either throughout or at some point in their learning journey, for example in the form of counselling support, career guidance, specific learning support, social interventions and assistive devices (Engelbrecht, 1999: 52).

"The main focus of support is to make the system more supportive of individual learner needs so that all learners can learn from the curriculum" (Gauteng Department of Education: 2006).

1.7 Research methodology

The research was conducted using both quantitative and qualitative methodologies. *Quantitative* research design accentuates objectivity in measuring and describing phenomena. As a result the research design maximises objectivity by using numbers, statistics, structure and control. *Qualitative* research design emphasises gathering data on naturally occurring phenomena and most of the data are in narrative form rather than numbers (McMillan & Schumacher, 2014: 29, 31). The research used

triangulation – a technique which employs several data collection methods – to validate the information by cross checking the information obtained from the quantitative data with the qualitative data in order to determine whether patterns recur.

1.7.1 Research approach

The case study approach was utilised wherein two English-medium primary schools were identified in Education District D6 (Ekurhuleni) in Gauteng. According to Henning, “In a case study approach the main assumption is that a phenomenon is investigated as a ‘bounded system’. This system may be a group of people, a set of documents or a television series. Any social entity that can be bounded by parameters and that shows a specific dynamic and relevance revealing information that can be captured within these boundaries may be a case study” (Henning et al, 2009:32).

McMillan states that a case study “examines a bounded system or a case, over time in depth, employing multiple sources of data found in the setting. The case may be a programme, an event, an activity or a set of individuals bounded in time and place” (McMillan & Schumacher, 2014: 32).

The research took a case study approach wherein learning support at two different schools representing different socio-economic environments were investigated. This was done in the anticipation that approaches would differ in the different socio-economic types of educational settings and that this, in turn, could lead to both bad and best practices in language learning support provided to learners were experiencing English as a barrier to learning.

1.7.2 Data collection strategies

A number of data collection techniques were employed in gathering the requisite data for these case studies – each aimed at complementing the other:

1. a structured questionnaire
2. semi-structured interviews with key informants
3. classroom observation
4. standardised English proficiency tests for Grade 4

Quantitative methodology or technique: structured questionnaire

This approach entails the compilation of a structured questionnaire – using mostly closed questions and rankings but, where unavoidable, open-ended questions. A structured questionnaire is “a written

set of questions or statements that assess attitudes, opinions, beliefs and biographical information which includes limited response questions that is followed by a predetermined set of responses.” (McMillan & Schumacher, 2014: 5,211). The questionnaire was piloted on a random sample of two educators in each of the selected schools in order to, inter alia, reduce the number of open-ended questions and test the feasibility and duration of the sample. These questionnaires were given to educators in the target schools to fill in by themselves. The sample was the entire universe of educators in the Intersen Phase in both schools.

The questionnaire was limited to the provision of learning support to grade 4 English second language learners who experienced a barrier to English as LoLT. The questionnaire also investigated educators’ basic knowledge and understanding of related issues such as: learning support strategies; inclusion and barriers to learning. The following elements were probed: method of identification of learners experiencing barriers to English as LoLT; the average amount of time educators spent in supporting these learners; and factors that impeded the educators’ efforts to assist learners who experienced barriers to English as LoLT.

An adequate response was regarded as upwards of 40% of the total. The literature reviews, the results of the standardised English proficiency test, plus personal observation in the classroom, were used to inform the compilation of questions.

Semi-structured key informant interviews

“This is an in-depth interview of an individual who has special knowledge, status or communication skills. This type of interview allows individual open-ended responses to questions that are fairly specific” (McMillan & Schumacher, 2001:6). These interviews comprised mainly of semi structured questions with no choices for respondents to select answers from. Questions were phrased to allow for individual responses. Key informants in each school, such as the principals, department heads and members of the SBSTs, were interviewed in this regard.

Classroom-practice: observation

This involved observing how ESL grade 4 learners received instruction in their different subjects. The focus was on whether and how learning support was provided during instruction time. A randomly selected class was observed as it followed its normal timetable over a two-day period.

Quantitative methodology: standardised English proficiency test for Grade 4

This is a test designed to ascertain the learners' levels of proficiency in English. This standardised test was obtained from the Gauteng Department of Education. The test is usually applied at the beginning of the Grade 4 year and is used to determine Grade 4 learners' proficiency in English. For research purposes, the test was administered during the third school term. The assumption was that at this stage, learners who experienced a barrier to English as LoLT would have been identified and substantial learning support would have been provided to them. An improvement in language proficiency should have resulted in test results above 50% for these learners.

1.7.3 Sample

The sample consisted of:

1. a former model C school (former 'whites-only' schools that were initially opened to a limited number of learners of other races in the early 1990s). At the time of the research the learner body comprised of children from all races with varying cultural and language backgrounds. The socio-economic milieu of learners ranged from poor to middle class to extremely wealthy. The LoLT at this school was English.
2. a state school in an area with low income levels and relatively high unemployment. This school served the surrounding community, learners from outside the community and learners from two nearby informal settlements, where issues involving home language education were likely to arise as learners also originated from diverse cultural and language backgrounds. The LoLT at the school was either English or Afrikaans, according to parents' preference.

These two samples were chosen in order to provide an adequate comparative canvas for the research, and so help tease out variations in methods, factors, and approaches around the issue and, of course, the role of resources (both human and material) in providing adequate support. Former model C schools were, for instance, usually better resourced than state schools. Other variables, including those influenced by resources, such as educator-learner ratios, were also taken into account. These variables included educators' training, involvement, attitudes, and knowledge about learning support.

At each school a list of Grade 4 learners was acquired. All the learners on this list constituted the sample in each school that was tested to determine their level of language proficiency, using a standardised English proficiency test. Since the assumption was that successful support would result in

an improvement in English proficiency, an improvement in English proficiency was regarded as an indicator of successful learning support. The levels of improvement were graded in order to graduate levels of success.

1.8 Plan of study

In order to establish historical and relationship perspectives of and insight into the research topic, namely learning support to Grade 4 learners who experience barriers to English as LoLT, the following were explored in the six chapters of this thesis:

Chapter 1

This chapter deals with the problem formulation, refinement and aim of the study. Key concepts (phrases) are explained. In this chapter the background to the research, the research methods and design, how the data was collected and analysed are explored and discussed.

Chapter 2

This chapter deals with the development and the scholastic and developmental needs of Grade 4 learners. It explores their cognitive, linguistic, emotional and social needs and what educational implications these have for the Grade 4 learner.

Chapters 3 and 4

In these chapters a literature review investigates international and national views on inclusion, barriers to learning and learning support. More importantly, the review investigated how learning support was provided to learners whose home language was not English and who experienced barriers to English as the LoLT, in an inclusive setting.

Chapter 5

This chapter deals with the discussion of the research design and methodology, the presentation of data and findings in relation to the theory, knowledge and practice as identified in the literature review. New theories based on research findings were explored.

Chapter 6

In this chapter the findings are interpreted, and conclusions and recommendations are made about the research topic.

1.9 Conclusion

This chapter introduced and elucidated a number of key concepts around which this study revolves, among others, home language, English second language as LoLT, barriers to learning, learning support and inclusive education. The context and background to the research problem accentuated the plight of ESL Grade 4 learners with a limited proficiency in English and their subsequent battle to master curriculum content, interact with peers and express their identity. Grade 4 learners have entered the Intermediate Phase and are expected to have mastered basic interpersonal communication skills and continuously improve their listening, speaking, reading and writing skills in order to cope with a more complex and increased work load.

Language can be a serious barrier to learning and has the potential to be a significant obstacle to an inclusive education system. The main aim of the research was to investigate whether Grade 4 learners who experienced a barrier to English as LoLT were supported in all their subjects and also probed how effective these intervention strategies were.

Brief reference was made to the numerous changes and amendments to our South African education system in recent years, its significance for language policy and how it impacted on learning and teaching. The intended research methodology was discussed and a plan of study was outlined.

The next chapter provides insight into and a detailed discussion of the development as well as the developmental needs of the Grade 4 learner. A study of child development can provide valuable educational information and the lessons drawn from such studies are relevant to this research.

CHAPTER 2

DEVELOPMENT AND THE SCHOLASTIC AND DEVELOPMENTAL NEEDS OF GRADE 4 LEARNERS

2.1 Introduction

This chapter focuses on the concept of child development and more specifically, the development of Grade 4 learners. Littlefield provides a clear and simple definition of child development, stating that it is the “field of study where researchers from many disciplines work to understand the important changes that take place as children grow through childhood” (Littlefield & Cook, 2005: 3). Learners in Grade 4 are categorized as being in the Middle Childhood age group (six to ten years) (Mcdevitt & Ormrod, 2010; Littlefield & Cook, 2005; Dowling, 2005).

The developmental trends and characteristics of these learners have been highlighted in this chapter. Writings in this chapter seek to identify, explain and clarify the increasing and progressive changes in the physical, social, emotional as well as cognitive development of children. These concepts are closely interrelated.

A number of factors contribute to a child’s growth; therefore the discussion and descriptions contained in this chapter rely on research from academic disciplines such as Anthropology, Biology, Economics, Psychology, Sociology and other linked fields. Facts and insights were also gained from child and family studies, social work as well as the medical field. Referral is also made to classic developmental perspectives such as those of Jean Piaget and Lev Vygotsky. Importantly, the educational domain also provides a firm foundation for arguments and discussion; therefore insights from this domain are employed, especially regarding early childhood education and intervention.

A study of human development aids us in understanding the changes that occur in human beings right from conception and throughout life’s journey up till death. Valuable information and applications relevant to education can be drawn from such studies. When conducting a study of child development, the influence of various factors should also be taken into account. Factors such as genetic inheritance, the environment in which the child is reared as well as the child’s unique emotional and mental processes, as these all affect his or her choices and behaviour. These factors are grouped into two categories, namely the “nature and nurture” forces, where “nature refers to biological influences that preside over development and “nurture indicates the circumstances and aid afforded by the environment (Littlefield & Cook, 2005: 5). A well known American psychologist, John Watson, argued that nurture, for the most part, settles a child’s destiny. However, recent scientific research has concluded that nature and nurture actually work together in determining what a child will become. Instead of debating the dominance of these two forces over each other, we

should be focusing on how they interact with each other (Littlefield & Cook, 2005; Saracho & Spodek, 2007).

Everyone who has a passion for working with and helping children, needs to have a good understanding of the basic principles of child development as well as the influences that may affect such development adversely or favourably. Grade 4 learners in the six to ten age group are classified as being in “middle childhood” and the skills, knowledge and attitudes that they need to succeed at primary school are described as “developmental tasks” (Mcdevitt & Ormrod, 2010:16; Mwamwenda, 1996: 86, 87; Littlefield & Cook, 2005,130).

The development of a child is comprised of many components such as physical, cognitive, social and emotional development. The child’s physical development stands out as the most noticeable feature; this refers to child’s growth in size, strength as well as muscle coordination. Cognitive development has to do with how children think, solve problems, as well as their memory and language communication. Cognitive growth can be deduced from children’s progress in academic work such as reading, writing and learning mathematics and other subjects. Social development relates to how children interact with family members, peers and later, other people from the greater society (Mcdevitt, et al, 2010; Littlefield & Cook, 2005; Barbarin & Wasik, 2009).

2.2 Physical development

The physical development of a child is the result of numerous systematic changes. Genes affirm instructions in body cells causing crucial changes in the body as a whole, until persons have adult bodies. In due time, physiological functioning becomes progressively more differentiated and integrated. This is marked by an increased variation in cell function and a more synchronised functioning of different body parts (Mcdevitt, et al, 2010; Barbarin & Wasik, 2009).

At birth, the weight of an average newborn is about 3, 75 kg, with males weighing about 250g more than females. By five months, birth weight tends to have doubled. On average, girls reach half of their adult body weight by age nine while boys attain half of their adult body weight by age eleven. At age two, children have gained more than half of their adult height. During middle childhood, the growth of Grade 4 learners slows to about two to three inches per year but there is a marked increase in this rate during adolescence. Growth hormones from the pituitary gland fuel growth during childhood and adolescence and maximum secretion occurs during stages of deep sleep. The rapid

growth of infancy and early childhood slows down during late or middle childhood (Littlefield & Cook, 2005).

In infancy, motor skills allow for exploration and investigation and survival devices such as reflexes are put to use. Primitive reflexes such as sucking, aid the infant to find nourishment. Postural reflexes help infants to keep their postural balance, hold their heads upright and roll their heads in the same direction as the body is leaning toward. During the first month after birth, the loco motor reflexes surface and vanish again by age four months. These reflexes imitate movements like crawling, walking and swimming (Mcdevitt, et al, 2010).

During the first few months, babies' reflexes, unprompted movements, and voluntary movements slowly strengthen their muscles and stimulate neurological development in their nervous systems. Major milestones in gross motor development are achieved across the first year. At one month the strength of the neck muscles permit infants to hold their heads upright. The muscles in the trunk also gain more strength and coordination then and permit infants to roll over by three months and sit on their own by six months. At age seven months, infants' legs are sufficiently strong to enable them to crawl. At the same age they are also able to stand by holding on to one or other support. A very important milestone for most parents is the first independent steps of the infant at about one year of age. It should be noted that the ages discussed above are averages. The rate of development in individual infants is influenced by variations in genetic make-up, neurological maturity as well as practice in muscle movement (Littlefield & Cook, 2005).

Children's bodies seem to aim for certain objectives in physical growth, even if growth is momentarily hampered by illness or insufficient nutrition. The body is a multifaceted, vibrant system that grows and changes in a complex environmental setting (Mcdevitt, et al, 2010).

During childhood and adolescence, expected changes in physical functioning take place. Dynamic physical activity and attainment of new motor skills is typical of early childhood. In middle childhood the increase in the weight of children is greater than their increase in height. This period is marked by an increase in physical energy. Grade 4 learners are very energetic and they have improved motor skills. Gross motor skills which were once awkwardly performed are now executed effortlessly. They seldom sit or stand still for very long but are always engaged in one or other activity such as running, skipping, climbing, throwing and catching balls. These improved physical attributes are channelled into organized games (Mwamwenda, 1996; Mcdevitt, et al, 2010). This increase in the physical energy of Grade 4 learners also adds greatly to the frustrations of educators.

In general, Grade 4 learners are very noisy and educators find it difficult and time consuming to get them to settle down in order for teaching to begin. Grade 4 learners are always moving about in class. They constantly find excuses to walk either to the bin to drop in one piece of paper or sharpen a pencil. Their inability to keep still impacts on their attention span and effects lesson presentation and lesson outcomes in various ways. They are also very excitable and it takes skill and experience to manage and control a class of forty three enthusiastic children during practical demonstrations or experiments.

Children in the middle childhood phase lose their primary teeth which are replaced by permanent teeth. Girls mature a bit faster than boys; they acquire permanent teeth sooner and reach skeletal maturity before boys do. There is also a marked improvement in fine motor skills during this phase. This is evident from their detailed drawings and handwriting which becomes smaller and more regular. These learners also turn out to be more competent in fine motor skills such as arts and crafts activities and model building. It is necessary to point out that some learners may have impediments in their fine motor skills, which can result in uneven and irregular handwriting. This impediment can be attributed to neurological conditions or insufficient opportunity to practice fine motor skills. In the researcher's personal experience, quite a number of Grade 4 learners' handwriting is still irregular. It is not uncommon to see letters of varying size, capitals and small letters in one sentence and even in the same word.

Play during middle childhood frequently entails gaining and mastering physical skills such as jumping, climbing, riding bicycles and skateboarding. Children in this phase may perform dangerous stunts just to impress their peers and to demonstrate their skilfulness (Littlefield & Cook, 2005).

Gender differences emerge in children's preferences for various sports and physical activities (Mcdevitt, et al, 2010). Research shows that boys, on average, demonstrate higher activity levels than girls from babyhood onward. Boys have a tendency to take part in rough, outdoor play whereas girls show a preference for and also perform better in activities which entail flexibility and fine motor coordination. Boys demonstrate more physical aggression than girls, a difference which persists throughout childhood and even into adulthood (Littlefield & Cook, 2005; Mcdevitt, et al, 2010). During observation of Grade 4 learners at play, the researcher noted that although there were games that boys and girls partook in separately, there was still a tendency to play together. Some boys enjoyed playing skipping and throwing and catching balls with girls. A favourite pass time was chasing one another on the playground. Fighting involving physical force still happens, especially

among Grade 4 boys who, at such times wrestle and punch one another, usually brought on by teasing from their peers.

The following tendencies in gender development can be noted in middle childhood learners. They are aware of gender constancy; that a change in clothing or appearance does not alter the gender of male or female. Children also become aware that a range of cultural values or meanings are attached to conventionally male or female functions. Both girls and boys become increasingly aware of the preferential status of males, and girls display some discontent with their female status (Littlefield & Cook, 2005).

2.3 Cognitive development

It is imperative that people who work with children have a firm understanding of cognitive development in order for them to build on learners' strengths, consider their limitations, and provide access to a challenging and inspiring academic environment.

Research over the past twenty five years has brought awareness of the fact that thinking begins very early in life. Babies are born with an amazing ability to learn. This ability is the driving force behind the changes in children's understanding and interaction with their world and it also allows them to foresee future happenings. Research on cognitive development aims to explain these changes and centres on the ways in which children think as well as their independent problem-solving skills (Dowling, 2010; Saracho & Spodek, 2007).

At the onset of the inquiry into cognitive development, the classic developmental theories of Jean Piaget and Lev Vygotsky will be considered briefly. Both theories explore the active manner in which children learn.

Piaget and Vygotsky's theories share common themes and essential differences which provide a significant foundation for current understanding of how children make sense of daily events on their own or with aid from adults. These commonalities and differences have allowed modern researchers to delve deeper into devices that lie beneath the thinking processes of children.

Both theories contain four shared themes: constructive processes, readiness, challenge as well as the importance of social interaction. Both theories suggest that children do not merely absorb knowledge passively but rather that knowledge is acquired constructively. According to Piaget, children organise

their thoughts as schemes and continue to apply these as operations in other circumstances, either on their own or with assistance from adults (Lee, 2000; Dowling, 2010). Both Piaget and Vygotsky propose that a child is cognitively ready for some experiences but not for others, at any given time. They agree that a child's brain maturation could limit the child's capabilities at different stages of development. Furthermore, Piaget suggests that children can accommodate new objects and incidents only when they can also incorporate the objects and incidents into existing schemes. He argues that children are capable of logical thinking concerning new problems only once they have created (constructed) the appropriate logical operations. Vygotsky proposes that once children have mastered certain tasks, other more difficult tasks come to the fore to be coaxed into full maturity with adult aid and support. He refers to this as the zone of proximal development (Mcdevitt, et al, 2010).

“Horowitz (as cited in Mcdevitt, et al, 2010: 224) cautions educators about the interpretation of the ‘readiness’ perception and states that all children are ready to learn something”. The concern is not whether a child is ready, but what a child is ready for and what would be the most beneficial way to assist the child's cognitive development.

The notion of challenge is contained in both theories. Vygotsky's zone of proximal development argues that children gain more from undertakings or tasks that they can master only with the assistance of adults (Littlefield & Cook, 2005). According to Piaget, children advance to more sophisticated knowledge and thought processes when they are faced with events that does not fit into or match their existing schemes or formats (Littlefield & Cook, 2005).

Both Vygotsky and Piaget consider social interaction as very influential in fostering logical thought processes and reasoning skills. Gauvain (as cited in Saracho & Spodek, 2007: 155) regards cognitive development as a social process. She states that cognitive development is socially constructed with regard to what and how children learn. Piaget is of the notion that through disagreement with others, children realise that different viewpoints from their own exist and this prompts steady abandonment of the egocentrism typical of preoperational thought (Dowling, 2010; Saracho & Spodek, 2007; Morra, 2008).

2.3.1 Differences between Piaget's and Vygotsky's theories of cognitive development

Piaget proposes that language supplies verbal labels for most of the perceptions that children have developed. Even so, Piaget concedes that a great deal of cognitive development transpires

independently from language. On the other hand, Vygotsky proposes that cognitive development is vitally dependent on language. With regard to the kind of experiences that facilitates cognitive development: Piaget promotes self-exploration while Vygotsky argues for more guided exploration and structured activities (Dowling, 2010; Mcdevitt, et al, 2010; Saracho & Spodek, 2007).

Both Piaget and Vygotsky value the influence of social interaction on the cognitive development of the child. However, Piaget places more emphasis on interactions with peers, while Vygotsky stresses the importance of interaction with adults who can assist the child with more difficult tasks (Dowling, 2010; Mcdevitt, et al, 2010; Saracho & Spodek, 2007). Piaget neglects the aspect of culture as a major influence in the course of cognitive development. Vygotsky however viewed culture to be of vital importance in shaping the specific thinking skills that children attain. It should be brought to the attention of educators and other experts that despite their varying instructional practices, almost all of the world's cultures have developed efficient strategies for helping children gain the knowledge and skills they will need to be successful members of adult society.

Piaget proposed that children's cognitive development can be grouped into four stages. The commencement ages for all stages except sensorimotor stage are averages. There can be variation in the ages that some children exhibit features related to a specific stage. In some children, features associated with a particular stage are demonstrated a bit earlier, in others a bit later. A number of children can be midway between the changeover from one stage to the next, thus demonstrating qualities of two bordering stages at the same time (Dowling, 2010).

Piaget identifies four stages of cognitive attainment. The sensorimotor stage is marked by fact that cognitive functioning is based mainly on behaviour and awareness. The beginning of this stage is at birth to about two years of age. Next is the preoperational stage when symbolic thought and language become common but reasoning is still considered unfounded by adult values. The third stage, into which the Grade 4 learner is grouped, is the concrete operations stage when logical thinking ability surfaces but is restricted to concrete objects and events. The fourth stage is the formal operations stage which is marked by an increasing ability to reason about abstract information (Mcdevitt, et al, 2010; Littlefield & Cook, 2005; Lee, 2000; Dowling, 2010).

Developmental researchers are of the opinion that Piaget underrates the influence of the environment, as well as prior knowledge and experience in the mastering of certain tasks. Modern developmental researchers also contest the notion that cognitive development of children can be compartmentalised into general stages. Another criticism or weakness in Piaget's theory emphasised by research studies

is that Piaget underrates the abilities of children, especially that of infants. Research conducted after 1970 attests to the remarkable cognitive abilities of infants as young as three or two months (Mcdevitt, et al, 2010; Littlefield & Cook, 2005; Lee, 2000; Dowling, 2010).

Central ideas in Vygotsky's theory

The following are key elements in a child's cognitive development:

- Some cognitive processes are seen as a diversity of species; others are unique to human beings. Vygotsky differentiates between lower mental functions and higher mental functions, where lower mental functions refer to certain basic ways of learning and responding to the environment and higher mental functions points to purposeful, decisive cognitive functions that improve learning, memory and logical reasoning.
- Adults communicate to children the ways in which their culture makes meaning of the world. by means of informal exchanges and formal schooling,
- Every culture contains physical and cognitive tools that make daily living more valuable and efficient.
- Thought and language become progressively interdependent in the first few years of life. Vygotsky views thought and language as two detached tasks for babies and toddlers. He states that in the young child, language is mainly used as means of communication instead of an instrument for thought. Thought and language merge from about the age of two. When this happens, the phenomenon of self-talk occurs, where children often talk to themselves.
- Multifaceted mental processes start as social activities and slowly progress into internal mental activities that children can use independently. Children obtain their culture's tools in their own individual manner. Children interpret and convert ideas and approaches in their own unique way.
- Children can perform more demanding tasks when assisted by more sophisticated and proficient individuals. This is also referred to as scaffolding, wherein "support is given to a child as he or she learns to master a new intellectual function or achieve a specific task" (Littlefield & Cook, 2005: 196).
- Difficult tasks encourage greatest cognitive growth.
- Play allows children to extend themselves cognitively. Play encourages social skills, aids children in experimenting with new groupings of objects, helps them identify cause and effect associations and to learn more about other people's viewpoints (Littlefield & Cook, 2005; Mcdevitt, et al, 2010; Dowling, 2010).

“In play a child always behaves beyond his average age, above his daily behaviour; in play it is as though he were a head taller than himself” (Vygotsky, 1978:102 as quoted in Mcdevitt, et al, 2010: 214).

The Grade 4 learner could be described as being in Piaget’s “Concrete Operational Stage”, because the child is capable of using a logical process of reasoning on the basis of concrete evidence (Mwamwenda, 1996; Mcdevitt, et al, 2010; Littlefield & Cook, 2005:14). Concrete operational thought can also be described as a stage of cognitive development in which learners are able to think about two or more aspects of a problem (Littlefield & Cook, 2005). This age group (6-10) is described as Middle Childhood (Mcdevitt, et al, 2010: 225; Littlefield & Cook, 2005: 130). The Grade 4 learner should at this stage have developed fundamental skills in reading, writing and calculating.

Children in the concrete operations stage show evidence of a number of forms of logical thought and they are able to explain their way of thinking. They can group objects in different ways and at different levels quite easily. Middle childhood learners are able to grasp the concept of conservation. They understand that an amount remains the same if nothing is added or taken away even if matter (for example liquid) is poured into differently shaped containers. Conservation on liquid and numbers emerge at around age six or seven. Their logical thinking abilities continue to develop and they become skilled in mastering progressively more difficult conservation tasks (Mcdevitt, et al, 2010; Littlefield, 2005).

It should be noted that even though children in the concrete operational stage show evidence of logical thought, their cognitive development is not yet complete. They struggle with reasoning and understanding about abstract or theoretical ideas. This is evident in a subject such as language, in their lack of ability to understand the underlying meanings of proverbs for example. In mathematics it may be evident when learners are confused about concepts such as infinity and negative numbers. In social sciences, learners could have problems grasping the meaning of abstract concepts such as “feudal” and “democracy”. During this phase, there is also the surfacing of group games and team sports that entail managing a variety of perspectives.

Moreover, development of logical thinking skills is influenced by the value that the particular child’s culture places on those skills. Some nine and ten year olds may intermittently display formal operational thinking skills where simple tasks in familiar contexts are concerned. In some cultures regular participation in adult activities is acceptable.

2.4 Social and emotional development

Our feelings influence who we are and help shape our destiny. They also affect our relationship with others and the world around us, as well as our ability to cope with life's challenges. Emotions can promote or discourage learning for children. The socialisation of children is shaped by numerous significant social forces such as those found in the family, the peer group and significant others, such as educators. Research in neuroscience has proven that people are not born with emotional well-being; it is nurtured by the positive and healthy interaction of adults with children and young adults (Blake, Bird & Gerlach, 2007; Littlefield & Cook, 2005; Mcdevitt, et al, 2010; Dowling, 2010; Saracho & Spodek, 2007).

Schools are important agents for fostering emotional health and well-being. Positive influence and reactions by parents and educators to children's social and emotional development makes for better learning. Schools also have a critical role in developing children's emotional competence, their flexibility, and their creativity - all of which contribute to establishing emotional well-being in the child. This helps children to manage their present lives, acts as a motivational agent for future ambitions and equips them for adult life (Saracho & Spodek, 2007; Littlefield & Cook, 2005; Mcdevitt, et al, 2010; Blake et al, 2007).

The World Health Organization (WHO) emphasises that an integral part of the educational function of schools is to ensure the healthy social and emotional development of learners. A child-friendly school is described as one which "encourages tolerance and equality between boys and girls and different ethnic, religious and social groups. It promotes active involvement and cooperation, avoids the use of physical punishment and does not tolerate bullying. It is also a supportive and nurturing environment, providing education which responds to the reality of the children's lives. Finally, it helps to establish connections between school and family life, encourages creativity as well as academic abilities, and promotes the self-esteem and self-confidence of children" (Nadel & Muir, 2005:2).

When children start to develop the "self- other" characteristic, they begin to differentiate themselves from other people. At two years of age, children are able to talk about their own feelings and the feelings of other people. They also become aware that emotions are connected to their mental judgments (Littlefield & Cook, 2005; Tokoro & Mogi, 2007: 68). The interpersonal existence of this

emotional feedback and the responses they draw from others, may in fact be vital to the further development of self-consciousness (Nadel & Muir, 2005).

Erik Erikson, a psychodynamic theorist, developed the theory of “Psychosocial Development”. This theory postulates that from birth to old age, people progress through eight significant social emotional stages, which he refers to as “crises” or psychosocial stages. According to Erikson, people learn and grow when faced with age-related life challenges. These stages are outlined below:

- Infancy is related to the “trust versus mistrust” stage, which revolves around the basic needs of infants either being met or not being met by their parents and how this can lead to trust or mistrust. Inconsistent and unreliable behaviour towards the infant by its parents can lead to it developing a sense of mistrust.
- The toddler years involve “autonomy versus shame and doubt”. During this stage children begin to explore their surroundings and become more autonomous. Where parents encourage this self-sufficient behaviour, the child tends to develop a sense of self autonomy. But where parents discourage or deride these attempts, the child may develop shame about its ability to handle situations autonomously and may become over reliable on others.
- The preschool years are marked by the “initiative versus guilt” stage. During this stage the child begins to plan and initiate activities with others and in so doing, it develops a sense of initiative. However, such initiative can be discouraged where parents overtly criticise or control the child and continually disapprove of these initiatives. This leads to the child developing a sense of guilt and may result in it relinquishing initiative to others.
- Elementary school years are related to the “industry versus inferiority” stage; this is the stage into which Grade 4 learners fall. At this stage, which is also the “middle childhood” years, Grade 4 learners are expected to master a number of new skills and they soon learn that they gain adult approval for accomplishments in academic work or sport activities. When they fail to meet standards set by parents or educators and get penalized, they may develop feelings of inferiority.
- Adolescents experience the “identity versus role confusion”. They begin to form their own individual identities within the wider society - a sense of who they are and what they wish to accomplish and become. Where this sense of identity cannot be forged, role confusion (in which the learner is uncertain about themselves or their place in society) can follow.
- Young adulthood is referred to as the “intimacy versus isolation” stage. During this stage adults usually find themselves involved in intimate reciprocal relationships with others, in

which they exhibit care, compassion and commitment. Young adults who cannot form, or avoid forming such intimate relationships, can suffer a sense of isolation and loneliness.

- Middle age is tied to the “generativity versus stagnation”. During this stage adults need to have a sense of usefulness and accomplishment through their careers, families and integration into the communities in which they live. They need to feel that they are making a useful contribution to their families and communities. Where this is not achieved, stagnation occurs and these adults often have a sense of being unproductive.
- Finally, the retirement years are referred to as the “integrity versus despair” stage. In this stage we look back on what we have managed to accomplish in our life and need to feel that we have led a full and productive life. If this is achieved, we develop a sense of integrity. Where we feel that our lives have been unproductive or regret our past, this leads to despair and depression (Mcdevitt, et al, 2010: 404).

According to Erikson, advancement from one stage to the next is not dependent on complete mastery of the previous stage but rather whether the individual has achieved more of the positive characteristics and less of the negative features of the previous stage (Mcdevitt, et al, 2010; Saracho & Spodek, 2007).

Erikson viewed middle childhood as a stage in which children must achieve mastery of challenging tasks with self-assurance. Research into the types of tasks assigned to children belonging to different culture groups, show that adults generally expect middle childhood children to be able to act responsibly. At this stage, children start to make comparisons between their own accomplishments and that of their peers. If they feel that they lack in areas which they regard as important, they may develop feelings of inferiority (Mcdevitt, et al, 2010: 407; Saracho & Spodek, 2007). Grade 4 learners are very competitive and aware of their own accomplishments. They are usually quick to point out the inabilities, incorrect work or slow work pace of classmates. These “complaints” are done loudly to great amusement of the rest of the class and the cringing embarrassment of the learner at the receiving end of this treatment. Experienced educators usually curb this type of behaviour very tactfully.

2.4.1 The attachment phase

People of all ages have a basic need to feel loved and respected. An infant's first connection or bond is called "attachment". Mcdevitt defines attachment as "an enduring emotional tie that unites one person to another" (Mcdevitt, et al, 2010: 407). A child's first attachment is to the parent or caregiver. The infant depends on the caregiver for protection, comfort and to meet its needs, whether this is hunger, tiredness or fear. Caregivers also act as a "secure base" for infants; they can venture away from a parent or caregiver for short periods of time but comforting looks from caregivers, or a backward glance, keeps them reassured. This behaviour exemplifies secure attachment. Secure attachment in the early years lays the foundation for positive social-emotional results later in life (Mcdevitt, et al, 2010: 438; Riley, 2008:6).

Children with secure attachments to one or more caregivers at twelve months of age are more amenable with adults as toddlers, get into fewer fights as pre-schoolers and grade-scholars, and experience better intellectual development through the early childhood years. The learning of language, logic and figures is disadvantaged if the child does not feel safe enough to explore and pay close attention. Children, who are securely attached, explore more and are likely to learn more (Riley, 2008).

Research also confirms that children who had a strong bond with at least one person during infancy, coped better with stress in their later lives (Dowling, 2010). The attachment bonds children form with their first early childhood educators also sets the tone for the quality of relationship foreseen with future educators, because this first affiliation forms the foundation for the others (Riley, 2008; Saracho & Spodek, 2007; Blake et al, 2007, Barbarin & Wasik, 2009).

In early childhood, children appreciate the care and attention they receive from parents and caregivers and they respond with equally affectionate gestures. Grade 4 learners form more bonds with people outside the family circle, such as educators, peers and other adults. They are also more able to control their emotions in socially acceptable ways (Barbarin & Wasik, 2009).

Grade 4 learners think that relationships with family members should be mutual. Children accept some responsibility for the parent-child relationship and they also expect parents to support them and praise their achievements. Grade 4 learners in the middle childhood phase understand that family bonds remain constant despite occasional disagreements and separation. It should be noted that serious disruption of the family bond (such as divorce or death) can result in some children reacting

with anger, aggression, and withdrawal. The health of such children could then also be negatively affected (Dowling, 2010; Mcdevitt, et al, 2010; Littlefield & Cook, 2005; Riley, 2008; Blake et al, 2007).

2.4.2 Development of self and social understanding

Self is the qualities, emotions and beliefs that people have about themselves. Psychologists differentiate between two features of the self. The I-self is the conscious awareness that you exist as a separate, unique person with your own thoughts, ideas, feelings experiences and actions. The Me-self is what you know about yourself. It pertains to classifications like gender and age. It also refers to objective knowledge that people have about their own character traits, physical and intellectual characteristics (Littlefield & Cook, 2005: 369).

Grade 4 learners begin to view themselves in more complex physical and psychological terms. They start to distinguish between different aspects of themselves such as their academic accomplishments and personal popularity or lack of it. These learners are aware of the real self and the ideal or “supposed to be” self. They recognise and are aware of their capabilities. Grade 4 learners know the tasks that they excel at as well as the ones in which they perform poorly. Children in this phase become more aware of the difference between effort and aptitude and how it could determine whether they accomplish tasks or not. They start to base their sense of self on how their own achievements measure up to that of their peers. This social evaluation helps children to be more realistic when evaluating themselves. In general, most children in the middle childhood phase have good self-esteem. Children vary in how they obtain their general sense of self-worth, in the sense that they decide which aspects are important to them, whether it be academic success or athletic achievement. At this stage, girls start to appraise their physical appearance in a much more critical sense than boys do (Mcdevitt, et al, 2010; Littlefield & Cook, 2005; Barbarin & Wasik, 2009). From observation of and discussion with Grade 4 girls, the researcher ascertained that they do pay more attention to their personal appearance compared to previous grades but are not overly concerned with how they look.

2.4.3 Moral reasoning and interpersonal behaviour

Morality pertains to making decisions about right and wrong and taking action based on that knowledge. Moral development is complex and incorporates aspects such as reasoning, emotions and behaviour (Littlefield & Cook, 2005).

Children in the middle childhood phase believe that justice and fairness should be allocated according to varying needs and circumstances of people. Moral offences make them feel guilty and embarrassed. They grow more sensitive to the feelings of other people and develop empathy and sympathy, especially for suffering and needy people (Barbarin & Wasik, 2009). From the researcher's teaching experience of Grade 4 learners, she has encountered the following regularly:

- A learner readily pleading a classmate's case or explaining the reason for the other's absenteeism and asking the educator for worksheets for the classmate who was absent.
- A Grade 4 class can get very upset as a group if they feel one of their own has been treated unfairly (for instance, bullied by a learner in a higher grade).
- A whole class of Grade 4 learners would be more than willing to carry a hurt peer to the sick bay at school.

Children in this phase are increasingly conscious of other people's opinions and, therefore, they try to ensure that their conduct is socially acceptable. They also strive to conserve friendships and avoid unpleasantness by applying conflict resolution strategies. They prefer playing games with established rules in larger social groups. Rule-governed games teach children to form partnerships, use the rules to their own advantage and develop strategies to deal with unclear situations. There is a decline in obvious physical aggression but an increase in more concealed antisocial behaviour such as stealing and lying (Mcdevitt, et al, 2010; Riley, 2008; Littlefield & Cook, 2005; Saracho & Spodek, 2007). Grade 4 educators are very often forced to take on the role of detective due to constant complaints about missing pencil cases and money.

2.4.4 Peer relationships

Peers or age mates are people who are more or less the same age as each other. Friendship can be defined as a "close shared bond between peers that withstand the test of time" (Saracho & Spodek, 2007: 133; Littlefield & Cook, 2005: 424). Peers become children's daily partners for most of the experiences and activities that form a fundamental part of their development. Both Saracho and

Barbarin, when considering social learning in the peer context, propose three components of the “social learning hypothesis”:

- Peer interactions and relationships provide children with social information about their own behaviour and peer behaviour.
- Children interpret and make meaning of the information obtained from their peer relationships.
- Children draw on the information gained from their peer interactions as a lead for future social interaction (Saracho & Spodek, 2007; Barbarin & Wasik, 2009).

Learning to get along with peers is one of the most essential tasks of childhood. A Child’s emotional bonds with caregivers form the foundation for the development of good peer relations. Children who experience secure attachments have more success fitting in and getting along with others. They are more compassionate and make friends more easily. The chances of them being bullied or turning into bullies themselves are slim (Riley, 2005). The quality of peer relationships in early childhood predicts later success in intellectual growth, self-esteem, mental health and school performance. Researchers have found that children who had stable peer relationships with fellow pre-schoolers continued to do so during adolescence. On the other hand, it was observed that children who have had poor peer interaction during this time, experience continual problems as they got older. While the results do not suggest that a child’s social life is fully determined at an early age, they do suggest that without timely intervention to change the child’s path, the child tends to continue down the path established in its pre-school years.

Since children spend much of their daily lives interacting with peers, a big part of their learning and development occurs within these relationships. Peer relationships assist children with the shift to adult status. Friends provide social stability for children. They can help each other deal with new situations. Friends help children to learn to get along with others. Peers contribute to the development of a child’s self concept, acting as a social mirror of acceptable and unacceptable behaviour. Research has demonstrated that the interactions of friends are marked by happier and more positive exchanges, more dialogue, support and negotiation (Riley, 2005; Dowling, 2010; Saracho & Spodek, 2007). The contrary has also been shown in studies where peer rejection causes children to avoid school, evade involvement in activities and attain poor academic achievement in general (Barbarin & Wasik, 2009).

Friendships help foster children's prosocial behaviours and humane values. Friendships may essentially be the building blocks for children to learn how to truly understand and care about others' thoughts and feelings (Riley, 2005; Mcdevitt, et al, 2010; Littlefield & Cook, 2005; Nadel & Muir, 2005). Friendships are prone to form between children of similar gender, age, race, values and attitudes. Up until the age of 11, children may have numerous best friends. A study done by Bigelow (1977) (as quoted in Littlefield & Cook, 2005: 428) revealed that close friendships during middle childhood are characterised by "loyalty, faithfulness and generosity" (Littlefield & Cook, 2005: 428; Dowling, 2010: 38).

Grade 4 learners learn to get along with their peers and are anxious to be accepted by these peers. They are inclined to come together in larger groups than they were in early childhood. Peer groups often partake in structured outdoor games and activities. They participate increasingly in gossip to protect friendships and exclude enemies. Some groups claim exclusive right of belonging and bar or make it difficult for others to join their group. Some children get rejected by peers, possibly because they are considered "weird" or to behave in socially unacceptable ways.

There is a prevalence of same gender friendships and the playgroups of boys are larger than those of girls. Girls may develop closer bonds in their smaller playgroups where they learn to share thoughts and feelings. Boys, however, may view sharing of thoughts and feelings as a sign of being weak and defenceless. Boys' play tends to involve physical aggression, autonomy and power, whereas girls' play commonly focuses on aspects such as compassion and social intimacy (Mcdevitt, et al, 2010; Littlefield & Cook, 2005; Saracho & Spodek, 2007).

Children's emotional health and well-being can be gauged by observing their behaviour. It indicates if and how they have succeeded in managing emotional distress. Children depend on relationships with adults to assist them in identifying, controlling and expressing their emotions. The ability to manage emotions, known as self regulation, helps children to get along with each other. Research findings indicate that children who were better capable of self-regulation in the kinder garden years have more self-confidence and self-esteem; better cognitive and social skills; and more independence, better academic achievements and better at handling stress and disappointment during their teenage years (Riley, 2005).

The National Healthy Schools Programme in England has identified the following factors as having the biggest positive impact on the emotional well-being of children and young people:

- having people to talk to

- personal achievement
- being praised
- generally feeling positive about oneself

The key things that make them feel stressed are:

- conflict
- confrontation with authority
- restriction of autonomy
- exclusion by their peers (Ahmad et al., 2003 as quoted in Blake et al, 2007: 15).

Research data confirms that many children try to cope with complicated emotions and to get unfulfilled needs met, through destructive behaviour. Children with a poor sense of self, low self-esteem and poor emotional health and well-being, are more likely to demonstrate destructive behaviour and in turn experience lower academic achievement (Blake et al, 2007). Many of the children at the school where the researcher teaches are faced with abject poverty, violence and abuse in their homes and neighbourhoods. It is thus extremely difficult for them to focus attention on academic and scholastic matters. They are in a survival struggle to have their most basic needs such as hunger, safety, warmth and clothing, met.

2.5 Language development

Human language distinguishes humans from other species in as much as it is a communication scheme that possesses a number of features which other species lack. Three main aspects set human language apart from other communication systems: human language encompasses semanticity, productivity and displacement. Semanticity refers to thoughts, objects and events presented by definite abstract symbols. Productivity signifies the creative facet of language, while displacement implies that we can talk about aspects that are distant in time and place. There is a difference between language comprehension and language production; this difference is also referred to as receptive and expressive language. Frequently, young children's ability to comprehend spoken language surpasses their capacity to produce grammatical speech (Littlefield & Cook, 2005; Mcdevitt et al, 2010).

To be able to communicate effectively, children must master the five rule systems that language consists of. They are:

- phonology

- morphology
- syntax
- semantics
- pragmatics

Phonology refers to the speech sounds of a language and the rules for combining these sounds into larger components. Morphology includes the rules for joining the smallest units of meaning in a language into words. A morpheme can consist of one or more syllables. Syntax is the way language merges words to create phrases and sentences. Semantics denote the meanings coupled with the words in a language. Pragmatics concerns the use of language to convey thoughts and feelings and communicate efficiently with other people (Mcdevitt, et al, 2010).

At the approximate age of three or four, most children have sufficiently mastered language to be able to converse with people around them. Theorists have tried to explain how children manage to achieve such an immense task in a relatively short space of time. Three theories endeavour to explain the development of language. The learning theory is founded on the behaviourist principles of Skinner's operant conditioning and Alfred Bandura's perception of learning through imitation. It perceives language as a trained behaviour and children can learn it by means of operant conditioning, imitation and modelling (Littlefield & Cook, 2005). Parents and caregivers shape or reinforce sounds that are similar to real words used in the home language and disregard sounds that do not resemble real words. Parents also provide a model of language that is more developed than the expressions that the child used. Critics of the learning theory argue that the shaping of the child's language by parents is inconsistent and that most of the language that children are exposed to in daily life is deficient, badly formed and rife with inaccuracies. It is also argued that the rate at which children learn a language is simply too rapid to be clarified by reinforcement, shaping and imitation (Littlefield & Cook, 2005).

Chomsky postulated a nativist theory which views language as an instinctive human capacity which is prompted into further development by another inborn human trait, the language acquisition device (LAD). According to Chomsky (1981) (as quoted in Littlefield & Cook, 2005:292), the LAD is a brain mechanism with the specific function of identifying and learning the rules of language. A minimal amount of language input and cognitive skill is required to activate the (LAD). Nativists propose that the level of complexity, abstraction or grammatical accuracy of this minimal language input is not a deciding factor in the development of normal language proficiency. Critics of this theory counter that children whose only language experience or input is obtained from television, for

instance, do not develop normal language proficiency. Another critique is that the nativist theory advocates a biologically programmed universal grammar, yet has not successfully discovered one common set of language rules that can be used in all languages (Littlefield & Cook, 2005; Mcdevitt, et al, 2010).

According to Tokoro, in comparison with and unlike views of linguists such as Chomsky, language is not a completely rule-governed static system; to a certain extent, it is a system we all create together. So every time you talk, you create new meanings or you may change the meaning of the words (Tokoro & Mogi, 2007).

Piaget's cognitive developmental theory proposes that language is but one of a number of varying skills and appropriate language development depends on general cognitive maturity. This observation is related to Piaget's stages of cognitive development. The reasoning behind this view is based on the rationale that only when children reach a particular level of cognitive maturity where they need symbols to represent things, do they need to use words and develops language. Cognitive ability then interacts with the milieu demands and language experience to produce progressively more mature language proficiency (Tokoro & Mogi, 2007).

The social interactionist theory postulates that language development is dependent on children's social contact and communication with other people. Such language socialisation entails direct language instruction as well as more indirect ways of expressing proper language interaction. Adults support and aid children's language development in diverse ways, amongst which is child-directed speech. This is a particular form of speech used when conversing with young children that varies from normal speech in tone, pitch and includes more questions than when directed at adults. Children then internalise language, whereby they first use words in their dealings with other people and then steadily integrates it into their daily thought patterns. Language also has a functional aspect for the human species. Through language, children increase their knowledge, procure meaningful interpersonal relationships, manage their own behaviour and manipulate the behaviour of other people (Mcdevitt et al, 2010; Littlefield & Cook, 2005; Salovey & Sluyter, 1997).

Most Grade 4 learners speak only their home language with parents and siblings. Out of a group of two hundred Grade 4 learners (at the school where the researcher teaches), only twelve percent spoke English as home language. Generally, Grade 4 learners have difficulty in understanding more advanced and abstract terms and phrases. An educator can never assume that learners understand all

words in written text. An educator can, for example, use either practical demonstrations or simpler English to explain words like “cargo”, “vibrate”, “hum”, “instigate” and “pitch”.

The following information was gained from personal teaching experience. Grade 4 learners’ display several difficulties in verbal and written English communication. They often confuse tenses and gender, and sometimes girls get referred to as “he” and vice versa. They also struggle with the pronunciation of a number of English words. Grade 4 learners are of the general opinion that English is a difficult language but they still prefer to be taught in English because it is a “beautiful” language. They need to master English in order for them to “get jobs one day when they are grown up”.

Sometimes parents of Grade 4 ESL learners are not proficient in English and are unable to assist these learners with homework tasks.

2.5.1 Trends in language development

This section deals with the development of language in children with special reference to language development of Grade 4 learners.

Semantic development

Children attain lexical words before grammatical words. Lexical words refer to words that are in some way, in an abstract or concrete sense linked to items or incidents in people’s physical, social and psychological milieu. Nouns, verbs, adverbs and adjectives are categorised as lexical words. Grammatical or function words do not make sense in solitary state but influence the meaning of other words or the interconnection between words or phrases. They refer to auxiliary verbs (e.g., have), articles (e.g., a, the), prepositions (e.g., before) and conjunctions such as “but” and “although”.

Research has shown that children experience difficulty with the use of grammatical words throughout the primary school phase. Children’s comprehension of abstract words develops later than that of concrete words. Studies recognise the following strategies to assist children’s semantic progress:

- they should be exposed to regular conversations in their home language
- they should be taught the precise meaning of words and the inaccurate use of words should be corrected
- they must be encouraged to become keen readers

- examples should be used to clarifying the meaning of words (Mcdevitt, et al, 2010; Littlefield & Cook, 2005).

Syntactic development

Even though syntax rules which are used to join words into meaningful sentences are difficult, children are able to acquire them fairly fast. At first, children use only single words to communicate their thoughts. Words used in this way are referred to as “holophrases”. Children frequently use telegraphic speech which contains words that are indispensable to convey meaning and omit words that are not as important. When they begin school, most children are skilled in basic sentence construction but deficiencies in their syntactic ability are manifested throughout the primary as well as the secondary school phase. An increase in the extent of sentences is accompanied by an increase in syntactic intricacy. Children’s syntactic development can be promoted by:

- improving their telegraphic communication by repeating their sentences in more complete form
- teaching them unusual forms of verbs and comparative adjectives
- explaining different sentence formations and allowing ample practice
- making them aware of the importance of applying grammatical rules in formal writing and public speaking (Littlefield & Cook, 2005; Mcdevitt, et al, 2010).

Development of listening skills

During their first year, infants learn to distinguish between the speech sounds that are crucial for understanding their home language. This ability continues to be developed throughout early and middle childhood. Young children are more intent on the context of what a speaker is uttering than on every single sound or word. Sometimes this overdependence on context leads to misunderstanding of the spoken message as children do not listen carefully enough. Younger children do not really understand what “good listening” entails. They interpret this as just sitting quietly. Older children are aware that good listening also requires understanding of the spoken message. Primary school children are not always sure what to do if they do not understand a spoken instruction or explanation. As children get older they recognise that some spoken messages are ambiguous and could have various possible meanings (Dowling, 2010).

The following strategies can be applied to promote children’s listening skills:

- limit the quantity of information presented at one time in recognition that the attention span of young children is very short
- explain what “good listening” really means
- encourage children to ask questions if they did not understand
- teach critical listening skills (Dowling, 2010).

The researcher’s experience in teaching Grade 4 learners, has taught her that in general, instructions have to be repeated and explained to quite a number of learners during a lesson period. The more confident learners tend to raise their hands, while the more timid learners tend to walk up to her desk to enquire. Some learners are totally unsure but do not ask for help. Needless to say, they turn up the next day without homework. Very often the researcher has had to rely on code-switching, where one learner had to translate instructions in the home language of a learner who had difficulty understanding instructions in English. Long or complicated tasks usually have to be explained and completed in sections, because most of the Grade 4 learners would otherwise get confused.

Development of speaking skills

During the first twelve months of life, infants become more adept in making speech sounds and there is a marked increase in the use of phonemes of their home language. At about one year, some children try to communicate by using gestures instead of words. A number of preschool children usually struggle with the pronunciation of *r* and *th*. At the age of six they are likely to have accomplished this but may still have some difficulty with consonant combinations such as *sp/* and *thr*. The length and detail of children’s conversations increases with age. Children become progressively able to match their language to the requirements of the occasion and the character traits of their listeners (Dowling, 2010). At the approximate age of three, children are able to scale down or simplify their speech when addressing younger children. Given time, they become more adept at delivering narratives. Their creative use of language expands during primary school years and carries on into adolescence. This growing skill in spoken language can be attributed to better control of the lips and tongue, advancement of semantic and syntactic knowledge, abstract reasoning capacity and definitely repetition and practice. To encourage speaking skills, adults should regularly have verbal interactions with infants. Creativity in spoken language should be encouraged through stories, poems, etc (Dowling, 2010).

Development of pragmatics

Pragmatics has to do with the verbal and nonverbal cues used for effective communication with other people. Children start to attain pragmatic skills in their preschool years. Educators should be aware of cultural differences in sociolinguistic behaviour to avoid misunderstandings. Some examples include: displaying of dispassionate facial expressions contradicting intense emotion; some cultures value silence and some associate too much talking with low intellectual ability; in some cultures children are allowed to voice their opinions freely and in others the principle of “speak when you are spoken to” applies (Littlefield & Cook, 2005). Some learners have been taught that looking an adult in the eye is disrespectful; whereas some educators could interpret a learner’s cast down look as insolence.

The development of language skills in Grade 4 learners

Grade 4 learners find themselves in the middle childhood language development phase. This phase witnesses immense development in a number of vital aspects of language. The receptive vocabulary of a ten year old is approximately 40 000 words and it increases to about 80 000 words by secondary school level. An increase in cognitive ability enables children to use more abstract words and phrases in their communication. Different meanings associated with intonation still remain a challenge for children in the middle childhood phase. Children struggle with passive full sentences well into adolescence. Demuth (1990) as quoted in Littlefield (Littlefield & Cook, 2005) notes that in the Sesotho language the passive voice is used more frequently, therefore Sotho speaking children aged 2 to 4 usually master the use of passives in that language. Children’s metalinguistic skills improve and this allows them to use language more flexibly and to value humour, sarcasm and metaphor. Pragmatic language aptitude continues to develop, enabling children to correct ambiguity in their own language use and that of others. Children of this age understand the social rules of communication and they know when it is acceptable to adhere to or overstep social boundaries, such as repeating what someone said to show either interest or disrespect (Littlefield & Cook, 2005).

Children in the middle childhood phase show progressive understanding of chronological words such as “before” and “after”, as well as expressions of comparison such as “smaller than” or “as cold as”. They still need formal instruction in irregular forms of verbs and adjectives - especially those in the past tense, such as “lie” and “lay”, as they tend to have difficulty in discerning which of these should be “lay” and “laid” in the past tense. It is common for children in this phase to interpret messages literally. Pronunciation dexterity is achieved at about age eight. They take a listener’s knowledge and viewpoints into consideration during conversations. In the middle childhood phase, children can

conduct prolonged conversations about concrete issues. They display linguistic creativity and are skilled in word games and rhymes (Mcdevitt, et al, 2010).

Differences in the way in which boys and girls talk become more noticeable during middle childhood and adolescence. This is also referred to as genderlects (Littlefield & Cook, 2005: 316). The language that boys use during play contains more vocal conflict, slang and swear words than that of girls. Girls' communication with other girls is comprised of talk concerning emotions, more questions and efforts to handle and control interactions by means of vocal persuasion. At this stage children are able to use language to articulate their personal experiences (Mcdevitt, et al, 2010).

2.5.2 Development of a second language

Early exposure to a second language is essential to attain sound pronunciation and to master the syntactic composition of the second language even though research indicates that there is no ideal time to start learning a second language. Other benefits of getting an early start on second language learning include better reading and vocabulary skills. This also makes young children aware of the world as a global community with a multicultural character. Bilingualism is the skill of being able to speak two languages fluently. Children can either attain bilingualism simultaneously or sequentially. They can acquire both languages at the same time or start learning the second after they have acquired the first language. If children start to learn the second language by at least the age of three, they can attain fluency in both languages. Studies reflect that when children are confident in both languages, they are more accomplished in creative and cognitive tasks (Spolsky & Hult, 2008; Mcdevitt, et al. 2010).

It is important that learners are exposed to a second language as early as possible to enable them to communicate effectively by mastering the five rule systems that language consists of. Different social and cultural backgrounds contribute to two approaches in second language acquisition: additive bilingualism and subtractive bilingualism. In additive bilingualism a person learns a second language while maintaining a first language; in subtractive bilingualism, acquisition of a second language is to the detriment and loss of the first language. The value placed on the second language by the family and the community, influences which approach will gain the upper hand in a child's acquisition of the second language. Where the second language is thought of as superior to the first, children are more prone to show subtractive bilingualism. If equal value is placed on both languages, children may demonstrate an additive acquisition in their language learning (Moreno, 2007; Spolsky & Hult, 2008).

Educators of ESL learners should acknowledge that acquiring a second language is a multifaceted process which takes time and ample practice. Research indicates that it could take seven to ten years to gain academic proficiency in a second language (Moreno, 2007).

Most of the Grade 4 learners in the researcher's school community come from homes and families where their home languages are languages other than English, yet the language of learning and teaching at the school is English. Numerous Grade 4 learners are not adequately proficient to understand curriculum content exclusively presented in English. In most cases parents and other family members also have difficulty speaking and understanding English. These learners have insufficient exposure to English in their home environment. Impoverished circumstances have far reaching effects on factors such as emergent literacy, where media or reading material is not readily available. Consequently there is the danger of subtractive bilingualism where learners may lose proficiency in their home languages and yet still not be proficient in English.

In general, Grade 4 learners' understanding of English is better than their expressive ability. Learners who experiences difficulty with English as LoLT have difficulty with their receptive and expressive ability. Decoding and understanding written instructions proves to be a challenge to them. The researcher has noted that there is a need to translate written instructions into simple English in order for learners to understand what they should do. A small percentage of Grade 4 learners are able to read instructions and then complete activities independently. The researcher gave test papers to two Grade 4 classes but there was only an opportunity to explain or translate test questions into simple English with one class. The test results of the class of learners, to whom explanation and translation were provided, proved to be generally better than that of the other class.

A number of Grade 4 learners have difficulty with their expressive language. A minority of learners in each class can express themselves by using complete sentences. Others will simply abstain from answering questions in class. If they do answer this tends to be in incomplete sentences or simple one-word answers. Where learners are uncertain of pronunciation, most responses tend to be inaudible. Educators usually assist learners to complete sentences - using the words given by the learner and allowing the learner to repeat and complete the sentence on his or her own.

Written responses highlight a myriad of grammatical and spelling errors made by learners. Even Grade 4 learners who are able to speak English fluently or whose home language is English, sometimes make grave grammatical and spelling errors. Examples of such errors include:

- frequent omission of prepositions like "a" and "in"

- leaving out the “s” in plural words
- confusing the gender prepositions “he” and “she”
- omitting the “i” in the double sound “ie” resulting in words like friend being written as “frend”
- leaving sentences and words incomplete, especially words such as “someon(e)” and “increase(e)”

At times, written responses are devoid of any meaning because of serious grammatical and spelling errors. Where this occurs, the learner has to be asked to explain the intended meaning of the sentence.

2.6 Conclusion

This chapter focused on the developmental trends in childhood. The changes that occur as children progress from infancy, childhood, through adolescence and into adulthood were discussed, as well as the forces that compel those changes. Understanding the changes that take place during the developmental stages is of particular significance to all the people who work with children. Special emphasis was lent to the development and developmental needs of the child in middle childhood as this group is of specific importance to this study.

The child’s development is composed of various elements, namely: physical development, cognitive development, emotional and social development, and language development. Different forces impact and influence the progress or disruption of these components. A definition of human language based on the characteristics that distinguishes it from communication systems of other species, directed the discussion on language development. Various theories concerning language development were compared.

Children’s physical development pertains to functional change and growth in their bodily stature, vigour and muscle coordination. Cognitive development refers to children’s ability to learn, think, solve problems and is vital in assisting growing children in their understanding of and interaction with the world. Social and emotional development concerns how children relate to and interact with other people. This process is shaped by social influences from their family members, peers and significant others.

Understanding child development is an absolute necessity for parents, educators, social workers and other people who are concerned with positively impacting the development of children. An overview of national and international views on inclusion is provided in the next chapter. The various terms employed in the discourse and literature on inclusion as well as their meanings is elucidated. There is also reference to the history of inclusion in South Africa and internationally.

CHAPTER 3

INCLUSION: NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL VIEWS

3.1 Introduction

This chapter discusses the various meanings and interpretations of the terms *inclusion* or *inclusive education*. A brief review of the general history of inclusion follows, as well as inclusion in practice in South Africa and the international context. Challenges with the implementation of an inclusive education system in South Africa and a few other countries, have also been highlighted.

The term *inclusion* is a complex concept. To fully understand what it entails requires a close examination of the underlying values and principles it is based on. Many definitions have been formulated in various countries and contexts.

According to Landsberg, one needs to refer to “... a comprehensive theoretical and philosophical framework, drawing from theories of human development and educational change, analyzing paradigm shifts in educational support as well as insight into historical, social, political and educational processes, internationally and nationally” (Landsberg, et al, 2006: 3). Armstrong rightly states that inclusion “... is concerned with cultural change in all areas of social, personal and political life” (Armstrong, 2003: 3). According to Armstrong, inclusive education is not merely about shutting down segregated schooling systems. It is also not solely about moving learners who have previously been excluded from mainstream education, to an unchanged mainstream education system. Inclusive education entails a total overhauling of existing education systems with reference to physical and curriculum factors, teaching styles and expectations. “This is because inclusive education is about the participation of all children and young people and the removal of all forms of exclusionary practice” (Bolton, 1998: 85) as quoted in (Armstrong, 2003: 3). According to Donald, inclusion is about catering for the various needs of learners, irrespective of their background, circumstances or ability. He defines inclusive education as “a policy that ensures optimal accommodation and inclusion of the full variety of educational needs in a single education system” (Donald, et al, 2006: 24).

An inclusive education system is one that enables all learners to participate actively in the education process so that they can develop and extend their potential and participate as equal members of society. The concept also refers to the right that all learners have to an education; nobody should be excluded on the grounds of certain characteristics. Education should be of value to all learners. Education should, therefore, provide and respect differences (Education White Paper 6, 2001; Sheehy & Rix, 2004). Grade 4 learners referred to in this study, who have a barrier to English as LoLT, are

being excluded from active participation in the education process and this exclusion is directly linked to the language barrier. Active participation in the education process entails among others, learners increasing their knowledge, and learning to socialise with peers and elders. A lack of proficiency in the language of instruction will automatically hamper the optimum participation and development of learners.

It can be said that the term inclusive education refers to a philosophy of education that promotes the education of all learners in mainstream schools. The Centre for Studies of Inclusive Education, based in London, England, expresses the principles of this philosophy as follows:

- All children have the right to learn and play together.
- Children should not be devalued or discriminated against by being excluded or sent away because of their disability or learning difficulty.
- There are no legitimate reasons to separate children for the duration of their schooling; they belong together rather than need to be protected from one another (Tilstone 1998:13).

The following definition is the perspective of the South African reference committees and consultative bodies that were commissioned to investigate the future of inclusive education:

“Inclusive Education is defined as a learning environment that promotes the full personal, academic and professional development of learners, irrespective of race, class, gender, disability, religion, culture, sexual preference, learning styles and language” (Engelbrecht & Green, 2007: 5). An ethos of shared responsibility should, therefore, be developed at schools. For the purpose of this study, we will use the South African definition of inclusion. It should be noted that in this definition specific reference is made to language.

Inclusion has its origins in the international human rights movement – a worldwide movement (Engelbrecht & Green, 2007). It is for this reason that an understanding of inclusion in a South African and international context is fundamental in grasping the various interpretations of inclusion.

3.2 From exclusion to inclusion

The early 1970’s and 1980’s saw rapid change and development in the economic, political and social spheres of society. Paradigm shifts saw increased attention and emphasis on human rights and societies became more diverse and multicultural. The education system could not be left untouched

by these changes as schools do not function in isolation from the rest of society. In response, classrooms increasingly consisted of learners from diverse ethnic, linguistic, cultural and socio-economic backgrounds (Landsberg, et al, 2006; Engelbrecht & Green, 2007). It thus made sense to create schools based on democratic values, social justice and fundamental human rights. The social perspective is also illustrated in White Paper 6 which says “The social model is based on the belief that the circumstances of people with disabilities and the discrimination they face are socially created phenomena and have little to do with the impairments of disabled people” (Department of Education, 1997:11).

The shift to inclusion began with the change from a medical deficit or within-child model to a social change approach. In the field of education, the medical model singles out learners with any kind of difference or disability. More importantly, the cause of this difference is sought within the learner itself. Such learners were treated differently and taught in special schools or classes or received some form of remedial teaching. These learners did not fit in with the normal learners in mainstream classes and were thus separated and subjected to efforts by specialist experts to try to remove the disabilities or lack from within the learners. Labels commonly associated with and attached to the medical deficit model include: “disability”, “handicap”, “diagnostic” and “exclusion” (Eloff & Kgwete, 2007: 351; Landsberg, et al, 2006: 5).

The medical model has been widely criticized and more social and ecological models were developed. In the 1960s, the idea of normalisation started in Scandinavia and then became popular in the United States. Nirje (as cited in Landsberg et al, 2006) explains normalisation as making available to all handicapped people, patterns of life and conditions of everyday living which are as close as possible to the regular circumstances and ways of life in society”. The normalisation approach opposed previous segregation practice and shortly led to mainstreaming and then integration approaches. The ultimate goal of mainstreaming is to return learners with disabilities to the mainstream of education to be taught alongside their so-called normally developing peers.

The origin of the integration policy stems from humanitarian and civil rights issues. According to Landsberg et al, integration “... involved more extensive and holistic participation of learners with disabilities in relation to mainstreaming, while significant instructional time in separate settings still prevailed” (Landsberg, et al, 2006: 7). The fact that the integration concept did not contain implicit steps for implementation led to many different interpretations. According to Ferguson (Ferguson,

1994) as adapted in Landsberg (Landsberg, et al, 2006), the hope of a mainstream that is more accommodating and tolerant of differences in ability, pinned on the integration approach, did not materialise. However, the introduction of inclusion in education envisions an era where diversity, hopefully, in all its fullness, will be welcomed and applauded (Landsberg, et al, 2006; Eloff & Kgwete, 2007).

3.3 International views on inclusion

There was a time when it was standard practice to exclude anyone who was considered to be different from formal education (Engelbrecht & Green 2007; Engelbrecht, Green, Naicker & Engelbrecht 1999). It was thought that these learners' needs could not be catered for in the existing education system. The general perception was that these learners were rather difficult to control and could cause an unwelcome disturbance to the normal routine of school. They were, therefore, removed from mainstream education. The little education that these learners received depended upon the goodwill of philanthropic individuals or organisations (Engelbrecht & Green, 2007; Eloff & Kgwete, 2007).

The inclusion of learners with barriers to learning in ordinary schools and classrooms is part of a global human rights movement. In 1994, from 7 to 10 June, the UNESCO World Conference on Special Needs Education was held in Salamanca, Spain. In attendance were more than three hundred participants who represented ninety two governments and twenty five international organizations. The main objective of the Salamanca conference was to decide on the future international direction of Special Needs and to ensure children's right to basic education. Crucial policy changes necessary for the development of inclusive education received special attention.

Concerning the development of an inclusive approach in schools, the Salamanca Statement on Principles, Policy and Practice in Special Needs Education (Unesco, 1994: 9) as quoted in Engelbrecht (Engelbrecht et al, 1999: 9), states that mainstream schools with an inclusive orientation are...“the most effective means of combating discriminatory attitudes, creating welcoming communities, building an inclusive society and achieving education for all.”

The focus was on developing inclusive education systems that “... accommodate all children, regardless of their physical, intellectual, social, emotional, linguistic or other conditions”. This should include disabled and gifted children, street and working children, children from remote or nomadic populations, children from linguistic, ethnic, or cultural minorities and children from other disadvantaged or marginalized areas or groups (Unesco 1994: 6).

At the 1990 Jomtien World conference, in Thailand, the goals for “Education for All” were set and it was proclaimed that every person – child, youth and adult – should be able to benefit from educational opportunities, which would meet their basic needs. Inclusive education addresses the educational needs of all learners in a non-threatening, supportive learning environment. This includes learners who were formally disadvantaged and excluded from education because of barriers to learning (Western Cape Education Department, 2002).

3.3.1 Inclusion in Europe

Traditionally, the history of special education in Europe began in the eighteenth century with the education of deaf children. In 1880, compulsory education was introduced in England and France followed suit in 1882 (Armstrong, 2003). This strategic move by authorities formed the foundation for soon to follow policy structures in the provision of special education. An organised and structured system of special education was born, with the dual intention of relieving ordinary schools of difficult learners and catering for the special needs of these learners. In France, the principles of “liberty, equality and fraternity” which emerged during the French Revolution also resounded in the education system of the time. One of the principles on which state education in France was based was the right to social inclusion, which implies that no child should be excluded from formal education because of religion, nationality or gender. Yet learners were excluded due to disabilities and learning difficulties (Armstrong, 2003:65; Sheehy & Rix, 2004).

The period between 1950 and 1970 saw a spurt of economic growth in Europe and special education thrived in all its facets, rendering care, remediation, medical aid, education, training and control. A slide in the economy after 1970 raised the issue of integration and debate around it continued into the 1980’s, especially after the 1981 Education Act was enacted in England and the 1975 Loi d’Orientation en Faveur des Personnes Handicapees was passed in France. These laws asserted “the right of access to social integration of all children, young people and adults with physical, sensory or

mental disabilities” (Armstrong, 2003: 67). The number of special schools in England was reduced although the total number of children placed in these segregated schools did not drop significantly. In France, the 1989 *Loi Jospin* (the framework law on education) stated that it is the right of all children (of whom many were placed in institutions outside the education system) to be allowed to attend ordinary school “as far as possible” (Armstrong, 2003: 69; Allan, 2003; Smith & Polloway, 2008).

It is clear from these developments that social attitudes shifted from intolerance to a more caring stance and an overall acceptance that disabled children should be included in ordinary education. But despite the legislation mentioned above (and the human rights principles on which they were founded), there still exists a significant and complex network of special schools and institutions in England and France. The current curriculum and assessment policies in ordinary schools are factors inhibiting the full inclusion of disabled learners and learners with learning problems, in mainstream education.

One of the main challenges to a fully inclusive system in France is the separate development of education and practices concerned with health and disability. The Social Affairs Commission report of July 2002, stated that “a quarter of children and young people with a physical disability and 8% of children with a sensory disability do not attend school”. The report also criticized inaccessibility to public transport, buildings, workplaces and schools (Armstrong, 2003: 67; Allan, 2003).

3.3.2 Inclusion in the United States of America (USA)

Before federal legislation was passed in the mid 1970s in the USA, a mere 20 % of all children with disabilities were catered for in the public school system. It was approximated that three million children with disabilities received inadequate schooling and about one million were entirely excluded from the education system in the USA (US Department of Education, 2000, Smith & Polloway, 2008: 4). Children whose parents could not afford private educational programmes were barred from all formal education and were forced to stay at home. A minority of schools catered for students with physical and mental disabilities, usually in classrooms separated from mainstream buildings. Financial constraints coupled with apathy, hampered development of services to these children. Pressure from groups such as the civil rights movement, advocacy groups, experts, federal and state legislation as well as legal action, prompted accommodation of students with disabilities in general

mainstream classes for the full school day or part of it (Smith & Polloway, 2008; Elliott & McKenney, 1998).

Providing for students with disabilities progressed in four main phases: relative isolation; integration (mainstreaming); inclusion; and empowerment. The first sixty to seventy years of the twentieth century can be categorized under the relative isolation phase. The integration phase with its onset in the 1970s, saw the mainstreaming of students with disabilities into general education programmes. The inclusion phase commenced in the mid-1980's and emphasised the inclusion of students with disabilities in all school activities and programmes. The fourth phase, empowerment, has been at the heart of the most recent inclusion efforts. The most noteworthy development has been the notion that inclusion is not confined to a place such as a classroom or a building but is viewed as specialised instruction and services provided to students with disabilities (Smith & Polloway, 2008).

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) recognises thirteen categories of disabilities. It also describes students with disabilities as persons who display one of a number of particular conditions which entitles them to receive special education. However, not all students who need special assistance fit precisely into the aforementioned categories. For this reason, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act and the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) use a definition of disability based on a practical, rather than categorical model. Section 504 and the ADA regard a person as disabled under the following circumstances:

1. if the person suffers from a physical or mental condition which greatly restricts one or more vital life functions
2. if there is proof of recurrence of such impairment
3. if a person is considered as having such impairment (Smith & Patton, 2007 as quoted in Smith & Polloway, 2008).

When learners are considered eligible, schools are expected to provide academic and non-academic assistance and these learners are entitled to free suitable public education (Smith & Polloway, 2008: 9; Allan, 2003).

3.3.3 Inclusive education in Australia

Roger Slee (as cited in Allan, 2003) summarises a reform agenda for public education in Queensland, Australia. This reform agenda was developed from a blueprint called Queensland State Education-2010. He describes the struggle for more inclusive schooling within that reform proposal. The complex politics surrounding inclusive education are explained and attention is also given to the implications of inclusive education for educator education in Australia. According to Slee, inclusive education in Queensland is slow and weakened by challenges posed by a number of factors such as knowledge about disability and difference, recognised power relations, institutional inflexibility and economic restraints. He asserts that the Queensland State Education - 2010 reform agenda could link the inclusive schooling agenda to a general reform of curriculum, pedagogy, assessment and school organisation (Allan, 2003).

Summary

Even though the focus in the development of inclusive education was mainly on children's impairments, the school and classroom, many barriers are situated outside the school, the child and the classroom. Children from ethnic and linguistic minorities and children from poverty stricken home environments, find learning difficult in ordinary mainstream schools. In some societies the education of girls is prohibited. Children living in remote rural areas, children affected by HIV/AIDS, poor health and social difficulties and physical or sexual abuse experience these issues as barriers to their learning and development. Some extrinsic barriers arise from the structure of the education system such as the curriculum, assessment and classroom practice. The content of school curricula, the assessment methods and teaching styles, could become more inflexible and rigid as learners progress through the education system. The school culture and inability to access the language of learning and teaching are some of the extrinsic barriers that children may experience. Countries need to consider the impact of these features and how they generate barriers to learning and more importantly, work on ways to lessen or remove these barriers. The inclusive approach searches for knowledge and understanding of these barriers and the development of ordinary schools which are able to meet these children's learning needs. Therefore, one can say that inclusive education is about lessening all types of barriers and establishing ordinary schools which are proficient to meet all learning needs of all learners (Landsberg & Gericke, 2002).

It is evident from the preceding discussion that educational systems do not become inclusive overnight. It is a continuous process of change built on a very definite set of principles and it involves the development of the whole education system. These principles have more impetus if they are incorporated into legislation and other government documentation, as is the case in South Africa where the constitution commits the State to equality of rights. The 1995 White Paper on Education and Training and 1996 South African Schools Act converts this commitment into the responsibility to guarantee all citizens a right to education irrespective of differences such as race, class and gender. In England, the government created a Green Paper (DfEE, 1997) in which its commitment to inclusive education and to the Salamanca Statement is contained (Landsberg & Gericke, 2002).

The move towards a fully inclusive education system by necessity involves the whole education system as well as related social systems because the goals and principles of inclusive education cannot be accomplished if all other facets of the education system remain unchanged. In South Africa, England and Spain, inclusive education has been the pivot of broader transformation to improve the effectiveness of the whole system (Landsberg & Gericke, 2002).

Other strategies necessary for the development of inclusive education include a meticulous analysis of the existing system, identifying existing intrinsic and extrinsic barriers as well as prospects conducive to the development of inclusive practice. There is a need for administrative structures to be altered. The administrative structures governing mainstream and special education can in itself be barriers to inclusive education, since administration is done by different departments with different rules, funding guidelines and decision-making procedures.

The process of development of inclusive policies and practices necessitates resources. Identification of appropriate human and financial resources is crucial, as well as the establishment of functional partnerships with appropriate stake-holders, NGOs and international organisations.

3.4 Inclusion in the South African context

In South Africa, inclusive education simply means a system of education that supports all learners in their learning by responding appropriately to their learning needs (Gauteng Department of Education, 2006: 3). The policies and practices of inclusive education in South Africa were and continue to be influenced by international movements and trends. The development of special education in South

Africa followed the same path as in most countries but the extent of political influence was a major distinguishing factor (Landsberg, et al, 2006). Inclusive education in South Africa was also a direct reaction and obligation to the Education for All movement espoused in the UNESCO Salamanca Statement, 1994 (Eloff & Kgwete, 2007).

Recent historical events in South Africa have impacted greatly on the education system and heralded significant changes. The advent of democracy in 1994 saw the end of the Apartheid era. This was a dispensation which structured the education system on a racially segregated model which was effectively an abuse of the human rights of the vast majority of South African citizens. South Africans were forced to attend racially-segregated schools. This resulted in huge inequalities in the provision of educational opportunities to the four population groups, namely black, coloured, indian and white. Separate education departments were designated for each of the race groups, and this led to the duplication of functions and services as well as major discrepancies in the per capita funding in the different departments (Engelbrecht & Green, 2007), with white-designated schools receiving the highest per capita funding.

During Apartheid, special education was separated from mainstream education as was the case in other countries in the mid twentieth century. The inequalities in the funding and services in the mainstream education provided to the different race groups were also evident in the provision of special education. White learners were the most privileged in this regard while black learners were the most disadvantaged group (Engelbrecht & Green, 2007; Landsberg, et al, 2006). During this era most learners in South Africa were marginalised because of their race and this marginalisation was underwritten and enforced by law and policy.

The separation of learners with special needs from other learners in mainstream education, as well as the interpretation of the concept “disability” led to stereotyping. This was strengthened by the significance attributed to the medical model of diagnosis and treatment of learner disabilities. Segregation practices were encouraged by this notion and a vast number of learners were denied access to sufficient educational services (Engelbrecht & Green, 2007).

The advent of democracy in 1994 brought with it the accentuation of the values incorporated in the new constitution. One of the aims of the South African Constitution (1996) is: “To heal the divisions

of the past and establish a society based on democratic values, social justice and fundamental human rights” (Department of Education, 2001:6).

These values were mirrored in ensuing legislation, policy documents and structures, including:

- White Paper on Education and Training (1995), which created the foundation for guiding principles and legislation to assist a paradigm shift to inclusive education
- The South African Schools Act (1996)
- White Paper on an Integrated National Disability Strategy (1997), which focuses on approaches for access to the curriculum for learners with disabilities
- Education White Paper 6: Special Needs Education: building an inclusive education and training system. (2001)- emphasises important principles that are fundamental to an inclusive education system (Department of Education, 2001: 6)
- National Commission on Special Educational Needs and Training
- National Committee on Education Support Services (1997) which was commissioned to scrutinize and advise on all facets and aspects of special needs and support services

White Paper 6 (2001) defines inclusive education and training as:

- acknowledging that all children and youth can learn and that all children and youth need support
- enabling education structures, systems and learning methodologies to meet the needs of all learners
- acknowledging and respecting differences in learners, whether due to age, gender, ethnicity, language, class, disability, HIV or other infectious diseases
- broader than formal schooling and acknowledging that learning also occurs in the home and community, and within formal and informal settings and structures
- changing attitudes, behaviour, teaching methods, curricula and environment to meet the needs of all learners
- maximising the participation of all learners in the culture and the curriculum of educational institutions
- uncovering and minimising barriers to learning (Department of Education, 2001: 6)

3.4.1 Extrinsic and intrinsic factors

The learning needs of learners are usually dependent on the interaction between various intrinsic and extrinsic factors. According to Donald, “intrinsic refers to those issues working mainly from within the individual whereas extrinsic issues stem mainly from outside the person” (Donald et al, 2006:21). These intrinsic and extrinsic factors can reinforce one another in creating and sustaining a wide range of barriers to a learner’s learning and development. Further reference will be made to these barriers in chapter 4 of this study. The Commission on Special Needs in Education and Training and the Committee for Education Support Services in South Africa (Department of Education, 1997) acknowledged a range of general factors that create barriers to learning and development. These factors include “General socio-economic factors (such as poverty), ideology, physical access, inflexible curriculum, inappropriate language and communication channels, inaccessibly built environments, lack of space and inappropriate transport” (Department of Education, 1997: 12). Research done in numerous countries has shown that poverty has unfavourable effects on children’s schooling and learning experiences. The following statement was made at the Public Hearing on the Right to Basic Education, steered by the South African Human Rights Commission in 2005: “The research clearly shows that if you are black – particularly if you are rural and poor – schooling and education does not work for you. For 60 – 80% of our children, education reinforces marginalisation, [keeping them] trapped in a second economy of unemployment and survival with few ways out” (South African Human Rights Commission, 2006:18).

Children who are poor face challenges such as an inability to afford school fees, uniforms, textbooks and stationery. They often come to school hungry, undernourished and inadequately dressed, especially in winter. At the school where the researcher is an educator, a feeding scheme provides one meal per day, which for some children is the only meal they will get for the day. Needless to say, these circumstances are not at all conducive to the child’s learning. Other poverty related effects include a lack of resources to supplement teaching, such as reading materials and audio visual equipment in the home. Especially worth mentioning is where the home language is different from the LoLT, (English) and the learner has difficulty with receptive and expressive LoLT. Often parents or caregivers are not proficient in English themselves and therefore unable to assist learners with homework tasks or improving their reading ability (Christie, 2008).

Sometimes learners' schoolwork suffers because they have been assigned too many household chores or they miss school because they have to take care of younger siblings. Gaps in their knowledge arise, and they may fall further behind their classmates and eventually even drop out of school. Children from poverty stricken households are more vulnerable when tragedy strikes, for example, when the breadwinner of the family becomes ill or dies (Christie, 2008). At the school where the researcher teaches, a number of Grade 4 learners are left orphaned due to HIV/AIDS-related deaths of parents. They are then either left in the care of ageing grandparents, sometimes unwilling relatives or moved from one foster care to another.

Other social problems that impact on learners' schooling and development are issues of violence, sexual, physical and emotional abuse. In the researcher's school community learners often witness horrific gang-related violence in the area where they live or relationship violence in their homes. There have been reports of Grade 4 learners as well as learners in other grades, being victims of physical and sexual abuse. It stands to reason that children subjected to such violence can experience serious psychological damage. Studies conducted by Mason and Killian, 1994, as quoted by (Donald, et al, 2006:237) suggest that risks seem greater for younger children. Christie succinctly captures the impact of all the above-mentioned factors on children's learning and development when he states the following: "What children bring with them to school from their homes makes a difference to their experiences and performance at school" (Christie, 2008: 175).

In the researcher's experience, schools situated in less privileged communities are not as well resourced as schools in more affluent communities. These schools usually lack in resources such as media centres (libraries and computer centres), school halls, sports facilities, and textbooks. In some cases even amenities such as school toilets are in a dismal state. Overcrowded classrooms with an educator to learner ratio of one to forty five and insufficient seating, further impacts negatively on the learning and development of some learners already weighed down by intrinsic barriers. Procuring support from the government in these schools is normally a tedious process involving copious amounts of red tape and a successful outcome is never a given. A newspaper article (*The Times* April 25, 2013: 1) titled "Is this freedom?" draws attention to the plight of learners attending a rural school in Mthatha in the Eastern Cape. Among the many challenges that learners are faced with are walking distances of up to 15km to school and more than one hundred learners crammed into one classroom. There is an obvious shortage of desks and other teaching and learning resources. A published

photograph shows four learners sharing a desk which is elevated on crumbling cement bricks in order for them to have a view of the blackboard. Brad Brockman, the general secretary of an organisation called Equal Education, is quoted in the article voicing deep concern, saying: “Education is meant to be the great equaliser. How are children meant to rise above poverty if these are the conditions in which they are forced to learn?” (Davids: *The Times*, April 25, 2013:1).

3.4.2 Policy

White Paper 6 makes a distinction between mainstreaming and inclusion and the description of the latter is of particular importance to this research. In particular, the following points are important:

- Inclusion is about recognising and respecting the differences among all learners and building on the similarities.
- Inclusion is about supporting all learners, educators and the system as a whole so that the full range of needs could be met. The focus is on teaching and learning factors, with the emphasis on the development of good teaching strategies that will be of benefit to all learners.
- Inclusion focuses on overcoming barriers in the system that prevent it from meeting the full range of learning needs. The focus is on the adaptation of support systems available in the classroom (Education White Paper 6, 2001:16).

It is clear White Paper 6 seeks to respond to the ethos of the constitutional imperative of an inclusive society regardless of race, gender, class, language, ethnicity or disability. The values of human dignity, equality and human rights challenge all of us to build a humane and caring society for all South Africans. Its aim is to support all components of the education system and ensure that all learners, with or without disabilities, accomplish their learning potential to the fullest.

Professor Kader Asmal, the then Minister of Education, rightly stated...“The place of these children is not one of isolation in dark bedrooms and sheds. It is with their peers, in schools, on the playgrounds, on the streets and in places of worship where they can become part of the local community and cultural life, and part of the reconstruction and development of our country” (Education White Paper 6, 2001: 4).

To do justice to the abovementioned philosophy and the sentiments expressed by Professor Asmal, our country has to accommodate and facilitate a process of transformation of all aspects of the education system. The RNCS list the following key strategies which will be employed:

- development of an integrated education system
- development of Special Needs and Support services throughout the education system
- policies to promote the rights and responsibilities of parents, educators support staff and other relevant human resources
- funding strategies to aid historically disadvantaged communities and institutions (Revised National Curriculum Statement, 2002:1).

Education and the education curriculum have an important role to play in realizing the aims of the South African Constitution. The curriculum aims to develop the full potential of each learner as a citizen of a democratic South Africa (Revised National Curriculum Statement, 2002:1).

After recommendations by the Review Committee (May 2000) a streamlined, strengthened and improved curriculum saw the light, namely the Revised National Curriculum Statement (RNCS). The Revised National Curriculum Statement Grades R – 9 (Schools) adopts an inclusive approach by specifying minimum requirements for all learners. All the Learning Area Statements try to create an awareness of the relationship between social justice, human rights, a healthy environment and inclusivity. Learners are encouraged to develop knowledge and an understanding of the rich diversity of South Africa, including the cultural, religious and ethnic components of its diversity (Revised national Curriculum Statement Grades R – 9, 2002: 2).

Challenges in the implementation of the RNCS led to an amendment to the National Curriculum Statement Grades R – 12 Subject Statements. A few years later (2010), the Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statements (CAPS) was developed. CAPS is a single comprehensive policy document and covers all aspects of the subject statements, and learning and assessment guidelines (previously covered in three separate statements). As discussed in Chapter 1 of this paper, CAPS is not a new curriculum since it follows the same process and procedure as the National Curriculum Statement Grades R – 12. CAPS is an adjustment to the curriculum content (what should be taught) and how the content should be assessed. CAPS has been implemented in the Foundation Phase Grades R – 3) and Grade 10 Further Education and Training (FET) in 2012. The Intermediate Phase and Grade 11 implemented CAPS in January 2013 and the Senior Phase and Grade 12 implemented it in January 2014.

The current Minister of Basic Education, Angie Motshekga, emphasised the idea that our curriculum is based on the same values and principles that motivated our constitution. The South African Curriculum includes principles such as human rights and inclusivity. One aim explicitly asserts that “inclusivity should become a central part of the organisation, planning and teaching at each school. This can only happen if all educators have a sound understanding of how to recognise and address barriers to learning and how to plan for diversity” (Department of Basic Education, 2011:5).

3.5 Educational implications of inclusion for South Africa

The mere acceptance and belief in a policy is no guarantee that it will operate and function as smoothly as it is stated in print. According to White Paper 6, the main resource to be utilised in realising the goal of an inclusive education and training system is the classroom educators. The main aim is human resource development for classroom educators who are expected to give multi-level instruction. This involves making use of differentiation to meet the needs of individual learners, the application of co-operative learning and teaching methods, the use of curriculum enrichment, and dealing with learners with behavioural problems (Department of Education, 2002).

White Paper 6 directs that all education support personnel within district support services must be trained to provide support to all learners, educators and the education system as a whole in order for all learning needs to be met. It says that these training programmes should focus on how to identify and address barriers to learning. According to White Paper 6, this approach which involves identifying and overcoming the causes of learning difficulties, develops learners’ strengths and empowers and enables them to participate fully and actively in the learning process. The approach is also on par with international approaches on equality in education. (See chapter 4 for a more detailed discussion of the new learning support system).

For the successful implementation of inclusion, schools need to restructure and transform so as to cater for the diverse needs of all learners. Inclusive education demands that schools transform to accommodate the needs of learners instead of the learners being expected to fit into the school system. It is especially important to accommodate the needs of learners who experience various barriers to learning (Donald, et al, 2006). Mutual acceptance, respect for diversity and social justice are just some of the values that schools need to embrace in the implementation of inclusion.

A variety of resources are available to assist schools in the implementation of inclusion. One such a resource is the “Index for inclusion” by Booth (in Landsberg, et al, 2006:8). Three dimensions of an inclusive school are discussed. Dimension A is about creating inclusive cultures, which basically means creating a community where a sense of belonging and acceptance forms the basis for the performance and ability of all learners. Dimension B is concerned with developing inclusive policies. Dimension C is about establishing inclusive practices that mirror the inclusive cultures and policies of the school (Landsberg, et al, 2006).

It makes sense that the change to inclusion had to be reflected in the terminology associated with this approach. This terminology now includes concepts such as *barriers to learning* instead of *special needs*, and *learning support* as opposed to *remedial education* (Landsberg, et al, 2006: 9).

The South African education system is faced with real challenges in implementing inclusive practices. These challenges are encapsulated in contextual factors such as:

- time frames and available resources
- educator training on skills and knowledge to provide adequate learning support to learners experiencing barriers to learning, especially learning support to learners who experience barriers to the language of learning and teaching
- policy concerning curriculum issues, educator administrative work
- high learner-educator ratios, which make unrealistic demands on educators and learners alike

Developing successful collaborative partnerships between all education support structures is an ongoing challenge to inclusive practices, not only in South Africa but globally as well (Donald et al, 2006; Engelbrecht & Gericke, 2007; Landsberg, et al, 2006). Briggs emphasises that inclusion involves continuous school improvement instead of an abrupt and swift change: “Inclusion is not a fixed state; it is a process that will take time to achieve” (Briggs, 2005: 1).

3.6 Conclusion

The meaning, interpretations and associated concepts of the term “inclusion” were discussed in this chapter. Various definitions of inclusion were reflected on. A South African definition of inclusion is founded on values of our democratic state such as social justice, respect for diversity, human rights and mutual acceptance. Inclusive education entails the special responsibility to implement these

values and ensure that a learning environment is created in which the needs of all learners are catered for, irrespective of their race, class, gender, language or disability. These inclusive settings should allow all learners to pursue their learning potential to the maximum.

An overview of international and national views on inclusion was provided in order to clarify the various interpretations of the term. The worldwide human rights movement gave rise to the development of inclusion in education. The South African education system had to follow suit and echo the changes that were rapidly occurring in the economic, political and social spheres of world society.

The history of education and inclusive practices abroad, as well as in South Africa were discussed. Political changes impacted greatly on the education system, especially in South Africa. The year 1994 heralded a new democratic state which produced new legislation and policies pertaining, among others, to education. White Paper 6 portrays and explains inclusive education in its multifaceted context. Our education system has to overcome numerous challenges in the implementation and realisation of its goal of inclusion. These included the challenges that arise from contextual factors such as: limited available resources; short time frames; lack of educator skills, knowledge and training and policy concerns. Knowledge and skills for the provision of learning support to learners who experience barriers to learning is of special concern in this study and will be focused on in subsequent chapters.

CHAPTER 4

BARRIERS TO LEARNING AND LEARNING SUPPORT

4.1 Introduction

The New English Usage dictionary (Alswang, 2001: 59) defines a barrier as an obstacle to prevent a person or thing getting past a place or thing. Therefore, a barrier to learning and participation is something that stands in the way of learning, something that stops participation or learning from progressing (Gauteng Department of Education, 2006: 24).

The opening statement of the report furnished by the combined effort of the National Commission on Special Needs in Education and Training (NCSNET) and the National Committee on Education Support services (NCESS) declares that the chief goal of any education system is to provide quality education to all learners so as to enable them to develop to their optimum potential and become valuable members of society. The onus then, is on the education system to facilitate effective learning by providing equal opportunities to all learners (Department of Education, 1997). This report provides valuable insight into the meaning and nature of barriers to learning in the South African context.

Special attention was given to interpretation of concepts such as special needs and education support. Exploration of these concepts led to acknowledgment by the NCSNET/ NCESS that a variety of learner needs are present among learners and within the education system. The education system has the vital role of catering to this diverse scope of learner needs. It is argued that failure to accommodate such needs will essentially lead to learning breakdown and exclusion of learners (Department of Education, 1997:11). There is also the understanding that a multifaceted bond exists between the learner, the education system and the broader social, political and economic environments and that problems encountered in any of these contextual aspects or factors could impact negatively on learning (Landsberg et al, 2006; Department of Education, 1997).

These factors that could cause learning breakdown have been formulated by the NCSNET/ NCESS as barriers to learning and development. Therefore barriers to learning and development can be described as “those factors which lead to the inability of the system to accommodate diversity, which lead to learning breakdown or which prevent learners from accessing educational provision” (Department of Education, 1997: 12). Barriers to learning can be found within the learner, within the learning environment, within the system of education or in the wider economic, social and political environment. These barriers to learning include poverty, ideology, physical

access, inflexible curriculum, inappropriate language, communication channels, inaccessible built environments, lack of space or inappropriate transport and similar factors within the system that impede access to learning (Department of Education, 2002; Donald, et al, 2006: 21; Landsberg, et al, 2006: 17).

4.2 Discussion of different barriers to learning

White Paper 6 adopts the use of the terminology “barriers to learning and development” in the place of “disabilities”. It, however, retains the internationally acceptable terms of “disability” and “impairments” when referring specifically to those learners whose barriers to learning and development are rooted in organic or medical causes (Department of Education, 2001:12).

According to Education White paper 6, the Department of Education acknowledges that a “broad range of learning needs exist among the learner population” (Education White Paper 6, 2001: 17). It is also clearly stated that if these needs are not appropriately catered for, these learners could be prevented from learning effectively and thereby be excluded from the education system. These learning needs or barriers to learning can be due to a variety of causes or factors such as:

- physical, mental sensory, neurological and developmental impairments
- psycho-social disturbances
- differences in intellectual ability
- particular life experiences or socio-economic deprivation.

The following can also be barriers to learning:

- negative attitudes to and stereotyping of differences
- an inflexible curriculum
- inappropriate language/s of learning and teaching
- inappropriate communication
- inaccessible and unsafe built environments
- Inappropriate and inadequate support services
- inadequate policies and legislation
- non-recognition and non-involvement of parents
- inadequately and inappropriately trained education managers and educators (Education White Paper 6, 2001:18)

In a developing country like South Africa, barriers to learning as experienced by any learner are usually the result of the interaction between varying degrees of intrinsic and extrinsic factors (Landsberg, et al, 2006; Donald et al, 2006). Donald defines *intrinsic* as “factors operating mainly from within the person” and *extrinsic* as “factors operating mainly from outside the person” (Donald, et al, 2006: 21). He emphasises the importance of not interpreting extrinsic and intrinsic factors as operating independently from one another and contends that they unavoidably reinforce one another (Donald, et al, 2006). Exactly how these factors impact upon one another will be evident from the discussion of socio-economic barriers, among other key barriers to learning and development.

4.2.1 Key barriers to learning and development

It should be noted that these key barriers to learning and development have been adapted from the NCSNET/ NCESS report, 1997 (NCSNET/ NCESS report, Department of Education, 1997).

Socio- economic barriers

It is essential that the connection between the socio- economic conditions and education provision in any society be acknowledged. There is no denying that socio-economic factors can act as barriers to learning and development. Some of these factors are set out below.

Lack of access to basic services: Learners from very poor communities, especially in the rural areas of South Africa, have no access to transport facilities to get to schools or other centres of learning. Learners with physical disabilities, including those in wheel chairs, are more severely affected. Lack of access to clinics can also encroach on the learning process: learners suffering from a chronic illness and therefore in need of regular medical treatment, experience long absences from school and this leads to gaps in their learning. Lack of intervention services can cause further harm and also lessen learners’ capacity to learn. Lack of access to welfare and communication services can also have an adverse effect on the learning process (Department of Education, 1997: 13).

Poverty and underdevelopment: The effects of poverty on learners, the learning process and the education system, are closely connected to the effects of a lack of access to basic services. The basic needs of learners, such as shelter and nutrition, are not met. Poor living conditions are prone to cause increased emotional stress in learners and impact negatively on learning. An under-

nourished child struggles to concentrate and cannot be effectively involved in the learning process. A general trend is that poverty-stricken communities are also poorly resourced in terms of educational facilities, learning materials and adequately trained staff. Their schools typically have large classes and high learner/educator ratios. All of these factors contribute to the probability of learning breakdown (Department of Education, 1997: 13).

Factors which place learners at risk

“Effective learning is directly related to and dependent on the social and emotional well-being of the learner” (Department of Education, 1997: 14). Specific conditions in the learner’s social, economic and political environment, may manifest that can have an adverse effect on the learner’s social and emotional well-being. A learner who is exposed to physical, emotional or sexual abuse is prone to suffer emotional and physical harm. In addition, such a learner may also be compelled to miss school and could finally “drop out” of the education system. Substance abuse may cause family-breakdown and increase the emotional stress of learners. Sometimes political violence in the wider society may disrupt the learning process by causing trauma and emotional suffering for learners. An instance of such political violence was demonstrated in the spate of xenophobic attacks that took place in our country in 2008. Some learners and their families in the researcher’s school community were victims of these horrific attacks. The learning environment and learning process was disrupted, eventually culminating in learning break-down. Families were displaced and many learners were forced to leave school. On 5 February 2014, during violent service delivery protests in Sebokeng, Vaal, learners were prohibited by protesters, to attend school (Hosken, *The Times*: February 5, 2014). A strike by the taxi federation in February 2014 left scores of learners in the researcher’s school community stranded, causing them to miss lessons.

The school environment should be conducive to learning and teaching but sometimes it is unsafe due to high levels of crime and violence in the surrounding or feeder community. Such factors encroach on the safety of learners and educators and can lead to a disruption in the learning process. The HIV/AIDS epidemic has affected numerous learners and adults over the last decade. Many learners have had to cope with the loss of family members; some suffer from the epidemic themselves (Landsberg et al, 2006Department of Education, 1997: 14).

Attitudes

When discriminatory attitudes based on race, class, gender, culture, disability and religion are expressed against learners in the education system, they become evident as barriers to learning. Negative attitudes can result in labelling such as “repeaters” or “slow learners”. Such labelling can adversely affect learners’ self-esteem but is even more harmful when it leads to placement or exclusion. Barriers may also arise from fear or lack of awareness about the specific need or barrier. Misconceptions concerning HIV can lead to the exclusion of learners suffering from it (Department of Education, 1997: 15).

Inflexible curriculum

Learning break-down takes place when learners are unable to access the curriculum. The style and tempo of teaching and learning, what is taught, classroom management and organisation, as well as teaching materials and equipment, are key components of the curriculum that are essential for facilitating successful learning. Inappropriate application of these components could result in barriers to learning and eventual learning break-down. An educator could teach at a pace that only caters to learners who learn fast. Subject matter or content may be unsuitable to develop learners’ academic and emotional ability.

Particular aspects of the curriculum may inhibit participation of learners. For example, when learners with physical disabilities are prevented from or not provided with the opportunity to participate in sport. Learners with disabilities are often denied access to the curriculum due to insufficient provision of resource materials or equipment. For example, lack of proper Braille facilities and equipment will impede the learning experiences of blind learners. Inflexible assessment strategies and methods that focus more on rote learning rather than comprehension of concepts can become a barrier to learning (Department of Education, 1997: 15).

Inaccessible and unsafe built environments

In many cases, centres of learning are not designed and built to allow easy access to learners with physical disabilities. This makes it difficult and often unsafe, for learners with disabilities (especially blind or wheelchair-bound learners) to access educational facilities (Department of Education, 1997: 16).

Inappropriate and inadequate provision of support services

Inappropriate support and intervention may be centred on problems in the learner instead of the system where the barrier may possibly exist, and the intervention may actually aggravate the learning breakdown. Inadequate skills and knowledge in educators and support personnel, leads to an inability and fear to deal with a diverse range of learner needs (Department of Education, 1997: 16).

Lack of enabling and protective legislation and policy

Some barriers to learning can stem from the government legislation and policy that regulates and directs the education system. This is especially true in cases where such regulations fail to shield learners from discriminatory practices (Department of Education, 1997: 16).

Lack of parental recognition and involvement

Efficient learning is under threat when the role of parents in the learning process is undermined or ignored. Parents are very important partners for successful governance of schools and are the key to community involvement in the education system (Donald et al, 2006; Department of Education, 1997: 16).

Lack of human resource development strategies

The sustained in-service training of educators and other service providers in the education system is sadly lacking. This may have a detrimental effect on educators' self-esteem and inventive practices in the classroom and could prompt negative attitudes towards learners experiencing barriers to learning (Department of Education, 1997:16).

4.3 LoLT as a barrier to learning

Language is the most important means for people to interact, communicate and transfer knowledge. Brunner and Vygotsky as cited in (Donald, 2006: 96), note that language in all its forms, whether spoken, written or read, is an essential instrument in teaching and learning. The use of language is crucial for learning and development (Department of Education, 1997:17).

Curriculum 2005 describes the outcomes of language proficiency in terms of a learner's ability to:

- make and negotiate meaning and understanding
- show critical awareness of language usage
- respond to aesthetic, affective, cultural and social values in text
- access, process and use information from a variety of sources and situations
- understand, know and apply language structures and conventions in context
- use language for learning
- use appropriate communication strategies for specific purposes and situations (Department of Education, 1997:23)

Language is a vital part of all elements of education and has very particular cognitive, scholastic, social and emotional implications for educational development (Donald et al, 2006: 195).

Herschensohn states: "Language is a species-specific attribute of humans who are born with the neural structure for developing linguistic abilities and learn the language that they interact and are faced with in their environment. Both nature – the genetic predisposition to learn and use language and the social, cultural and emotional input that feeds acquisition, are crucial to learning a first language" (Herschensohn, 2007: 27).

Many learners in South African schools are taught through the medium of English, which is not their home language and in which they have a limited proficiency (Department of Education, 1997; Landsberg, et al, 2006; Donald, et al, 2006, Theron & Nel, 2005). Mahlobo reasons that the full development of a learner's potential depends on, among others, the learning environment, the learner, as well as the learners' understanding of the language of learning and teaching, which for most South Africans is English (Mahlobo, 1999).

According to the report of the NCSNET and the NCESS (Department of Education, 1997:24), learning through a language that is not their first language, places learners at a disadvantage. It may also cause other linguistic problems that add to learning breakdown. Donald adopts the views of Ramirez, Thomas and Collier (Ramirez, Yuen & Ramey, 1999; Thomas and Collier, 2002) when he states that the sudden severance of a learner's formal learning from his first language, can adversely affect the learner's cognitive development as well as scholastic performance (Donald et al, 2006).

Learners who do not perform well scholastically start to feel incompetent and this in turn impacts negatively on their self-esteem. Sound emotional, cognitive and scholastic development is hampered in this way. Second language learners are frequently faced with discrimination and low expectation due to their limited proficiency in English as LoLT. Educators are also often at a loss when it comes to developing and applying appropriate support mechanisms to assist second language learners (Department of Education, 1997).

4.3.1 English second language as LoLT

Since the focus of this research study is on barriers experienced due to the LoLT, a more in-depth discussion of English Second Language (ESL) as LoLT will be done. According to the Department of Education: “Many learners, out of choice or lack of viable alternatives, have opted to be educated via a medium of teaching, learning and development which is not one of their home languages. This often creates barriers to learning which are rooted in the curriculum and culture of the institution” (Department of Education, 1997: 79).

Mahlobo (1999:10) describes a second language as a “... language used by a people in addition to their native language for communication between different language groups”. He expresses the view that in South Africa, English is the language of political, economic and technological dialogue and offers this as a reason why proficiency in English is rated highly by a many learners and their parents (Mahlobo, 1999). Theron reiterates this by stating that the South African Schools Act (Act 84 of 1996) allows parents to choose the language of learning and teaching for their children and many parents choose English as LoLT for their children (Theron & Nel, 2005). Learners who are truly bilingual do not experience barriers to learning when taught in English but Theron makes the observation that not all learners, because of their varying language backgrounds, are adequately bilingual and usually such learners experience difficulty in the use and comprehension of English (Theron & Nel, 2005: 228; Boucher, 2006: 202).

When learners learn through a language that is not their first language, which is as alien to them as it is to their homes, their social contexts as well as their culture; this is referred to as “subtractive bilingualism”. It is proclaimed “subtractive”, because it displaces both the value and the place of the learner’s first language in the formal learning milieu (Donald et al, 2006: 196).

Alidou (Alidou & Boly: 2006) as adapted by Donald et al (2006:197) cites the following negative outcomes or effects of a subtractive approach:

- a negative effect on cognitive development and scholastic performance
- lack of proficiency in the second language undermines learners' confidence and sense of self-worth
- cultural devaluation of learners' home language, which in turn can adversely affect social and psychological process of identity formation
- when learners and educators feel inadequate and uncomfortable with the use of the second language as LoLT, it can impede the learning process (Donald, et al, 2006: 197).

There are eleven official languages in South Africa and English is the most important LoLT in the majority of schools (Landsberg, et al, 2006). Child, quoting a report by the National Education, Evaluation and Development Unit, noted that the prevalence of each of these eleven languages also differs from one region to the next with "only one educator per classroom, speaking one language" (Child: *The Times*, May 9, 2013). Mahabeer's research study estimated that in 2003 only nine percent of the 40 million people in South Africa spoke English as a first language and yet it is the most widely used language in the majority of organisations in South Africa (Mahabeer, 2003: 19). The most recent statistics comes from the South African Census 2011, which concludes that only 9, 6% of the 51 770 560 South Africans spoke English as a home language in 2011 (South African Census, 2011).

The *Sunday Times* published an article in 2010 in which the Gauteng education MEC, Barbara Greecy, was quoted as stating that just over 50% of Grade 6 learners had passed languages, while only 38% had passed maths. Only a third (30%) of Grade 3 learners could read and write and fewer than 40% had basic numeracy skills (Mouton: *Sunday Times*, November 14, 2010:11). This has great relevance for Grade 4 learners because it means that fewer than 30% of learners reach this grade without having any proficiency in the LoLT. In turn, this means that Grade 4 educators will have to provide intense support in the LoLT in order to ensure effective learning and teaching.

The Department of Education strives to create multilingual South African classrooms by means of its additive approach to multilingualism in which:

- all learners learn their home language and at least one additional official language

- learners become competent in their additional language, while their home language is maintained and developed
- all learners learn an African language for a minimum of three years by the end of the General Education and Training Band (RNCS, 2002:4)

This policy allows School Governing Bodies (SGBs) to select school language policies that are suited to their circumstances and in line with the policy of additive multilingualism. The Department of Education's language -in-education policy recommends that the learner's home language should be used for learning and teaching wherever possible. This is particularly important in the Foundation Phase where children learn to read and write. Where learners have to make a transition from their home language to an additional language as LoLT, this should be carefully planned as follow:

- The additional language should be introduced as a subject in Grade 1.
- The home language should continue to be used alongside the additional language for as long as possible.
- When learners enter a school where the language of learning and teaching is an additional language for the learner, educators should make provision for special assistance and supplementary learning of the additional language, until such time as the learner is able to learn effectively in the language of learning and teaching (RNCS, 5: 2002).

Basic Education Minister, Angie Motshekga, is quoted as saying that the appalling 2009 Matric results can be attributed to the poor English skills of the learners. The minister said that learners, whose home language was not English, found it difficult "articulating themselves properly", even though they were familiar with the subject content (Govender: *Sunday Times*, January 10, 2010). The minister stated that it is beneficial for learners to be introduced to English as early as possible as learners are more receptive to language acquisition at an early age (Govender: *Sunday Times*, January 10, 2010:4). A task team appointed by the minister recommended that English as first additional language be introduced as a fourth subject from Grade R to Grade 3, from 2011.

The National Curriculum Statement (NCS) was then amended to shape and give rise to CAPS. As stated before, CAPS is not a new curriculum as it follows the same process and procedure as the NCS (see Chapter 1). CAPS has been implemented in the Foundation Phase (Grades R-3) and Grade 10 Further Education and Training (FET) in January 2012. One of its main changes

includes the addition of a First Additional Language to the Foundation Phase, where one language must be the LoLT. At a recent language conference held in Cape Town from 15 to 17 October 2013, the Minister stated that children are likely to achieve higher levels of literacy when using a home language in schools (Sapa: *The Times*, October 16, 2013:12).

The quintessence of the “additive approach” is that a second or more languages just gets **added** to the first language; it does not **displace** the first language. If applied in this way, all negative outcomes (as set out earlier in **Section 4.3.1**) may be evaded (Alidou, et al, 2006) as adapted from Donald (Donald, et al, 2006, 197).

The National Education Evaluation and Development Unit of the Department of Education did a study of the language challenges of South African learners during their first three years of school. According to the report, the Department of Education introduced a new policy in 2012 which stated that English should be taught as an additional first language from Grade 1 to Grade 3 in order to ensure that learners would be able to cope with the all the subjects that are taught in the medium of English, from Grade 4 onwards.

The report voiced concern that this policy was not being put into practice appropriately. One of the reasons mentioned for this, was that a number of educators were not adequately proficient in English and, therefore, unable to do justice to the effective teaching of English in Grade 1. The report concluded that: “When learners do not speak the language of instruction, they find learning difficult and academic achievement is undermined” (Child: *The Times*, May 9, 2013:6).

4.3.2 Difficulties encountered in English second language learning

A consequence of learners being taught in English too early is that they may end up with a lack of proficiency in both their first and second languages. The upshot may be learners who are not able to speak, read or write any of the two languages well. Learners who had extended contact with their first language gain a better or firmer foundation to facilitate learning of the second language. This finding by Lapp (2001) as adapted by Landsberg (Landsberg et al, 2006: 151) supports the Department’s policy recommendation on learners’ continued use of their first language while learning or gaining sufficient proficiency in the second language or language of learning and teaching.

Countless educators do not have the necessary insight and understanding of how a second language is learnt or how to teach learners with no or very little comprehension of English. Educators do not have necessary knowledge and skills to teach learners from diverse cultural backgrounds and home languages. Different language structures may be alien to educators causing inability to understand interference from the first language, in particular word order errors and pronunciation (Theron & Nel, 2005).

Theron points out the following characteristics of ESL learners with limited English proficiency:

- inadequately mastered home language, as the learning of a second language often depends on how well the foundation of the first language was laid
- poor literacy skills because in order to be academically literate, learners have to gain sufficient proficiency in English to master curriculum content over and above English as a second language
- general linguistic deprivation due to the fact that ESL learners often come from poor backgrounds where there is no access to television, books, magazines and newspapers
- an inadequate English literary culture arising from the fact that ESL learners were hardly ever (or never) exposed to the experience of listening to childhood tales, nursery rhymes, songs and games that form such an integral part of the English-speaking child's cultural world
- delayed English acquisition where ESL learners learn English at a later stage than English first language learners
- lack of English resources where the ESL learner's parents and neighbourhood contacts do not speak English, resulting in a lack of resources to assist the ESL learner to improve in English proficiency
- exposure to non-standard English caused by more than one language being spoken at home, with the result that the English spoken is rarely Standard English
- language problems in the course of learning English in the Language Learning Area, as well as in the curriculum content of all other subjects
- learner's general socialisation and peer interaction are also adversely affected (Theron & Nel, 2005: 223).

These characteristics can make the task of educators of ESL learners more difficult.

Grade 4 ESL learners, who experience a language difficulty, generally have difficulty with their receptive and expressive language in verbal and written responses. Grade 4 educators come across specific difficulties related to word sounds, grammar, meaning, reading and spelling difficulties. These learners often cannot distinguish between similar sounds such as “mat and “sat; they mix up the order of sounds and “many” is seen as “namy” and certain sounds are left out of words so that “show’ becomes “sow” (Theron & Nel, 2005).

In this regard, the researcher observed the following grammatical errors in the course of the fieldwork undertaken at the two subject schools: incorrect tenses of verbs, inaccurate use of pronouns and the wrong word order. Furthermore, Grade 4 ESL learners were often unable to form more complex sentences while some learners found it difficult to construct simple sentences without making one of the errors mentioned above. Grade 4 ESL learners who experience difficulty in comprehending and making sense of messages in English, encounter serious problems in understanding curriculum content in all subjects.

Reading difficulties experienced by Grade 4 ESL learners include slow, word-by-word reading, without connecting words grammatically in order to make sense of words that were read. These learners will literally be unable to process information. Some learners have an inability to make visual and auditory differentiation between the same letter shapes like “b” and “d” (Theron & Nel, 2005). A diagnostic report, compiled by the Department of Basic Education summarised learners’ performance in the 2012 National Assessment tests. In reference to literacy, the report stated: “Many pupils cannot read with understanding; they write sentences and words that are completely incoherent and they struggle to spell frequently used words” (Child: *The Times*, July 2, 2013: 5).

Grade 4 ESL learners, who experience specific phonic difficulty in reading, in general also display a spelling difficulty because they have to process phonic data. A learner has to say or hear sounds in his head and then convert them in the correct sequence into written letters and words. The irregular phonic structure of English as opposed to the regular phonic structure of Afrikaans and most African languages also adds to the spelling difficulties experienced by learners. In the latter, the same sound is more often than not, spelled with the same letters in all words, thus enabling learners to sound out and spell most words (Donald, et al, 2006: 311).

In English the sounding –out technique becomes more difficult. An example of this difficulty is the difference in the spelling of similarly pronounced words such as “hare” and “hair” and

between “there” and “their”. A number of English words must be memorised as visual wholes and learners who experience visual and auditory difficulty really struggle with this task (Donald, et al, 2006).

Grade 4 ESL learners generally have a limited vocabulary that they actually understand and are able to use constructively either orally or in written form (Theron & Nel, 2005: 223). Theron points out that this can be attributed to the poor literacy skills, general linguistic deprivation, lack of English resources and inadequate English literary culture, among ESL learners. Most Grade 4 ESL learners at public schools hail from extremely poor home environments where they have no access to television, magazines, newspapers or books. Crucial support in gaining sufficient proficiency in English sorely lacks, as these learners grow up in neighbourhoods where parents and their community mostly communicate in a language other than English (Theron & Nel, 2005).

4.4 Learning support

Grade 4 learners who experience a barrier to English as LoLT are in danger of being totally excluded from the learning process, since all curricula content and assessments are presented in English. Not only will this exclusion hamper learners’ academic progress but also impact negatively on their emotional and social well-being. Learners, who do not comprehend subject matter, generally work slower and begin trailing behind peers who are proficient in the LoLT. A type of vicious cycle develops with these learners feeling increasingly incompetent and alienated, which in turn reinforces the formation of a negative self-concept.

Classroom educators are among the key role players who can change learning conditions for learners who are experiencing a barrier to the LoLT. All educators should be made aware of the gravity of a barrier to the LoLT. Classroom educators should initiate intervention or learning support by accurately identifying these learners and setting the process of learning support in action. Effective learning support measures can improve learners’ proficiency in the LoLT. There are concerns about whether educators’ have sufficient knowledge and skills to enable them to accurately identify learners with a barrier to English as LoLT and more importantly, to provide effective learning support to these learners.

The essence of the term “learning support” is easier captured when viewed from an eco-systemic standpoint. This perception sees each individual learner as part of a multifaceted system of

interdependent contexts or backgrounds. Subsystems are comprised of the learner's physical, intellectual, and emotional self. All of these aspects determine the degree to which the learner profits from formal teaching instruction (Engelbrecht et al, 2007: 160).

Barriers to learning may be present at any level of the system, be it education policy, curriculum, learners themselves, educator's teaching style or parental involvement. This systemic view of learning support means that any effort to eliminate or reduce barriers need not essentially be focused only on the learner, since the need for change could be located in any of the systems of which the learner is a part (Engelbrecht et al, 2007).

The above notion of support means "... that all learners may at times require support and the removal of barriers to participation and learning, since changing contexts may affect learning in different ways at different times" (Engelbrecht et al, 2007:160). This important task of supplying support to learners should be seen as an ongoing function of the education system and not just sporadic reactions to a particular problem (Engelbrecht et al, 2007).

For the intent and purpose of this study, the focus was on learning support needed for Grade 4 learners who experience barriers to English as LoLT.

4.4.1 Learning support: definition and discussion

Landsberg provides a very comprehensive definition of learning support. "The concept of learning support acknowledges the potential of learners each to grow at his own pace towards his maximum level of independence in his learning, using strategies and practicing learning styles of choice, and each reaching a level of achievement in accordance with his unique abilities. It further relies on the collaboration of people from the systems to which learners belong, to participate in the process of their learning" (Landsberg et al, 2006: 4). To Engelbrecht, use of the term "education support" instead of "learning support" is more acceptable. The reason for this distinction being that "education support" entails a different and broader understanding of support. According to Engelbrecht, the term "learning support" seems to lean toward the traditional or medical model of special education where support is offered to those learners who fail to make satisfactory scholastic progress and where the "fault" is seen to reside within the learner (Engelbrecht et al, 2007: 161).

The approach of the NCESS and NCSNET to support services include all human and other resources that provide support to all aspects of the system. “While these services attempt to minimise and remove barriers to learning and development, they also focus on the prevention of these barriers and on the development of a supportive learning environment for all learners” (Department of Education, 1997: 2). According to Donald, prevention and support are at the heart of addressing barriers to learning (Donald et al, 2006).

4.4.2 Education support structures in an inclusive system

The ministry of Education is of the opinion that the key to minimising barriers to learning is a strengthened support service. Both nationally and provincially, the Department of Education provides a broad management structure for education support services. White Paper 6 sets out a support system that relies on efficient management, policy, planning and supervisory capacity. Central to this support service is the District Based Support Team (DBST) and the institutional-level support team. The district-based staff members are drawn from the Provincial, District, Regional, and Head offices and from Special schools. Its primary function is to:

- evaluate programmes
- diagnose their effectiveness
- suggest modifications

It is envisaged that at institutional level, there will be School Based Support Teams (SBSTs). The primary function of SBSTs will be to put in place properly coordinated learner and educator support services by identifying and addressing learner, educator and institutional needs. A time frame of 20 years was proposed for the full implementation of the envisaged Inclusive Education and Training system (Department of Education, 2001:29).

4.4.3 A support network within each education district

Education White Paper 6 (Department of Education, 2001: 10) stipulates that support will be provided according to the level of needs of learners and not to the impairment of these learners. A flexible rating scale is applied from one (low intensity support) to five (high intensity support). Learners in need of high intensity support will be educated in *special schools* which will serve as resource centres; learners in need of medium intensity support will receive instruction in *full-*

service schools. Learners who need low intensity support will receive instruction in *ordinary schools*.

Special schools serving as resource centres

The functions of special schools serving as resource centres will be integrated and incorporated with that of the district –based support teams. Other functions of special schools serving as resource centres include, among others:

- training of educators on barriers to learning
- management of inclusive classrooms
- development of learning support material

The special schools that are serving as resource centres will also coordinate their activities with that of other community-support structures such as health and welfare and disabled people’s organisations (Department of Education 2002: 25-33).

Full-service schools

The full-service schools will:

- provide support in the school to learners and educators by means of competent and experienced learning support educators
- support neighbouring schools with knowledge, information and assistive devices in respect of their barriers to learning
- work in close collaboration with the DBST to coordinate support (Department of Education, 2002: 44-46)

District Based Support Teams (DBSTs)

The key function of the DBST is to facilitate and support educational centres in their task of identifying and addressing the full range of learning needs. According to Education White Paper 6 (Department of Education 2001:3), a “....key responsibility of the district support teams will be to provide curriculum assessment and instructional support”.

To be effective, the District Based and the School Based Support Teams should function in collaboration with other governmental departments such as social welfare, health and justice (Engelbrecht et al, 2007).

School Based Support Teams (SBSTs)

The SBST should be a very prominent sub-structure in each school. It functions in collaboration with the district support service. Deciding factors in the composition of the SBST are the size and needs of the school as well as the number of educators available. The SBST should be comprised of the following members:

- the school principal (on a part-time basis)
- a school-assessment team representative (usually a member of the school management team)
- an educator representative from each phase (Foundation, Intermediate and Senior)
- a learning support educator knowledgeable in learning support and in possession of good teamwork skills
- the referring educator
- an elected educator from the foundation phase, who has experience in and can assist with language support
- a learner-support material representative
- a designated member with specialist training (if possible and depending on specific need of learner) such as a psychologist or occupational therapist (Landsberg, et al. 2006: 67)

The functions of the SBST include:

- the in-service training of educators to assist them in the identification, assessment and support of learners who experience barriers to learning
- setting up collaborative partnerships between educators, learners, parents, non-governmental organisations and health, social and justice departments
- assisting subject or class educators in devising learning support programmes,
- adapting curriculum content and advising educators on various teaching strategies
- facilitating placement of learners in another school where necessary
- sustaining parental involvement
- sharing of human and material resources
- supervising and monitoring the process of learner support and progress (Landsberg et al, 2006: 67)

Each member of the SBST is allocated certain duties. The responsibility of the learning support co-ordinator is to coordinate the functions of the group, schedule and preside over meetings and arrange in-service-training workshops. He or she should ensure that timeframes with regard to report-back on certain issues and goals are kept. Before the referring educator approaches the SBST with regard to support of a specific learner, he or she should first confer with the phase educator. The duty of scribe rotates among members. The minutes of all meetings should be done thoroughly and kept securely for future reference (Department of Education, 2006; Landsberg et al, 2006).

A learner's progress should be carefully monitored and reports filed safely. Copies of such assessment reports, as well as support programmes, should be kept. Parents of learners experiencing learning difficulties should be consulted regularly, since they are important sources of information regarding the learner's needs, strengths and development. Parents can also be requested to assist the learner at home with directions from the SBST. Although the team can assist in the drawing up of support programmes and advise on the use of diverse support strategies, the onus finally rests on the referring educator to execute these directives. If the support strategies implemented by the combined efforts of the SBST are ineffective, the case gets referred to the DBST which will further the support, in partnership with education professionals and representatives from health or social services. Educators from resource centres and full-service schools could also be called on for assistance (Landsberg et al, 2006; Department of Education, 2006).

The first step in intervention starts with classroom support. Here it is the duty and responsibility of the classroom educator to identify learners who experience barriers to learning. As the focus of this study is the language of learning and teaching as a barrier to Grade 4 learners, it is the class or subject educator's task to identify these learners.

Personal view on the need for learning support in Grade 4

The researcher's observation of teaching practices at the schools where the study was conducted, as well as personal experience, led her to conclude that the identification process appear to present a major stumbling block in the support process. Field notes from this study indicated that, in general, educators struggled with accurate identification of barriers, whether they were social, individual, systemic or pedagogical.

Most barriers are considered as being intrinsic to the individual learner. It is seldom that the interactive nature of different barriers is considered, with the result that the holistic impact of this collective force is being overlooked. Some learners who had a language difficulty were often wrongly identified as having a general cognitive barrier.

During interviews with educators at the two subject schools, they complained that they were not adequately trained to distinguish between and recognise various barriers to learning. Grade 4 educators felt strongly that ESL learners who only communicate in their home language should have been enrolled at schools capable of providing teaching in the learners' home language. Educators were also of the opinion that the department of education often left educators to their own devices in solving the language issue at their schools. Educators were obligated to do learning support in their classes without the necessary skills and knowledge to support ESL learners and the occasional training workshops were by no means sufficient to equip them with the required ability.

In the researcher's opinion, very few Grade 4 learners actually get referred to the SBST. This initiative rests with the class educator or subject educator. If learners do not get referred, the assumption is made that adequate support is provided by educators in all subjects and there is not a need for more intense intervention by the SBST. Functionality of the SBST at schools is also questionable. It is also possible that a barrier to the LoLT is not considered a serious barrier or not an insurmountable barrier.

Most Grade 4 educators felt that completion of 450 support forms for each learner who experienced a barrier to learning, was a cumbersome and unnecessary exercise and only added to their existing abundant administrative workload. The 450 support forms were forms that educators were required to complete for every learner who received learning support, in all subjects, after each session of learning support. All intervention strategies as well as the outcomes of these measures had to be recorded on the form.

The SBST at the school where the researcher taught tried to solve the problem of educator training by providing basic in-service training on how to identify barriers to learning and then apply intervention strategies. The SBST coordinator (HOD in the Foundation Phase) conducted workshops after school for all Intersen Phase educators. Educators were also requested to approach Foundation Phase educators for assistance with phonics and reading support. Even after

training, Grade 4 educators, as well as other educators, still felt that they were not skilled enough to provide effective support in English to ESL learners. One of these support intervention strategies was to adapt the curriculum to suit the needs of learners who experienced a barrier to English as LoLT. Many Grade 4 educators did not know how to do this or simply state that they do not have the time available, considering the substantial workload of the regular curriculum.

Since early identification of learners experiencing barriers to learning, was emphasised, more attention was focused on the Foundation Phase so that further intervention measures could be taken such as placement, if need be, at another institution. Great effort was put into attaining a Learner with Special Needs (LSEN) number for a learner after he or she was tested by a member of the DBST.

As this was the phase where the foundation for reading and writing in English was established, there seemed to be more interaction between the coordinator of the SBST and the Foundation Phase educators. There also appeared to be a problem with continuous support from Grade 3 to Grade 4. Support forms were usually placed in learners' profiles at the end of the year and passed on to educators in the next grade to continue with support and intervention. Due to organisational factors, these profiles only reached Grade 4 educators during the second term of the next year.

4.5 Conclusion

The literature review in this chapter provided insight and understanding into the meaning and nature of barriers to learning and learning support. Special attention was given to the LoLT as a barrier to learning, as this research revolves around the provision of learning support to Grade 4 learners who experience a barrier to English as LoLT.

Two crucial approaches to addressing barriers to learning emerged from the discourse in this chapter, namely, prevention and support. For prevention to be effective, changes in the education institutions, curricula and the social contexts of learners are necessary. Collaborative support lies at the heart of successful inclusive practice. The learner and the education system as a whole should be supported by means of structured processes and methods.

The next chapter presents a discussion of the methodology in relation to theory, knowledge and practice explored in the literature review.

CHAPTER 5

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY AND PRESENTATION OF DATA

5.1 Introduction

The context in which the research took place is important for the reader to fully understand the setting in which the research transpired, before surveying the findings or results engendered by the research. Mc Millan defines research as “the systematic process of collecting and logically analysing data (evidence-based) for some purpose (McMillan & Schumacher, 2014: 16). Research transpires under specific conditions and this may have had an impact on results attained from the questionnaires and standardised learner tests.

A specific methodology was utilised to construct the research. Methodology is about “how we come to know. This means that we come to know by inquiring in certain ways. Methodology is concerned with the specific ways, the methods we can use to try to understand our world better” (Henning, 2009: 15).

This chapter sets out the methodology employed in the study and discusses the results of the research fieldwork. Descriptive statistics have been used to summarise and organise these observations. “Descriptive statistics transform a set of numbers or observations into indices that describe or characterise the data” (McMillan & Schumacher, 2014: 163). Descriptive statistics have thus been used to summarise, categorise and reduce the substantial number of observations in this study. Findings from the educators’ questionnaires, learner standardised tests, classroom practice, as well as information obtained through semi-structured interviews with key informants, were discussed.

A description and summary of the main results is available in table format or graphs. Key trends and patterns have been correlated with the research hypotheses. Findings were discussed and interpreted in terms of the literature review. The results were grouped according to distributions at **School 1** and **School 2** with reference to learner test results, questionnaire responses and classroom practice. Questionnaire results were grouped according to educators’ knowledge and understanding of learning support, inclusion and barriers to the LoLT. Educators’ attitudes, training and skill in providing learning support, as well as contextual aspects, were discussed. The impact of the aforementioned aspects on learner progress, both positive and negative, has been highlighted.

5.2 Research context

The Revised National Curriculum introduced the concept of inclusive education in all South African schools in 2002, requiring of mainstream educators to accommodate learner diversity. According to White Paper 6 all learner educational needs or barriers to learning are to be addressed by mainstream educators rather than special education educators. Language can be a barrier to learning and can act to exclude learners from the mainstream and therefore pose a major obstruction to the kind of inclusive system envisaged for education in South Africa (Department of Education, 2001: 6-7).

This study took as one of its hypotheses that a language barrier is often not viewed as seriously as it should be in our mainstream schools and therefore does not get due attention, support and resources. Yet extensive personal practical experience in classroom settings and reliable evidence suggests that it can potentially be a source of wide exclusion. For the purpose of this study, learners who experienced barriers to English as LoLT should have been provided with learning support, which would have allowed them to access effective learning and teaching in all curriculum content. The assumption was that effective and successful support strategies would have led to an improvement in learners' English proficiency and this in turn, would have resulted in improved learning.

The main aims of this research were: to investigate whether Grade 4 learners who experienced a barrier to English as the LoLT were supported in all subjects in their regular classes; and also to explore how effective these learning support measures or strategies were. The researcher therefore investigated how mainstream schools were handling the challenge posed by the LoLT as a barrier to learning, what support was offered to Grade 4 learners with this challenge, what barriers constrained educators from providing adequate support in this area, and what factors enhanced the ability and willingness of educators to undertake this crucial task.

A case study approach has been utilised. Creswell (as cited in McMillan, 2014) refers to a case study as "an in-depth exploration of a bounded system (e.g. an activity, event, process, or individuals) based on extensive data collection (McMillan & Schumacher, 2014: 370). This research study could also be referred to as a multisite case study due to the fact that the phenomenon of learning support was investigated at two schools or settings (McMillan & Schumacher, 2014).

Two English-medium primary schools were identified in Education District D6 (Ekurhuleni) in Gauteng as follows:

- an ordinary state school in an area with low income levels and relatively higher unemployment than that of the other school. This school serves the surrounding community, learners from outside the community and learners from two nearby informal settlements, where issues around home language education were likely to arise. This school has been identified as **School 1** for research and confidentiality purposes
- a former model C school (former “whites-only” schools that were initially opened to a limited number of learners of other races in the early ‘90s). This school has been identified as **School 2** for research and confidentiality purposes

School 1 was established in 1964 under the auspices of the former “Department of Coloured Affairs” and at the time catered primarily to the educational needs of so-called “coloured” learners from its feeder community. After the country’s first democratic elections in 1994, a steady influx of black children from nearby townships followed. The number of black children increased with the establishment and expansion of two informal settlements in close proximity to the school. At the time of this research, The LoLT of the majority of learners at the school was English. The total number of learners at the school (comprised of only black and coloured learners), was 1 141 of which 548 were boys and 593 were girls. The total number of Grade 4 learners was 165.

One class, consisting of 27 learners, used Afrikaans as LoLT. These learners were excluded from the study. 138 learners took part in the research. Of these, 67 were boys and 71 were girls. The staff establishment was 34 and the educator to learner ratio was 1:48. The school principal rated parental support in terms of finances (school fees, fundraising etc.) and academic matters as “poor”.

School 2 is a former Model C school located in a former “whites only” suburb with middle to upper middle class profile. The school was founded in 1976. At the time of the research the learner body totalled 873: 414 boys and 459 girls of various races. The total number of Grade 4 learners was 129 of which 66 were boys and 63 were girls. The teaching staff totalled 39 and the educator to learner ratio was 1:30. The language of learning and teaching at the school was English. The school principal described the socio-economic background of the learner body as ranging from poor to middle class to

extremely wealthy. The principal also rated parental support in terms of academic matters and finances as “poor”.

These two samples were chosen in order to provide an adequate comparative canvas for the research and so help tease out variations in methods, factors, and approaches around the issue and, of course, the role of resources in both the school and their feeder communities (both human and material) in providing adequate support. Former model C schools are, for instance, usually better resourced than state schools. Variables influenced by resources, such as educator to learner ratios, have also been taken into account. In addition, other variables, including educators’ training, involvement, attitudes, and knowledge about learning support, have been factored in.

5.3 Methodology

5.3.1 Research design

Research design is a plan or blueprint of how you intend to conduct the research (Mouton, 2012: 55). This research design addressed empirical questions pertaining to a real-life problem. These empirical questions included: exploratory, descriptive, causal, evaluative, predictive and historical questions.

A mixed method design which combines both qualitative and quantitative techniques was used as the best approach to answering research questions in this study. The use of both these methods was relied upon to offer complete answers that met the purpose of the research. According to McMillan, quantitative techniques collect objective data and analyses it numerically, while qualitative techniques use interviews or observation procedures to amass data from people in their natural surroundings. McMillan & Schumacher defines mixed method research as “a study that combines qualitative and quantitative techniques and or data analysis within different phases of the research process (McMillan & Schumacher 2014: 19). The following is a very apt definition by Tashakkori & Creswell (as cited in McMillan & Schumacher, 2014), “research in which the investigator collects and analyses data, integrates the findings and draws inferences using both qualitative and quantitative approaches in a single study or programme of inquiry” (McMillan & Schumacher, 2014: 426). The advantage of using a mixed method design is that it incorporates the strengths of both qualitative and quantitative techniques to capture distinctive findings.

The research used triangulation – a technique which employs several data collection methods - to validate the information by cross checking the information obtained from several methods against each other in order to determine whether patterns recur. In this study, concurrent triangulation was used because qualitative and quantitative methods were used jointly. “Triangulation is the cross-validation among data sources, data collection strategies, time periods and theoretical schemes. To find regularities in the data, the researcher compares different sources, situations and methods to see whether the same patterns keep recurring” (McMillan & Schumacher, 2014: 407).

5.3.2 Research approach

The research took on a multisite case study approach wherein learning support at two different schools representing different socio-economic environments were presented. This was done in the anticipation that approaches differ in the different socio-economic types of educational settings that may lead to both “bad” and “best” practice that informs the language learning support provided to learners with a language barrier.

“Any social entity that can be bounded by parameters and that shows a specific dynamic and relevance, revealing information that can be captured within these boundaries may be a case study” (Henning, 2009: 32). Creswell (as cited in McMillan & Schumacher, 2014) refers to a case study as “an in-depth exploration of a bounded system (e.g., an activity, event, process or individuals) based on extensive data collection” (McMillan & Schumacher, 2014: 370). Being *bounded* means being distinctive with reference to place, time and participant qualities.

The case study design, specifically an instrumental multisite case study, was chosen in order to gain an in-depth understanding of the theme: Learning support to Grade 4 learners who experience barriers to English as LoLT. The study presents a wide-ranging description of the case, an analysis of the issue at hand as well as the researcher’s understanding and explanation about the case (McMillan & Schumacher, 2014).

5.3.3 Identification and selection of data sources

Data sources can be categorised as observation, self-reporting and documentary sources.

5.3.4 Data format

Data sources in the research study were comprised of text and numeric computerised data.

5.3.5 Data access

Primary data collection was undertaken (gathering of new data). In order to collect the data, both existing instrumentation as well as newly constructed instrumentation was employed. The standardised test was obtained from and applied with permission of the Department of Basic Education. It is the Annual National Assessment in English Home Language for Grade 4 and is administered at the start of Grade 4 in order to determine Grade 4 learners' proficiency in English at the start of the Intermediate Phase. As this test was developed by trained and skilled professionals appointed by the DOE, it has high validity and reliability.

5.3.6 Ethical clearance

It is the responsibility of the researcher to be aware of the ethical and legal principles that should be addressed and adhered to in the course of the research. Legal and ethical issues that had to be considered, pertained to access to the population of this study (the Grade 4 learners) and to a certain extent, the educators employed at the two subject schools. Permission or request letters were written to and permission was obtained, first from the District Director of the Ekurhuleni South District (Department of Education) and then from the Institutional Development and Support Officer (IDSO) of the respective schools. Consent was then obtained from the school principals of the two subject schools, the respective school management teams, and school governing bodies.

The most important consent came from the Grade 4 learners' parents. The parents of all learners who participated in the research gave their consent in the form of reply slips which learners returned to their class educators. The following were included in the consent form: purpose of the study, description of the procedure and statement of the extent of confidentiality. In cases where learners did not write the test, this was due to absenteeism on the day rather than non-consent from parents.

Participant privacy was ensured by confidentiality, anonymity and suitable storing of data. Names of the two subject schools were withheld. Throughout the research process, reference was made to

School 1 and **School 2**. Participants were initially provided with necessary information about the research after which they were given the option to participate or not.

5.3.7 Data coverage

This research made use of Purposeful Sampling. Purposeful Sampling is “A type of sampling that allows choosing of small groups or individuals who are likely to be knowledgeable and informative about the phenomenon of interest; selecting cases without needing to generalise all such cases” (McMillan & Schumacher, 2014: 5). This type of sampling is done to enhance the usefulness of information gathered from small samples. Data was collected from the complete population of the study - all the Grade 4 learners whose LoLT is English, at both schools, for considerations of accuracy, precision and a holistic impression of the research phenomena. Data was also collected from all the Intersen Phase educators. The Grade 4 educators and school principals were key informants in the research because they were conversant and informative about the phenomena under investigation.

5.3.8 Variables

Variables present in this research include dependent, independent and extraneous variables. An independent variable is the first variable that causes the effect in a causal explanation. A dependent variable is a variable that is assumed to depend on or be caused by another variable (Neuman, 2000:511).

The independent variables in this study were the educators and learners. The dependent variables included the attitude of educators toward learning support in English as LoLT. The extraneous variables were those that fall outside the attitudes, such as contextual factors (including the educator learner ratios) that could influence results (Neuman, 2000).

5.3.9 Developing new instrumentation: design, construction and piloting

The researcher designed and constructed a structured questionnaire. This questionnaire was based on the literature review discussed in chapters 2, 3 and 4. The questionnaire was given to educators at the two target schools to complete themselves. Piloting was done on a sample of two educators at each school. No adjustment to the questionnaire was necessary. Section A contained biographical data. Sections C, D, E and F were presented as multiple response questions. Responses from section B

(which tested knowledge about learning support and related issues) was then utilised as a type of knowledge index against which to compare the summarised responses of sections D-F.

5.3.10 Validity and reliability

It is the responsibility of the researcher to ensure the validity and reliability of the research. According to Creswell, validity is “a process of ensuring that meaningful and justifiable inferences can be made from the data obtained from the sample” (Creswell, 2008: 649). Validity is a situation -specific perception: It is assessed depending on the purpose population and environmental features in which measurement takes place. It refers to the honesty of findings and conclusions. Explanations about observed occurrences estimate what is reality or truth, and the extent to which explanations are precise. The researcher has selected and designed the research using scientifically acceptable methodologies. The sample was the entire population of Grade 4 learners at the two schools, with English as LoLT. All the Grade 4 learners were given the same standardised test and precautionary measures were taken to ensure that learners answered the questions without aid from peers.

Reliability refers to “the consistency of measurement - the extent to which the results are similar over different forms of the same instrument or occasion of data collection, it is the extent to which measures are free from error” (McMillan & Schumacher, 2014: 195). For this study, reliability was ensured through giving participants the same instructions and the same amount of time to complete identical research items: the standardised test for learners and structured questionnaires for educators. The same assistants applied the same research procedures at the two subject schools, employing the same instructions and explanations at both schools.

The standardised test used in this research has been prepared by measurement experts (Department of Education). Usually this means that careful deliberation of the nature of the norms, reliability and validity was done. This results in an instrument that is objective and reasonably uninfluenced or distorted by the person who administers them.

The researcher has concluded that the data collected for this study are as far as possible, reliable.

5.3.11 Limitations of the study

Some threats to validity of this research could be listed as follows:

Firstly, the research did not independently determine the level of parental assistance regarding homework activities at the two subject schools. This information was only obtained from semi-structured interviews with educators.

A further constraint was that the research did not measure the precise household income levels of the Grade 4 learners' families. Instead the socio-economic conditions surrounding the schools' feeder areas were taken as a proxy for this. In the case of **School 1**, the fact that most of the Grade 4 learners came from the neighbouring informal settlements were taken as indicator of the general socio-economic status of learners' families. The area surrounding **School 2** was generally a middle class area but information gained from the semi-structured interviews with key informants indicated that the socio-economic status of learners ranged from poor to middleclass to extremely wealthy.

5.3.12 Data preparation and data analysis

The data collection process was documented as accurately as possible. Quality control was managed by keeping a detailed record of important decisions and proceedings during the fieldwork process. Key decisions and activities in this process included: Dates when access was gained to the field, dates set for the standardised tests, educator questionnaires as well as dates for the semi-structured interviews. Scheduled dates for classroom observation had to be strictly adhered to. Record was kept of extraneous variables such as delays in production problems regarding instrumentation e.g. structured questionnaires or postponement of interview appointments and how it influenced the fieldwork. Extensive field notes of classroom observation and the semi-structured interviews were recorded in order to capture the context of these data collection methods.

Fieldwork done during the research culminated in the analysis and interpretation of quantitative and qualitative data as well as literary texts. Analysis involves “breaking up the data into manageable themes, patterns, trends and relationships” (Mouton, 2012: 108). The aim of analysis was to understand the different components of the data by scrutinising the connection between concepts, variables and to determine whether there were any patterns that could be recognised or to establish themes in the data. Interpretation involves “the explanation of observations or data by formulating hypotheses or theories that account for observed patterns and trends in the data” (Mouton, 2012: 109).

A crucial initial step in analysis was to organise the substantial amount of data into a few practical or workable units, which facilitated coding and assisted the researcher in making sense of all the gathered information. Initial ideas for organising the data came from the research question, the research instrument and literature as well as personal and general knowledge. The researcher organised the qualitative data into categories on the basis of the type of data collected such as interviews, observation and questionnaires. Data was then prepared for visual review by transcription of notes taken during observation and interviewing. Data coding was done by identifying segments “text that is understandable by itself and contains one idea, activity or piece of relevant information” (McMillan & Schumacher, 2014: 398). A code is a name or a phrase that is used to supply meaning to the segment and could be activities, quotations, relationships, events and processes (McMillan & Schumacher, 2014: 399). Intense reading of datasets provided the researcher with a sense of the totality of the data. Initial codes were created and data codes were compared for duplication. As more data was collected, this provisional organising system of codes (topics) continued to be refined throughout the study.

Similar codes were then grouped to form categories or themes. These categories represented major ideas used to describe the meaning of similarly coded data. This research explored significant themes or concepts such as provision of learning support to Grade 4 learners, barriers to English as LoLT, inclusion, educators’ training and knowledge.

Data was then examined to discover patterns in the relationships among categories. The technique for pattern -seeking used in this research was triangulation. To find regularities in the data the researcher compared various literary sources, situations and data collection methods to find out whether the same pattern kept recurring.

Data was managed through the use of a partially electronic system to retrieve datasets and to accumulate coded data in one place. Textual data, rich in meaning was captured as well as numeric data such as numbers and quantitative measurements gained from the standardised tests. The quantitative numeric data was captured in computerised format. A spreadsheet format facilitated the capturing of this data.

Quantitative research depends greatly on numbers in reporting results, sampling and providing approximates of score reliability and validity. Statistics are means of organising, analysing and understanding quantitative data (McMillan & Schumacher, 2014). A statistical technique that was

applied in this study was *descriptive* statistics. The descriptive statistics used were frequencies and percentages presented in tables which summarised, organised and condensed large numbers of observations.

Measurement scales or traits that describe the nature of data that were utilised in this study were *nominal* (scales that name, classify or number) and *ordinal* (ranking from lowest to highest), for which frequencies and percentages were calculated. Observations were organised and data portrayed graphically in order for the researcher to interpret the results easily and accurately. The methods of representing group data used in this study were *frequency distributions* and *bar charts*. Frequency distribution illustrates how often each score occur and a bar graph illustrates frequencies of categories. In a bar graph the ordering of columns is arbitrary or random, such as those depicting learners' and educators' ages, home language and gender.

5.4 Data collection strategies

A number of data collection techniques were employed in gathering the requisite data for these case studies – each aimed at complementing the other:

- a structured questionnaire
- semi-structured interviews with key informants
- classroom observation
- administering of standardised English proficiency tests

5.4.1 Structured questionnaire

At least 40% of the questionnaires needed to be completed in order to draw valid conclusions about the universe of Intersen Phase educators. The literature review, the results of the standardised English proficiency test, and personal observation in the classroom, were used to inform the compilation of questions.

A new instrument, based on the literature study was constructed by the researcher. Effort was made and care taken to avoid vague or ambiguous terms, leading, double-barrelled questions and sensitive or threatening questions. Attention was given to clear and logical layout as well as the length of the questionnaire. Care was taken to ensure relevance of questions. This approach entailed the compilation

of a structured questionnaire – using mostly closed questions and rankings but where unavoidable, occasionally using open-ended questions. Scaled questions or statements followed by a scale of potential responses were included. The Likert-type scale was used, since descriptors on this scale can vary according to the nature of the statement or question, thus offering great flexibility (McMillan & Schumacher, 2014). The questionnaire was piloted on a random sample of two educators in each of the selected schools in order to, inter alia, reduce the number of open-ended questions and test the feasibility and duration of the sample. These questionnaires were given to educators in the target schools to fill in themselves. The sample was the entire universe of educators in the Intersen Phase in both schools.

The questionnaire explored how educators provided learning support to Grade 4 learners who experience a barrier to English as LoLT and probed the existence and functionality of SBSTs. It also investigated educators' basic knowledge and understanding of related issues or terminology such as inclusion, barriers to learning and their attitude towards learning support to English second language learners who experience a barrier to English as LoLT.

5.4.2 Semi-structured key informant interviews

These guided interviews involved the preparation of a set of guide questions or issues, which were used as the basis to direct questions. These guides allowed the generation of questions that led into interesting areas of inquiry during the interviews. Key informants in each school, such as the principals, department heads and members of SBSTs, were interviewed in this regard. The researcher ascertained willingness of participants to share information before dates were scheduled for the interviews. These key informants were chosen as they were likely to have access to observations that would have been unavailable to the researcher. Selection of the semi-structured interview as one of the primary data collection strategies was determined by the content and purpose of the research:

- to obtain the current perception of activities, responsibilities, beliefs, motivations, concerns and opinions regarding learning support to Grade 4 learners who experienced barriers to English as LoLT at the two subject schools
- to ascertain future prospects or anticipated practices concerning learning support
- to corroborate and expand information gained from other sources

- to substantiate or extend hunches and ideas developed by the researcher (McMillan & Schumacher, 2014).

The interview guide was generally compiled of probing open-ended questions which anticipated further clarification and where unavoidable, close-ranked questions which needed a specific response. These interviews assumed a conversational rather than a rigid approach.

5.4.3 Classroom observation

“Observation is a way for the researcher to see and hear what is occurring naturally in the research site. By observing naturally occurring behaviour, the researcher hopes to obtain a rich understanding of the phenomenon being studied” (McMillan& Schumacher, 2014: 376).

This procedure involved observing how English second language Grade 4 learners received instruction in their different subjects. The focus was on whether, and how, learning support was provided during instruction time. Randomly selected classes were observed as they followed their normal timetable over a two day period.

Attention was focused on the following during classroom practice observation sessions:

- number of learners in each class
- subject
- seating arrangement and cooperative group-work or peer-assistance
- teaching method or strategy - whether the educators varied teaching methods, style and pace during the course of a lesson
- all educator activities - especially any learning support or intervention activities
- rephrasing of instructions or questions - whether the educators at times incorporated learners’ home language into the lesson (code switch)
- individual attention or support during teaching time - whether a variety of assessment methods, techniques and instruments was used
- all learner activities, including homework activities, if any
- whether there was differentiation in assignments or whether all learners in the class did the same assignments regardless of whether there were some learners experiencing a language barrier

- whether provision was made for learners who worked at a faster pace (enrichment activities)
- how learners responded to questions
- whether learners were allowed to ask questions and how educators responded to these
- the type of resource materials available and how these were incorporated into the lesson
- educators' proficiency and mastery of English during lesson development and intervention (See Appendix F as a sample of an observation sheet).

5.4.4 Standardised English proficiency test

Standardised tests provide consistent procedures for administration and scoring. The same or parallel questions are asked each time the test is used, with a set of instructions that stipulate how the test should be administered (McMillan & Schumacher, 2014).

An existing measuring instrument was used, namely the provincial and district assessment task for 2012, with high validity and reliability. The test was designed by the Department of Education for South African cultural, social and historical conditions.

This was a test designed to ascertain the learners' levels of proficiency in English. It established a baseline for the proficiency of the learners in English as LoLT. The test was obtained from the Department of Education and it is a provincial assessment task used as part of the department's systemic evaluation. The test is usually administered at the start of the Intermediate Phase (Grade 4), to determine whether learners' language proficiency is at an acceptable or appropriate level for that grade.

The test was administered at the start of the third term. At this stage, identification of learners experiencing barriers to the LoLT should have taken place. If necessary, these learners should have been referred to the SBST and intervention programmes in all subjects should be functional. During this period sufficient learning support should have been done.

The researcher pre-arranged test dates and times with the respective school principals and educators. Grade 4 educators at the schools were not expected to invigilate. The researcher employed independent invigilators. Care was taken with the seating arrangements of learners, completion of the

cover page, as well as clarity of instructions. Learners were not provided with assistance regarding answers. Strict adherence to the test duration was observed.

5.5 Participant results

Listed below are the results of the participants' tests, observations, questionnaires and interviews. These have been discussed for each group of participants in each of the two schools that were the subjects of this research.

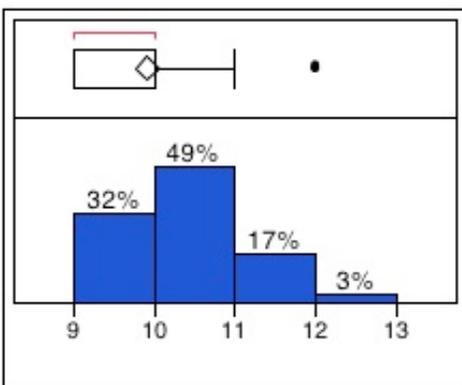
5.5.1 Learners' results

Age

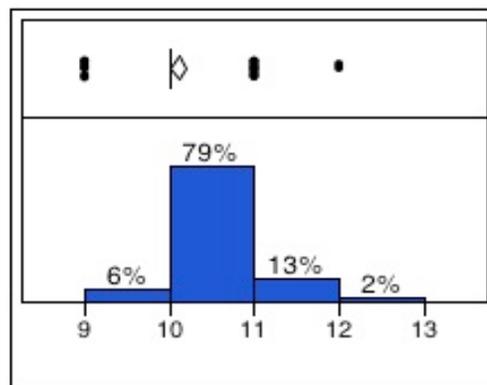
Figure 1, below, shows that the majority of learners at both schools fell into the ten to eleven age groups, which according to the literature study, is classified as middle childhood and the developmental tasks discussed in the literature are applicable to the majority of the research subjects (See section 2.1).

Figure 1: Learners age distribution

School 1



School 2



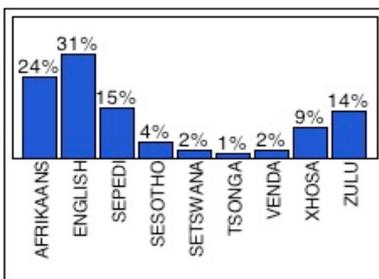
Home languages

Most of the learners who took the test at **School 2** (62.5%) had English as home language. On the other hand, a minority of the learners who took the test at **School 1** (37.5 %) had English as home language.

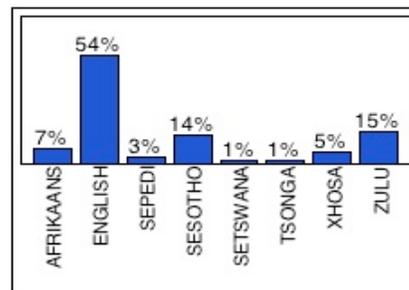
At **School 1**, the majority of learners achieved test results below 50%; the average achieved at this school was 33.2%. At **School 2** the majority of learners achieved test results above 50%. The average achieved at this school was 64.18%. Most learners who failed the test had an indigenous language or Afrikaans as home language. At **School 1**, 67 of the 91 learners who failed the test had Afrikaans or an indigenous language as home language. At **School 2**, 13 of the 24 learners who failed the test had Afrikaans or an indigenous language as home Language.

Figure 2: Learners' home language

School 1



School 2



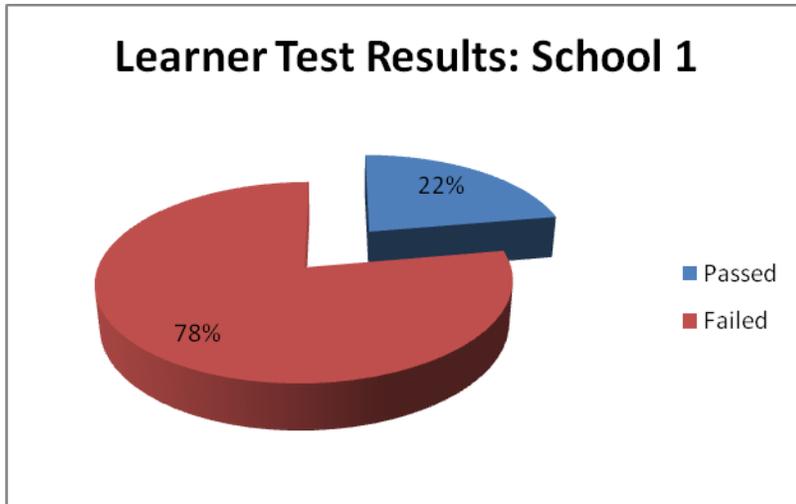
Standardised test results and most common errors made by learners

The standardised test had a maximum mark of 30; the pass mark was 50% or 15 marks.

School 1

School 1 had a total of 135 Grade 4 English home language learners: 67 of them were boys while 68 were girls. Of these, 117 wrote the test. Only 26 learners (22%) passed, while 91 (78%) failed.

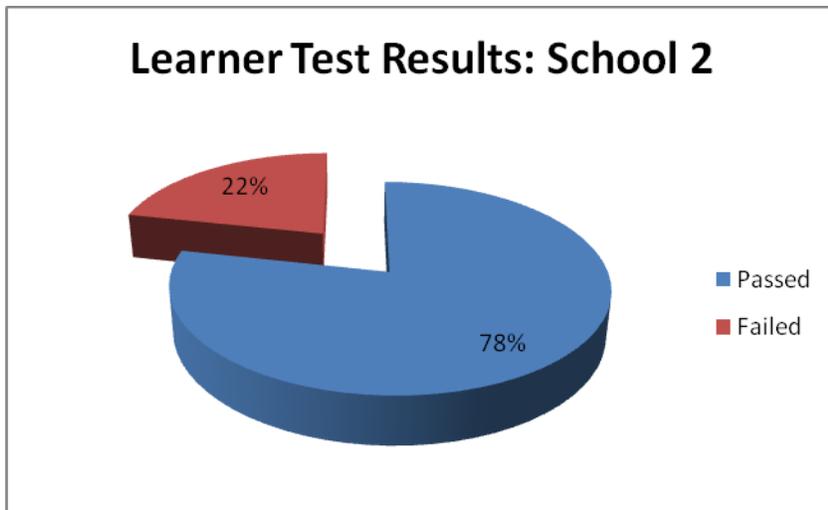
Figure 3: Learner test results School 1



School 2

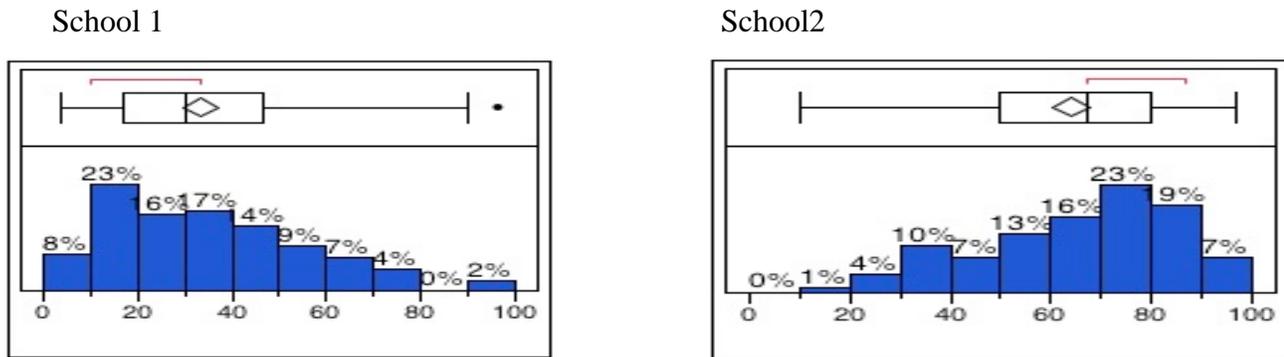
School 2 had 129 Grade 4 English home language learners: 66 of them were boys while 63 were girls. Of these, 111 wrote the test. In this school 87 learners (78%) passed, while 24 (22%) failed.

Figure 4: Learner test results School 2



The test results in terms of percentages were exact opposites at the two schools. The majority of learners at **School 1** (78%) obtained less than 50% in the test, while the majority of learners at **School 2** (78%) achieved above 50%. The graphs in Figure 5 below, illustrate the spread of results in the two schools. They clearly show that the spread was almost exactly opposite in the two schools.

Figure 5: Spread of test results



The most common errors made by learners scoring below 50% were as follows:

- In Questions 1-4, which were multiple choice questions, learners had problems with reading and comprehension of the written text. They could not decode and make sense of what they had read. This was evident from their written answers. These answers did not make sense and were totally unconnected to the questions asked (see Appendix E).
- Learners with some of the lowest scores struggled with simple sentence construction where the word order was completely incorrect and the sentences were devoid of any meaning. Some scripts contained words that made no sense, where vowels and consonants were combined in random order. Serious grammatical and spelling errors were made wherein learners wrote “juping and screaming” instead of “jumping and screaming”. Tenses such as “can lost” and “the children is very happy” were used. Direct and indirect speech and punctuation posed a challenge to most learners. Some learners wrote letters in reverse, such as “d” instead of “b”, resulting in sentences such as “The doys is holding the book”, instead of “The boy is holding the book”). Some learners also reversed words within sentences. There were many omissions of letters within words and learners wrote “runing” instead of “running” and “chool” instead of “school”). The omission of words within sentences was also common, resulting in sentences such as “She not with them”. See Appendix E for more errors made by learners.
- Learners fared the worst in questions 15 and 16. Question 15 was a contextual passage and contained apparent (obvious) answers to the questions. Some learners had difficulty utilising given cues. The content had an accompanying picture of president Zuma which was also stated as such in the text, yet some learners could not name the president of South Africa. Question 16 required an answer consisting of six sentences written in paragraph form. Learners were

required to interpret a picture and put their ideas to paper. It would seem that even though most learners could interpret the picture, their limited vocabulary and unfamiliarity with English seriously impeded their written expression of any ideas they might have had. Most of these paragraphs were written in total disregard of any punctuation (see Appendix E).

5.5.2 Discussion

Learners' ages

The majority of Grade 4 learners at both schools fell into the ten to eleven age groups, which according to the literature study is classified as middle childhood; the developmental tasks discussed in the literature are applicable to the majority of the research subjects (See section 2.1). Developmental tasks of Grade 4 learners refer to their physical, cognitive, social and emotional development (Littlefield & Cook, 2005; Dowling, 2005; Mcdevitt & Ormrod, 2010).

The literature describes Grade 4 learners as being in Piaget's "Concrete Operational Stage" (Littlefield & Cook, 2005:14). According to the literature review, Grade 4 learners should at this stage have developed fundamental skills in reading, writing and calculating (see Section 2.3.1.1). From the quantitative data obtained, it is evident that these fundamental skills have not yet been attained by the majority of Grade 4 learners at **School 1**.

Child development is the "field of study where researchers from many disciplines work to understand the important changes that take place as children grow through childhood" (Littlefield & Cook, 2005: 3). When doing a study of child development, the interaction between the "nature and nurture" forces should be taken into account, where nature refers to factors like genetic inheritance and nurture comprises influences of the environment in which the child is reared (Saracho & Spodek, 2007; Littlefield, 2005: 5). This study explored aspects of the home and school environments that impacted on the quality of learning support provided to the Grade 4 learners experiencing a barrier to English as LoLT (see Section 2.1).

Learners' home languages

The majority of learners who failed the standardised English test at **School 1** did not have English as home language, while the majority of learners who passed the same test at **School 2** had English as

home language. From the quantitative data obtained from the standardised test, it is evident that there is a correlation between the LoLT and home language. Literature corroborates that similarity between home language and LoLT promotes better reading, comprehension and spelling ability of learners (see Section 1.2). This finding also confirms the literature review verdict that many learners in South African schools are taught through the medium of English, which is not their home language and in which they have a limited proficiency (see Section 1.1.1).

The NCSNET/NCESS acknowledges that a wide variety of learner needs exist among learners and within the education system. There is also the perception that a multifaceted bond exists between the learner, education system and broader social, political and economic environment. Difficulties encountered in any of these contextual factors could adversely influence learning. Factors that could cause learning breakdown have been defined by the NCSNET/ NCESS as barriers to learning and development. Education White Paper 6 lists a variety of factors which could cause barriers to learning; amongst these is an inappropriate LoLT (Department of Education, 1997:12).

The concept of “inclusive education” has been made policy and implemented in South African schools since 2002. One specific aim of the South African curriculum states that “inclusivity should become a central part of the organisation, planning and teaching at each school. This can only happen if all educators have a sound understanding of how to recognise and address barriers to learning and how to plan for diversity” (Department of Basic Education, 2011:5). The implication of this aim of the curriculum is that the major responsibility of addressing barriers to learning and for the purpose of this study - barriers to English as LoLT, rest on the shoulders of mainstream educators. Classroom educators are expected to reduce and prevent barriers to learning by providing effective learning support to learners who experience a barrier to English as LoLT (see Section 1.1).

Standardised test

According to the literature review (see Section 4.3.2) as well as personal experience, learners’ poor performance in the test can be attributed to any of the following:

- lack of word-attack skills in the areas of phonics, structural analysis, or context clues
- lack of comprehension and insufficient word recognition
- lack of basic sight vocabulary

Many of the learners had not built up a sight vocabulary equivalent to their grade level, in this case, Grade 4. A word becomes a sight word after it has been read many times, therefore inadequate exposure to English reading, listening and writing could have had an adverse effect on learners' general proficiency in the language (Theron & Nel, 2005).

The results of the standardised tests at **School 1** and **School 2** unavoidably question the effectiveness of learning support strategies applied at the two schools. They also call for an in-depth scrutiny of the interrelated impact of other contextual factors on the learning support provided at the respective schools.

It should be emphasised that barriers to learning as experienced by learners in a developing country like South Africa, are frequently the end result of interaction between varying degrees of intrinsic and extrinsic factors. Literature (see Section 4.2.1) corroborates how important it is that these factors are not interpreted as operating independently from one another, as they are not only interdependent but inevitably reinforce one another. Therefore, further discussion of other contextual factors such as socio-economic factors, educator knowledge, training and attitude, as well as school policy and how they impact learning, will be considered.

5.6 Classroom practise: observation notes

5.6.1 School 1 (See Appendix G)

Subjects: Social Sciences, English Home Language, Afrikaans First Additional Language, Natural Sciences

Duration of one period: 30 minutes

Class size: Average of 44 - 46 learners per class

Seating arrangement: Rows or groups of 4 - 6

Teaching method/strategy: Lesson presentation generally followed the pattern of educators addressing the class as a whole. Educators introduced the topic either by linkage to a previous lesson or a leading question. Educators would read a prepared text, e.g. comprehension, to the class and then

explain the activity questions to it. At times learners were requested to answer a few of these questions verbally before continuing with written activity. In one English Home Language period, three learners each delivered a prepared speech after which the educator provided guidance concerning intonation, pace and emphasis. During the Social Science (SS) period, the educator moved around in class, assisting learners in finding answers to questions for a written activity.

Learning support during teaching time: Very little, if any, individual learning support was evident; this could have been due to time constraints. The English home language educator stated that she provides individual learning support during breaks or after school. It is difficult to do this on a regular basis since travelling learners could miss their transport after school and learners need to have intervals to have lunch or use amenities.

Paired reading was observed in one class (SS) where educator and learners read an abstract together. Learners were trained to use their fingers to point at the words they were reading and this appeared to help them with their reading. In most classes cooperative groups worked on activities. Peer assessment was also employed.

Learning support material: The use of visuals such as pictures, drawings, charts and picture symbols were negligible or totally lacking. The resource materials that were most often used were prescribed text books, printed notes and the black board.

Adaptation of the curriculum content to suit the needs of learners with barriers to LoLT: this was not evident.

Differentiation of assignments: There was none - all learners received and completed the same written activities.

Incorporation of any learners' home language: This was not evident as there was no code switching to any other language or engagement of peer aid in this respect.

Good general teaching practices (Landsberg, et al, 2006).

- Most of the time educators gave clear instructions.
- Good learner involvement was observed during lessons.

- The question and answer technique was utilised effectively (although educators need to guard against 'chorus' answers).
- Learners were allowed time to do their own corrections.
- Homework instruction was given in the English Home Language class.

Educator proficiency in LoLT: In general, all the educators used in observation practise were proficient in English - except for the mispronunciation of a few words which could impact learners' pronunciation and spelling ability such as *Bryk-fast; fin-gars; ve-ge-ty-bils*. The whole class followed suit.

5.6.2 School 2

Subjects: English Home Language (EHL); Social Sciences (SS); Mathematics; Life Skills; Afrikaans 1st Additional Language

Duration of one period: 30 minutes

Class size: Average of 32-33

Seating arrangement: Mostly rows; in the SS class, all the desks were arranged in a square with learners facing one another. The educator alternated movement between standing in the centre of the square or at the black board.

Teaching Method: Lessons were presented by the educators who, in general addressed the class as a whole. The topic was introduced either by relating it to a previous lesson or a leading question. In Mathematics it was introduced by a speed test while in EHL it was done by spelling or dictation. The SS educator introduced the topic of steam engines by a slide show on the history and types of transport. The educators discussed the topic and then explained activity questions to the learners. After the spelling test in EHL, the educator continued with a lesson on tenses while after the speed test in Mathematics, the educator moved around to control homework sheets. While working through an assignment memorandum, the maths educator would enquire if there were learners who needed help; learners indicated by a show of hands. The educator then addressed the specific challenge of the learner. Educators moved around frequently in the class, checking and assisting learners with either their written activities or peer assessments. In one class (Afrikaans First Additional), the educator marked workbooks and called individual learners to her desk to give immediate feedback and support, while the rest of class completed a worksheet.

Learning support during teaching time: In general, educators interacted with the class as a whole. Minimal time was spent on individual attention as educators moved around to assist some learners. The EHL educator mentioned that there was no time for structured learning support during lesson periods due to time constraints. The EHL educator assisted the class with word-recognition by using colour emphasis (underlining with colouring pencils).

The SS educator introduced the topic of steam engines by using an eye-catching slide-show. The educator would also explain the meaning of key words or phrases during the course of the lesson. Resource materials most often used were text books, printed notes and the black board. Cooperative group work was observed as well as employment of peer assessment.

Adaptation of learning programme/curriculum content to suit the needs of learners with barriers to the LoLT: This was not evident.

Differentiation of written assignments: there was none and all learners in the class received the same assignments.

Incorporation of any learners' home language: this was not evident as there was no code switching during the course of the lesson.

The researcher perceived the following good general teaching practices: (Landsberg, et al, 2006)

- The SS educator encouraged critical thinking by posing challenging questions to the learners.
- The EHL educator dictated spelling words by using them in contextual sentences.
- Frequent interaction with learners, providing assistance in completion of work sheets.
- Some of the educators did regular homework control.
- Learners did their own corrections, guided by a memorandum provided by the educator.
- Some educators provided immediate feedback to learners on completed assignments.
- The EHL class had a structured daily homework booklet.

Educators' LoLT proficiency: In all the classes observed, the language proficiency of the particular educators was very good.

5.6.3 Discussion

The literature asserts that prevention and support are fundamental in addressing barriers to learning and that the first step of intervention starts with the classroom or subject educator (see Section 4.4). The main aim of this study was to probe whether learning support was being provided to Grade 4 learners who experienced a barrier to English as LoLT, therefore close attention was paid to whether or not any learning support measures were being applied during teaching time.

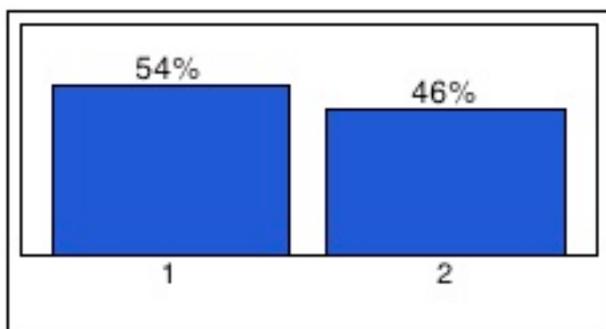
In view of observation of teaching practices at both schools, it was noted that even though educators at both schools made use of good teaching practices, the time spent on individual learning support was insignificant. Inclusive practices such as code switching, adaptation of curriculum content and differentiation of learner activities were not evident. Factors such as time constraints and discipline concerns inhibited the provision of effective learning support during teaching time.

5.7 Educators' results

5.7.1 Questionnaire

School 1 had a total of 34 educators, 16 of them were Intersen Phase educators. Of these 14 (87%) completed the questionnaires. **School 2** had a total of 39 educators, 16 of them were Intersen phase educators. Of these 12 (75%) completed the questionnaires. In total, 26 educators responded to the questionnaires in both **School 1** and **School 2** combined. **School 1** accounted for 54% of these responses while **School 2** accounted for 46%.

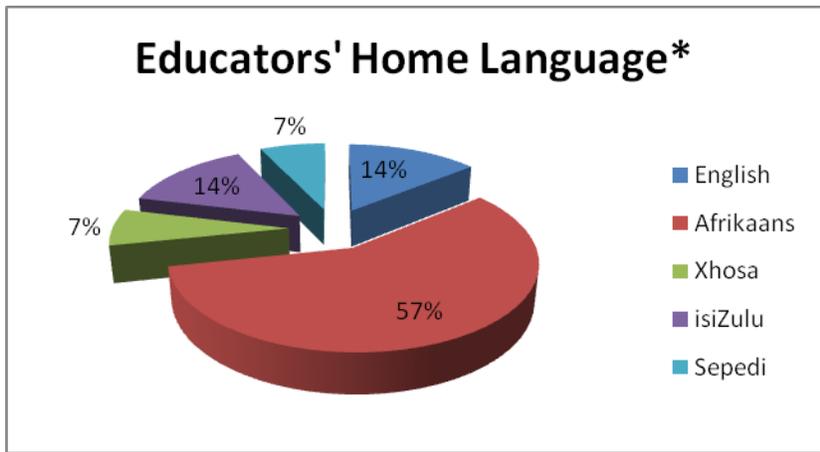
Figure 6: Combined educator responses



Biographical data

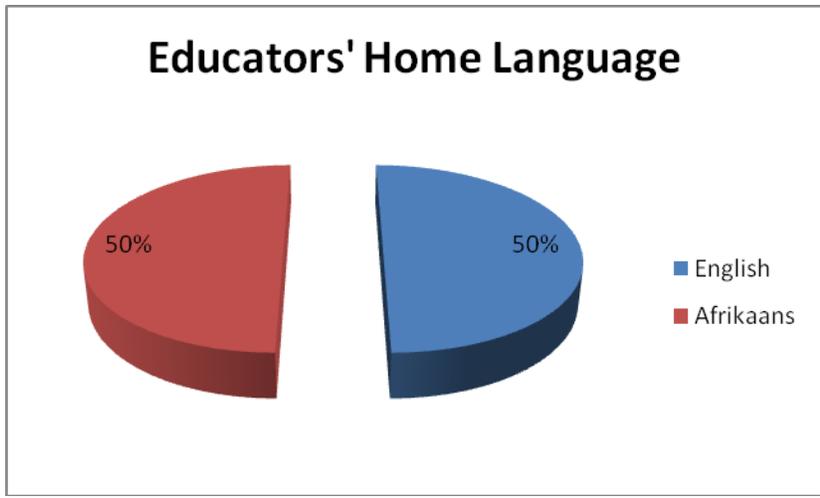
Home Language: The majority of educators at **School 1** had Afrikaans as their home language. At **School 2**, half of the educators had English as their home language while the other half had Afrikaans. Some 28% of educators at **School 1** had an indigenous language as their home language while none of the educators at **School 2** had an indigenous language as their home language.

Figure 7: Home language of educators at School 1



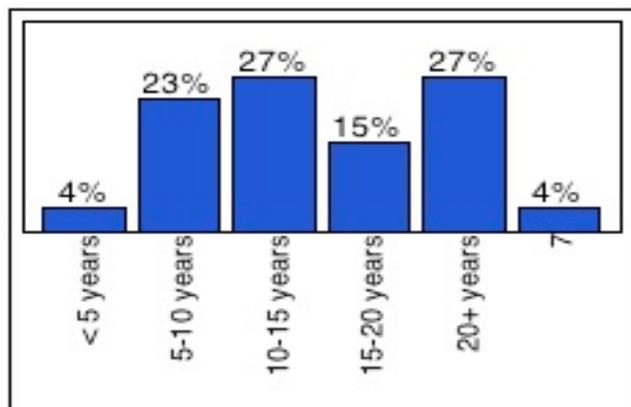
* Due to rounding, the percentages only total 99%

Figure 8: Home language of educators at School 2



Teaching experience: Most of the educators at both schools had ten or more years teaching experience. Only 4% had less than five years teaching experience. Some 28% of the educators taught English as subject.

Figure 9: Combined teaching experience at both schools



It is evident that most of the educators at both schools have more than ten years teaching experience. It is therefore, expected that they have acquired valuable teaching skills which could facilitate application of their knowledge on learning support.

Educators' knowledge and understanding of key concepts

Most educators were knowledgeable about the terms or concepts discussed hereunder (See Appendix I, sections B and C).

Inclusion: The majority of educators at both schools stated that inclusion indicates a system of education that supports all learners in their learning by responding appropriately to their learning needs.

Learning support: Most educators responded that learning support is the intervention strategies provided by educators to individual learners in the classroom and structures and arrangements beyond the classroom which make it possible for educators to be more supportive of learners who experience a barrier to learning.

Barriers to learning: The majority educators indicated that barriers to learning are all the factors which hinder teaching and learning and occur at all levels of the education system. It could be of some significance that four educators at **School 1** and three educators at **School 2** were of the opinion that barriers to learning are factors which hinder teaching and learning but are only related to the learner.

Curriculum Differentiation: All the educators at **School 1** and the majority of educators at **School 2** preferred the following definition of “Curriculum differentiation”: Adapting the learning and teaching environment, teaching and learning techniques, teaching and learning support materials to improve a learner’s performance.

Cooperative learning: Most of the educators at both **School 1** and **School 2** described “cooperative learning” as: organised groups of learners working as a team on structured activities.

Identification of learners who experience a barrier to English as LoLT: The majority of educators stated that they did identify learners who experienced a barrier to English as LoLT and the majority of educators at both schools indicated that they identified learners with a barrier to the LoLT as soon as the academic year commenced.

Criteria for the identification of learners who experience a barrier to English as LoLT: The majority of educators at both schools indicated that they had applied all the following criteria to identify learners who experienced a barrier to English as LoLT:

- a reading screening checklist
- observation in class
- consulting learner profiles (reports and school records)
- interviews with parent/s
- criterion referenced tests
- Curriculum based tests.

Designing individual support programs for each learner who experiences a barrier to English: The majority of educators at both **School 1** and **School 2** stated that they designed individual support programmes for each learner who experienced a barrier to English as LoLT. However this was not evident during classroom practice observation.

Strategies to support a learner who experiences a barrier to the LoLT: Educators ranked the three best support strategies as follows:

1. Adapting teaching methods, style and pace as well as simplifying their language, such as rephrasing questions and limited instructions.
2. Using visuals such as pictures, drawings, charts, maps.
3. The use of a variety of learning support materials.

In this regard, an interesting observation was that although 69% of educators indicated that they do design individual support programmes for each learner with a barrier, only 16% chose “adaptation of content of learning programme” as one of the three best strategies to support a learner who experiences a barrier to English as LoLT.

Support for learners who experienced a barrier to English as LoLT during teaching time: (See Appendices G, H and I). All the educators at **School 2** indicated that they offered support during teaching time. With the exception of three educators, all the other educators at this school did not do learning support during teaching time. Of those offering support, one provided learning support after school; another during intervals; and two, during periods specifically allocated for this purpose.

Time dedicated to learning support per week: Some 43% of educators at **School 1** and 57% of educators at **School 2** indicated that they spent more than two hours per week supporting learners while 29 % of educators at **School 1** and 25% at **School 2**, spent less than an hour per week on learning support. Some 29% of educators at **School 1** and 8% of educators at **School 2** spent two to three hours on learning support.¹

Attitude of educators and other contextual factors concerning barriers to learning and the provision of learning support: The majority of educators at both **School 1** and **School 2** thought that a barrier to English as LoLT was too difficult to overcome in a mainstream class. Most educators were of the firm belief that class size definitely affected learning support. The EHL educator at **School 1** remarked that: “To deliver quality education, a small learner number per class is needed.” The life skills educator at **School 2** stated that: “It is very difficult to do learning support when there are more than 25 learners in a class” (information obtained during semi-structured interviews with Grade 4 educators).

¹ Note that percentages do not add up exactly to 100% due to rounding.

Most educators said that it was more difficult to teach learners whose home language is not English. Almost all the educators at both schools agreed that learners who were not proficient in English as LoLT, will experience difficulty in most subjects. Also, the majority stated that they adapted their lesson planning to suit the needs of individual learners in need of support. However, some 21% of educators at **School 1** and 8% of educators at **School 2** admitted to preparing all their lessons in the same way, with no regard for planning for individuals who needed support.

The majority of educators at both schools agreed that inclusive practices can reduce the impact of barriers to learning but more educators at **School 1** than **School 2** believed that this was possible. Most of the educators at both schools stated that they were familiar with a variety of assessment methods and teaching styles suitable to needs of learners who experience a barrier to the LoLT. The majority of educators at both schools indicated that they were satisfied with the assistance they received from their respective SBSTs but almost all of them voiced disgruntlement with the aid they received from the district support team.

Half of the educators at **School 1** and the majority of educators at **School 2** would have preferred not to have learners with a barrier to the LoLT in their classes and most of the educators at both schools thought that learners with a barrier to the LoLT should be catered for in special classes. The majority of educators at both schools were in agreement that a situation where the LoLT is not the learner's home language could be a serious barrier to learning.

The vast majority of educators at **School 2** thought that they were adequately trained to support learners who experienced a barrier to the LoLT, while almost half of the respondents at **School 1** said that they were not sufficiently trained to cope with learners who experience a barrier to the LoLT.

Educators' opinion on the functions of the SBST: The majority of educators at both schools agreed that the SBSTs at their respective schools performed the following functions (See Appendix I and J, section E):

- supporting the teaching and learning process
- identifying learner, educator and school needs
- developing resource networks

- identifying and discussing educator development
- establishing networks with learners, staff and parental interest groups
- preparing references for the district based support team
- assisting educators to plan intervention strategies to support learners who experience barriers to learning

However, educators at both schools indicated that the SBST at their respective schools had failed to plan and conduct developmental workshops for educators.

Most of the educators at both **School 1** and **School 2** were knowledgeable about the purpose and function of the District Based Support Team. Even though educators were well informed about the functions of the District Based Support Team, they aired their dissatisfaction with the inadequate support they actually received from these teams, especially with regard to learning support for learners who experience a barrier to the LoLT. The majority of educators at both schools believed that the educator was primarily responsible for the implementation of support programmes.

Contextual factors that constrain educators' effort to provide effective learning support to learners who experience a barrier to the LoLT: The majority of educators at both schools indicated that the lack of learning support materials hampered effective support. Most of the educators at **School 1** said that financial resources were a constraint. Only 8% of educators at **School 2** stated as such.

None of the educators at these schools indicated that school policy impacted negatively on their learning support efforts. Less than half of the educators at **School 1** and only 8% of educators at **School 2** specified that their knowledge and training was inadequate and did not enable them to offer the necessary learning support. An equal majority of educators at both schools were of the opinion that the educator to learner ratio had a definite adverse impact on their learning support efforts.

Most of the educators at both schools agreed that a lack of parental involvement impacted negatively on their attempts at providing effective learning support.

5.7.2 Semi-structured interviews with Grade 4 educators and principals

The following emerged from the semi-structured interviews with educators and principals in the subject schools.

School 1

- Educators mentioned time constraints and high educator to learner ratios as factors that hampered adequate learning support during lesson periods. Classes with large numbers of learners unavoidably brought with them discipline concerns. This finding was confirmed during classroom observation. A large number of learners per class were much more rowdy than classes with fewer learners. The educator also took more time to get them settled and ready to start the lesson.
- Parental support was very poor and this was compounded by the fact that numerous parents were illiterate and unable to assist learners with homework or learning support activities.
- The unfavourable socio-economic circumstances of the majority of learners' impacted negatively on their general progress. The principal stated that the parents of most learners were unemployed and dependent on social grants and financial support from parents was, therefore, also sadly lacking. As a result, more than half of the learner population was on the school feeding scheme (See Appendix C). The learners' poor socio-economic status was evident from general observation of school uniforms in dire need of repair. Findings about learners' poor socio-economic status was also confirmed by qualitative data gained from the educator's questionnaire.
- The school had no structured learning support programme in place but educators were expected to provide learning support either during contact time or after school. The EHL educator stated that her efforts to do learning support after school were not effective since a large number of learners in need of support would miss their transport if kept after school. She said: "I sometimes keep learners in during breaks to assist them and at other times I keep them after school but it has happened that some learners missed their transport home".
- The school is under-resourced and there is no functional library or media centre; the science class is not conducive to the teaching of the subject due to a lack of equipment.

School 2

- All educators stated that it was extremely difficult if not impossible to do adequate support during contact time due to limited time. They said that it was difficult to do learning support with more

than 25 learners in a class - discipline then also became problematic. They argued that small learner numbers was a prerequisite for quality education. It is interesting to note at this point, that even though the educator to learner ratio at **School 2** was 1:32 on average, compared to that of **School 1** which was 1:45 on average, educators at **School 2** still believed the ratio to be too high.

- Parental support was a concern. Most support received was from parents whose children were good or top achievers. Few of the parents of the learners from the townships supported their children or attended parent meetings; this may not have been as a result of a lack of interest by these parents but could, in part, be explained by their survivalist tendencies (which dictated that they spend most of their time eking out an existence) in response to their socio-economic circumstances. Some parents (as compared to numerous parents in **School 1**) were illiterate and unable to assist their children with learning support activities. The EHL educator mentioned that: “Parental support is very poor; learners from townships parents’ do not attend parent meetings. Some of them are illiterate and unable to assist their children with homework. Most support is from parents whose children are top achievers”.
- The school principal described the socio-economic background of learners as ranging from poor to middle class to extremely wealthy (see Appendix C). This finding was confirmed during classroom observation sessions.
- The school had established a structured learning support programme for English, Mathematics and Afrikaans. This was a co-curricular endeavour scheduled from Tuesday to Thursday from two o'clock to three o'clock in the afternoon. In English, emphasis was on reading skills and phonics.
- The EHL educator was of the opinion that Grade 4 learners’ proficiency in the language was good; the minority of the Grade 4 learner body had difficulty with English as LoLT.
- The Afrikaans first additional educator stated: “Even though my training in offering learning support was inadequate, I am capable of providing satisfactory support to learners in need of learning support”.

5.7.3 Discussion

Most of the educators at both schools had more than ten years teaching experience therefore it is presumed that most of them have acquired the necessary skills to provide effective learning support to learners experiencing barriers to learning. It is evident from the questionnaire results that the majority

of educators at **School 1** and **School 2** were familiar with the important key concepts such as learning support, barriers to learning and other terms related to this study.

Assertions made by educators in the questionnaire, such as provision of individual learning support during teaching time and adaptation of curriculum content were disproved by the classroom practice observation as well as the semi-structured interviews. Claims that extrinsic factors such as the poor socio-economic background of learners, high educator to learner ratios, lack of learning materials and poor parental support, had adversely effected the provision of learning support was confirmed by qualitative data obtained from the semi-structured interviews and classroom observation. The finding that **School 2** has established a structured learning support programme, while **School 1** lacked a learning support programme is significant when considering the quantitative data obtained from the standardised tests written at both schools.

5.8 Observations about school premises, organisation and functioning

5.8.1 School 1

- Some of the buildings (classrooms) were satisfactory while others were not in a good condition.
- Some of the furniture in the classrooms was in disrepair.
- The school was not well resourced and there was no functional library or media centre.
- The science class was not conducive to the teaching of the subject as there was insufficient science equipment and in some classes learners had to share text books.
- The change of periods was usually noisy and time-consuming due to the large number of learners per class.
- According to the principal and staff, the socio-economic background of the majority of learners was very poor. The majority of parents were unemployed or dependent on grants.
- A total of 600 learners were on the school's feeding scheme.
- Numerous Grade 4 learners had visibly torn uniforms and worn out shoes.

5.8.2 School 2

- Buildings, classrooms and furniture were well maintained and in good condition.

- The school was well resourced with a modern media centre and science laboratory.
- There were sufficient text books for all learners.
- Learners changed classes orderly and the noise level was minimal.
- According to the principal the socio-economic background of the learners ranged from poor to middle-class, to extremely wealthy.
- All learners' uniforms were in good condition.

5.8.3 Discussion

Observations made about the condition of school buildings, classroom furniture, school grounds, educational facilities and even the general appearance of learners' uniform at **School 1** and **School 2** clearly delineate the disparity in the socio-economic backgrounds of the learner bodies at the two schools. This observation about the unfavourable socio-economic conditions at School 1 is confirmed by qualitative data obtained from the educators' questionnaire and semi structured interviews. Educators at **School 1** also indicated that financial constraints adversely effected their provision of learning support. Literature alludes to socio-economic barriers as one of the key barriers to learning and development. A barrier to learning as experienced by any particular learner is generally the consequence of interaction between varying degrees of intrinsic and extrinsic factors (See Section 4.2).

5.9 Conclusion

The research methodology and data presentation was outlined in this chapter. A mixed method design, involving both qualitative and quantitative methodologies was utilised. A case study design, involving two schools in different socio-economic settings, was selected. The focus of the study was whether learners with a barrier to English as LoLT were being supported at the two schools and the specific approaches at both schools were probed. The variety of data collection techniques decided upon allowed validation through cross checking of information gained from these different methods. The next chapter focused on interpretation of research findings, summary and recommendations.

CHAPTER 6

FINDINGS, RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

6.1 Introduction

In the final chapter the findings of the research results have been elucidated and conclusions drawn. Recommendations based on the findings have been considered.

6.2 Summary of study

The advent of democracy in South Africa in the early 1990's led to a break with the past of discrimination and exclusion in the education system, but many learners whose home language is an African language, were moved, due to choice or circumstances, into school environments where the Language of Learning and Teaching (LoLT) is English. An increasing number of these learners with an indigenous language (which could be described as African languages as well as Afrikaans) as home language, are experiencing grave difficulties in comprehending concepts and knowledge transferred through the instruction of English, which to many is a "foreign language". They thus are confronted with the double challenge of mastering the curriculum content while simultaneously learning the language (English) in which it is couched and instructed.

When the LoLT differs from learners' home language, this difference can be an educational barrier, which if not addressed timeously and effectively, could turn into a major obstacle in an education system. Indeed it could become a major cause of exclusion that may drive up failure rates and undermine the system. This barrier should be addressed by the educators especially in Grade 4 when English is the only language used as LoLT.

Grade 4 learners find themselves in a challenging phase of their school life due to an increase in school subjects, workload and an expectation to work much more independently. The language barrier as a challenge to inclusion is often not recognised as a mainstream barrier in the education setting and is often viewed as a "soft" barrier and thus does not command the kind of resources and attention that it should, both at the level of policy and in the classroom.

The main aim of this research was to investigate whether Grade 4 learners who experience barriers to English as LoLT did get supported in all subjects in their regular classes and also to explore how effective these learning support measures or strategies were. Therefore the researcher

investigated how mainstream schools were handling the challenge posed by the LoLT as barrier to learning. Sub research questions that were addressed included:

- How seriously educators considered language as a barrier to learning where English was a learner's second or third language of learning and teaching.
- What methods of support were being provided to ameliorate its impact.
- What can be learnt (both from the positive and negative experiences of educators) that might help strengthen support in this area.
- How effective were the School Based Support Teams (SBST) in supporting the teaching and learning process by identifying and addressing the needs of the learner, educator and school.

In this case study approach, research was done at two English-medium primary schools in the Education District D6 (Ekurhuleni) in Gauteng. A former model C school (former 'whites -only' schools that were initially opened to a limited number of learners of other races in the early '90s). This school was referred to as **School 2**. At the time of the research, the learner body was comprised of learners from all races - whites, coloureds, blacks and Asians. The socio-economic background of the learners ranged from poor to middle class to wealthy.

The other school was an ordinary state school that catered for the educational needs of so called 'Coloured' learners in the pre-democratic elections of 1994. This school has been referred to as **School 1**. After the first democratic elections it experienced a steady influx of Black children from nearby townships as well as two closely situated informal settlements. The school was situated in an area with low income levels and a relatively high unemployment rate. The learner body was comprised of Coloured and Black learners.

These two samples were chosen in order to provide an adequate canvas for the research and to help tease out variations in methods, factors and approaches around the issue and the role of resources (both human and material) in providing adequate learning support. Other variables or extrinsic factors such as educator -learner ratios, learners' socio-economic environments, educators' training and knowledge about learning support, and educators' attitudes towards learning support, were also taken into account.

The most appropriate theoretical framework for this study was a mixed method design which merged qualitative and quantitative paradigms in significant ways and included considerable contributions from both these approaches. The mixed method design is “a convergence of philosophy, viewpoints, traditions, methods and conclusions (McMillan & Schumacher, 2014: 426). The mixed method approach was chosen for this study because it was able to present lucid and augmented insights which would not have been possible if the quantitative and qualitative approaches were used independently. The triangulation technique validated information obtained from data collection methods such as structured questionnaires, observation, semi- structured interviews and standardised English proficiency tests. The supposition was that effective learning support would produce an improvement in learners’ English proficiency.

6.3 Findings

The interdependent dynamic between a number of contextual factors at both schools either countered or facilitated effective learning support. According to the results of the standardised English tests, **School 2**’s scores greatly exceeded that of **School 1**; in fact, the outcomes were direct opposites. The rationale for these findings could be explored via a few avenues.

The first avenue to explore was whether more effective learning support was done at **School 2**. School educators’ training, knowledge and attitudes concerning barriers to learning and learning support may either have contributed to or obstructed effective learning support. The contribution of contextual extrinsic factors toward the efficiency or impediment of learning support was also probed. The findings have been set out below.

6.3.1 Learners' home language

Learners at **School 2** entered this scenario already advantaged over those in **School 1**, due to the majority having English as their home language. Very few learners at **School 1** had English as their home language; indeed the majority of those learners at **School 1** who failed the test, had Afrikaans or an indigenous language as their home language. According to a report of the NCSNET and the NCESS, learning through a language that is not their first language, places learners at a disadvantage (Department of Education, 1997). The standardised tests confirmed this.

The most common errors made in the test by Grade 4 learners' related to grammar, comprehension, reading and spelling difficulties. Grade 4 ESL learners generally had a limited vocabulary that they truly understood and were able to use constructively, either orally or in written form. According to Theron, this could be ascribed to poor literacy skills, general linguistic deprivation, lack of English resources and inadequate English literary culture (Theron & Nel, 2005).

6.3.2 Learning support strategies

The following learning support measures (or lack thereof) during teaching time were observed at **School 1** and **School 2**.

Individual learning support during teaching time was lacking completely or negligible even though the majority of educators at both schools indicated in the questionnaire that they did learning support during teaching time. At **School 2**, minimal support was provided to individual learners during teaching time. This could be attributed to time constraints.

There was no variety of learning support material, such as pictures, drawings, charts and picture symbols, incorporated into lesson presentations. An exception at **School 2** was noted where a slide show accompanied discussion in one class. The most often used resource material was the prescribed text books, printed notes and the blackboard. At **School 1**, learners shared a textbook in some classes.

At both schools adaptation of the learning programme or differentiation of written assignments to suit the needs of learners with barriers to the LoLT, was not apparent during classroom observation. In both schools, the code switching strategy (incorporation of learners' home language, sometimes with peer aid) was not employed in any of the lesson presentations.

Both schools utilised cooperative groups, paired reading and explanation of key words or phrases, as learning support strategies. In view of the above evidence, it could be concluded that there was not a vast difference in educator teaching methods between the two schools. Therefore, although

these aspects definitely impacted on the quality of learning support provided, the influence of other factors had to be taken into account.

6.3.3 Educators' home language and teaching experience

It could be significant that the majority of educators at **School 1** had Afrikaans as home language and at **School 2** the majority of educators had English as home language. Despite this home language split, the English language proficiency of educators at both schools ranged from satisfactory to excellent, notwithstanding mispronunciation of some words by educators from **School 1**. Most of the educators at both schools had more than ten years teaching experience. It was, therefore, expected that they had acquired valuable teaching skills which could facilitate application of their knowledge on learning support.

6.3.4 Educators' knowledge about inclusion, learning support and barriers to learning

Most of the educators at both **School 1** and **School 2** were well informed and knowledgeable about all the key concepts that are significant in this study. Educators could define terms such as 'inclusion' and 'learning support'. It was evident that these educators understood the meaning of the concepts such as barriers to learning, cooperative learning and curriculum differentiation, as referred to in the literature discussion in section 1.6 of this research. Educators at both schools indicated that they do identify learners who experience a barrier to English as LoLT and the findings affirmed that the majority of educators at both schools were familiar with all the necessary criteria for identification. Most educators were well informed on best learning support strategies as well as suitable assessment methods and teaching styles. It would seem that most educators possessed viable theoretical knowledge concerning learning support and related issues but some impediment prevented effective application of this knowledge.

6.3.5 Provision of learning support

Even though the majority of educators at both schools declared that they designed individual support programmes for each learner experiencing a barrier to English as LoLT, observation findings refuted this assertion. Despite claims by the majority of educators that they provided

learning support during teaching time, correlation of the findings from the questionnaires, observation and semi-structured interviews contradicted these claims. It became evident that time constraints prevented educators from delivering effective individual learning support during contact time. Another inhibiting factor appeared to be the number of learners in the class; these large numbers (especially at **School 1**) militate against educators providing any effective individual learning support.

6.3.6 The School Based Support Teams (SBSTs)

The majority of educators were aware of the functions of the SBSTs and the District Based Support Teams (DBSTs). Educators made known their dissatisfaction with the inadequate assistance they received from DBSTs with regard to learning support for learners who experience a barrier to the LoLT. At school level, educators at both schools indicated that they would prefer their respective SBSTs to plan and conduct developmental workshops aimed at enhancing their capacity in learning support.

6.3.7 Educators' attitude

Some seemingly contradictory, though understandable research findings emerged. On the one hand, the majority of educators at both schools agreed that inclusive practices could lessen the impact of barriers to learning; however, on the other hand, most of them also opined that the specific barrier of English as LoLT was too difficult to surmount in a mainstream class. This outcome was substantiated by qualitative data about the following attitude of educators: most of the educators at both **Schools 1 and 2** said that they would have preferred not to have learners with a barrier to the LoLT in their classes and opined that these learners' needs should be catered for in special classes. While this sentiment is understandable, given the time constraints and high educator to learner ratios, the literature suggests that isolating these learners by putting them into special schools or classrooms, may be less optimal to integrating them into the mainstream of the school environment and providing them with adequate support (Department of Education, 1997; Landsberg, et al, 2006; Donald, et al, 2006; NCSNET/NCESS, 1998).

6.3.8 Educators' training

Another contributing factor may be discerned in the admission by almost half of the educators at **School 1** that they were not adequately trained to provide effective learning support to learners experiencing a barrier to the LoLT.

6.3.9 Contextual factors

Poor socio-economic conditions are extrinsic factors considered to be one of the key barriers to learning and development (Donald, et al, 2006). Literature (section 4.2.1) substantiates that poverty –stricken communities are also bound to be affected likewise in terms of educational resources, learning materials, high educator to learner ratios and sufficiently qualified staff. All these extrinsic factors could operate interdependently with other possible intrinsic factors and contribute to the likelihood of learning breakdown (Department of Education, 1997). The findings of this study indicate a wide divide between the socio-economic backgrounds of learners at the two subject schools. The majority of learners at **School 1** hailed from extremely poor home environments, while most of the learners from **School 2** came from middle class to extremely wealthy family backgrounds. Most of the basic needs for food and shelter of Grade 4 learners at **School 1** were not being adequately met. The majority of these learners lived in informal settlements under impoverished circumstances, where they had little or no access to materials or equipment that help stimulate learning, such as a television or reading materials. This, together with the low English literacy levels of many parents, no doubt, was a significant contributing factor to the dismal test results that emerged from **School 1**. Furthermore, the findings determined that **School 2** was much better resourced than **School 1** in terms of financial and academic support from parents, text books, and the condition of the buildings and furniture. Learners at **School 2** had access to a better resourced library, a media centre and a science laboratory. The educator to learner ratio at **School 1** was also much higher than that of **School 2**, leading to the consequential concerns of classroom management and discipline as well as the adverse effects on learning support efforts, in that school.

6.3.10 Factors that most significantly impacted upon the outcomes

The following can be listed as decisive factors which wielded major influence on the different outcomes of learning support at the subject schools:

- Contextual factors at **School 1**, such as the poor socio-economic background of learners; deficient educational facilities and learning materials; high educator to learner ratios; poor parental support; and inadequate educator training on providing support.
- A structured learning support programme was established at **School 2** while no such structured programme was in place at **School 1**.
- The home language of the majority of Grade 4 learners at **School 2** was English while very few grade 4 learners at **School 1** had English as home language - yet both schools used English as LoLT.
- The home language of the majority of educators at **School 2** was English, which could help explain the slightly enhanced English proficiency of educators at **School 2**.
- The attitudes and opinions of educators at these schools toward the provision of learning support to learners with a barrier to English as LoLT, as well their (educators') preference to have these learners needs provided for in special rather than mainstream classes.
- Methods to teach and support ESL learners were applied more frequently and successfully at **School 2**, due to the fact that a structured learning support programme was in place at this school.

6.4 Recommendations

Below, are some recommendations that have been made on the basis of this study.

6.4.1 Schools and educators

The recommendations hereunder have been made specifically with regard to schools and educators.

1. Educators should be seen as key role players in providing effective learning support as they are the link between parents, the school and the Department of Education.
2. Strengthened support links should be established with the District Based Support Teams to ensure that appropriate and timely intervention strategies are applied at all schools. The school principal and SBSTs at the schools should initiate and maintain this vital partnership.
3. School management teams need to search for ways to fortify relationships with all parents and get them involved in all matters affecting their children.

4. Schools, especially government schools, should devise ways to motivate their communities to “own” their schools and assist in the safekeeping and maintenance of school grounds and buildings.
5. Schools may need to explore creative ways of becoming more viable, such as establishing partnerships with NGOs, companies and community businesses to secure funding and sponsorship. Essential educational resources and learning material could be procured in this way. Sufficient funds would allow school governing bodies to acquire the services of additional educators to alleviate the problem of high educator to learner ratios at state schools.
6. A culture of reading could be promoted amongst our learner population by dedicating one period per week to reading. The idea is that during this period, learners read for enjoyment. Learners reading on their own could be alternated with the class educator sharing and or discussing a story with the class. Personal experience has shown that most children, especially primary school children, love listening to stories. There may be schools that have already implemented this initiative with great success. Surely the prospect of improved LoLT proficiency overshadows any objections directed at “loss” of time and content coverage in other subjects. Acquiring the necessary reading material need not be an insurmountable hurdle.
7. Educators should emphasise that ESL learners should not neglect their home language and instead strive to instil a sense of pride in these languages. Educators should also make an effort to familiarise themselves with learners’ home language and culture (Donald, et al, 2006; Landsberg, et al, 2006).

6.4.2 The SBSTs

Careful scrutiny of findings gained from various data collection methods indicate a very definite need for up-skilling and further training in several learning support related issues. The findings suggest that most educators do not know how to apply their existing knowledge. DBSTs and SBST’s should meet this challenge and commence structured training on:

1. inclusive education – in order for all educators to grasp the essence of the concept of inclusivity, counter negative attitudes, and to understand that inclusive education is the ultimate acceptance of diversity
2. basic principles of child development – especially development of Grade 4 learners; this is essential knowledge for individuals who work with children, in order to positively influence their development

3. learning support approaches, methods and strategies that can be applied in the teaching of ESL
4. how educators can design individual support programmes for learners with a barrier to English as LoLT, in all subjects

The principal and the SBST at all schools should ensure that a structured co-curricular learning support programme is established with regular quality checks on implementation.

6.4.3 Getting parents involved

Parents can help to improve their children's command of English by becoming more involved in developing their command of the language in the following ways:

1. If the home language is not English, parents should create opportunities to converse in English with the family. Learning new English words together and discovering their meaning can be a fun way for a family to improve their use of English.
2. Parents should cultivate a culture of reading and actively encourage a love for reading in their children. This can be done by regularly reading stories or newspaper articles to children.
3. Buying books is not always affordable. Parents can set an example by joining the local library with their children.
4. Parents should show an interest in their children's progress by assisting them with homework assignments or projects. They can also positively reinforce their children's self-concept by providing constructive feedback to them. However, given that some parents, especially those in the lower socio-economic neighbourhoods, may not have the necessary knowledge to help their children, they should sit together with older siblings or relatives with this knowledge to ensure that their children are provided with support in the home. They should also encourage their children to make good use of homework support, where this is available at the school. Education must be seen as a joint responsibility between the school and the home.
5. Parents should make an effort to attend all parent meetings. It is in the best interest of child. The school and parents need to form a strong partnership in order to support learners who are experiencing barriers to learning, especially where there is a barrier to the LoLT.

6.4.4 Department of Education

The following recommendations have been made with regard to the Department of Education.

1. Recently the Gauteng Department of Education (GDE) initiated the Extra School Support Programme that allowed for the appointment of assistants to support educators in sport, culture and some academic matters, such as homework supervision. With appropriate training, the services of these assistants could be utilised more efficiently in classes, during those periods when subject teachers focus their attention on individual learning support.
2. Education authorities should seriously reconsider policy regarding time allocation per subject, especially instructional time for English. Provision should be made for learning support to ESL learners in school time tables.
3. A definite need exists for educators to be trained in approaches, methods and strategies in the teaching of ESL.
4. A high educator to learner ratio will adversely affect learning support, especially learning support to Grade 4 learners who are at the start of the Intermediate Phase. Staff quotas at mainstream schools should be revised.
5. GDE should devise alternative transport provision to allow travelling learners to attend these after school classes.
6. Education authorities should explore the idea of bridging classes between Grade 3 and Grade 4 for ESL learners.
7. It is proposed that learners with a barrier to English as LoLT remain in their mainstream classes and attend all other subject periods with their classmates but get 'pulled out' daily to attend scheduled English support classes or periods, after which they rejoin their classmates. Reading, comprehension and phonics instruction should be concentrated on. As soon as these learners reach the appropriate level of English proficiency, they should commence full instruction with the mainstream English classes. Further investigation into the feasibility of this option as well as more information on implementation is necessary.
8. Communication loopholes exist between educators and education authorities with particular reference to learning support. A platform needs to be established where educators can voice their concerns about limitations in the current learning support policy. Education authorities should not be lulled by printed orders and instructions contained in official newsletters and assume that these have been accepted, accessed, internalised and carried out to the letter. A reality check is urgently needed if we want to determine whether justice is being done to the issue of learning support to learners who experience a barrier to English as LoLT. This topic could be explored in further research.

9. Finally, the government should be taken to task persistently, to deliver basic infrastructure and learning materials to schools that are desperately under-resourced. A recent newspaper article highlighted the plight of poor rural and township schools in the Western Cape, where school principals have taken the government to court for failing to provide learners with a decent education. They intend obtaining a court order that will compel Basic Education Minister, Angie Motshekga, and the education MECs of all nine provinces “to promote early childhood development, provide learning material on time and in the right language and improve mother-tongue education in the Foundation Phase”. A spokesperson for these principals stated: “The quality of education delivered by the state fails to equip the majority of learners in public schools with sufficient literacy and numeracy skills to describe them as 'basically educated' with the result that they are denied social mobility and remain trapped in poverty” (Davids & Dlamini: *The Times*, November 18, 2013:1).

6.5 Conclusion

This research explored and investigated the provision and efficiency of learning support to Grade 4 learners who experience a barrier to English as LoLT at two primary schools in contrasting socio-economic settings. After surveying and evaluating numerous factors that could influence the outcomes as discussed in the study, a number of conclusions could be made.

Firstly, it is clear that the application of educator knowledge and training as well as different teaching methods, definitely influences the quality of learning support delivered. Outcomes were most significantly impacted by interdependent contextual factors such as learners' socio-economic milieus, home language, deficient educational resources and infrastructure as well as educator to learner ratios.

Educators' attitudes toward providing learning support to learners with a barrier to the LoLT and a general apprehension to cater for these learners in their mainstream classes is a cause for concern. Cognisance should be taken of all the preceding recommendations but particular attention must be drawn to the fact that educators included in the study, considered a barrier to the language of learning and teaching as extremely serious. Even though educators were of the opinion that inclusive practices could reduce the impact of barriers to learning, they found a barrier to the LoLT most daunting.

To fully embrace the principle and concept of inclusion, our education system should create inclusive settings in which the needs of all learners, irrespective of race, class, gender, language or disability, are catered for. Therefore, education authorities and all other stakeholders in education are compelled to proactively face the challenges posed by the LoLT as barrier and find appropriate solutions to this challenge which has the potential of becoming a major source of exclusion to learning.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A: Letter of Consent

Participation in a Research Project

Dear Parent/Guardian:

I am a registered Masters Student at Unisa who will be conducting research at _____
Primary School.

This research is being conducted with the permission of the Department of Education,
the Principal and the School Governing Body.

Each learner will be required to write a standardised English test to determine his or
her proficiency in English.

The research results will remain confidential. No names or distinguishing
characteristics will be identified.

Your child's participation in the research would be appreciated.

Yours Sincerely



Mrs. B. Mackay
EDUCATOR

.....
Consent Form

I, _____ (name of parent/guardian)
of _____ (child's name),

Hereby grant permission/do not grant permission for my son/daughter to participate in
the research.

Parent/Guardian Signature

Appendix B: Educators Questionnaire

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Educators Questionnaire

Instructions

- Please respond to all questions in black ink
- Please provide information on a separate page if not enough space is provided
- Mark with an X in the space under or next to the appropriate box

Section A

Biographical Data

1. Home Language							Office Use <input style="width: 40px; height: 20px;" type="checkbox"/> 4
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
English	Afrikaans	isiXhosa	isiZulu	seSotho	sePedi	Other (Specify)	
2. Gender							Office Use <input style="width: 40px; height: 20px;" type="checkbox"/> 5
1	2						
Male	Female						

3. Teaching Experience					<input style="width: 40px; height: 20px; margin: 0 auto;" type="text"/> 6				
1	2	3	4	5					
Less than 5 years	5–10 Years	10-15 years	15-20 years	More than 20 years					
4. Subject/s					<input style="width: 40px; height: 20px; margin: 0 auto;" type="text"/> 8				
1	2	3	4	5		6	7	8	9
Eng	Afri	Maths	NS	SS		EMS	LO	A & C	Tech
5. Grade/s					<input style="width: 40px; height: 20px; margin: 0 auto;" type="text"/> 10				
1	2	3							
Grade 4	Grade 5	Grade 6							

Section B

1. Which definition best suites the term “Inclusion”		Office Use
1. A system of education that gets learners to fit into the ‘normal’ class routine		<input type="checkbox"/> 11
2. A system of education that focuses on changes that need to take place in the Learner		
3. A system of education that supports all learners in their learning by responding appropriately to their learning needs		
4. Other (explain)		

2. Which definition best suites the term “Learning Support?”		Office Use
1. Some activities that make the education system more supportive of learner needs so that some learners can learn from the curriculum.		<input type="checkbox"/> 12
2. Intervention strategies provided by educators to individual learners in the classroom and structures and arrangements beyond the classroom which make it possible for educators to be more supportive of learners who experience a barrier to learning		
3. All the activities that increase the capacity of the education system to respond to the individual needs of educators.		
4. Other (explain)		

3. Which statement best describes “barriers to learning?”		Office Use
1. Factors which hinder teaching and learning and occur at all levels of the educational system.		<input type="checkbox"/> 13
2. Factors which hinder teaching and learning and is only related to the learner.		
3. Factors that stand in the way of learning and is only related to the educator		
4. Other (explain)		

4. Which statement best describes the term “Curriculum differentiation?”		Office Use
1. Creating a new curriculum		<input type="checkbox"/> 14
2. Adapting the learning and teaching environment to improve a learner’s performance		
3. Adapting the learning and teaching environment, teaching and learning techniques, teaching and learning support materials to improve a learner’s performance.		
4. Other (explain)		

5. Which statement best describes the term “Cooperative learning?”		Office Use
1. Organised groups of learners working on activities.		<input type="checkbox"/> 15
2. Organised groups of learners working as a team on structured activities.		
3. Organised groups of learners competing against each other.		
4. Other (explain)		

Section C

1. The language of learning and teaching at this school is English. Do you identify learners who experience a barrier to English as LoLT? (language of learning and teaching)		Office Use
1. Yes		<input type="checkbox"/> 16
2. No		
2. When do you identify learners with a barrier to the LoLT?		Office Use
1. At registration.		<input type="checkbox"/> 17
2. As soon as the Academic years commences.		
3. After the first formal Assessment tasks		
4. Other (explain)		

3. How do you identify learners who experience a barrier to English as LoLT?		Office Use
1. Reading screening checklist		<input type="checkbox"/> 18
2. Observation in class		
3. Consulting learner profile (reports and school records)		
4. Interview with parent/ s		
5. Criterion referenced tests		
6. Curriculum based tests		
7. All of the above		
8. Other. (explain)		
4. Do you design individual support programmes for each learner who experiences a barrier to English?		Office Use
1. Yes		<input type="checkbox"/>

		33
8. Approximately how many hours do you spend per week in supporting a learner experiencing a barrier to the LoLT?		Office Use
1. Less than 1 hour		<input type="checkbox"/> 34
2. 1 to 2 hours		
3. 2 to 3 hours		
4. Other (explain)		

Section D

Please indicate the extent to which you agree with each of the statements listed below by marking the appropriate box with an X.

Agree = A, Strongly Agree = SA, Disagree = D, Strongly Disagree =SD, Undecided =UN

	A	SA	D	SD	UN	Office Use
1. A barrier to English as LoLT is too difficult to overcome in a mainstream class						<input type="checkbox"/>
2. Class size does affect learning support in a mainstream class						<input type="checkbox"/>
3. It is more difficult to teach learners whose home language is not English						<input type="checkbox"/>
4. Learners who is not proficient in English experience difficulty in most learning areas						<input type="checkbox"/>
5. I prepare all my lessons in the same way, regardless of whether a learner is in need of support						<input type="checkbox"/>
6. Inclusive practises can combat or reduce the impact of barriers to the LoLT						<input type="checkbox"/>
7. I know how to adapt assessment methods to cater for learners who experience a barrier to English as LoLT						<input type="checkbox"/>
8. I employ different teaching styles to support learners who experience a barrier to the LoLT						<input type="checkbox"/>
9. Our School Based Support team offers effective assistance to educators to support learners who experience a barrier to the LoLT						<input type="checkbox"/>
10. I get enough assistance from the district support team to cope with learners who experience a barrier to the LoLT						<input type="checkbox"/>
11. I prefer not to have learners with a barrier to the LoLT in the classes that I teach						<input type="checkbox"/>
12. Learners who experience barriers to the LoLT should						

be accommodated in special classes						<input type="checkbox"/>
13. When the LoLT is not the learner's home language, it could become a serious barrier to learning						<input type="checkbox"/>
14. I feel that I am adequately trained to support learners who experience a barrier to English as LoLT						<input type="checkbox"/>

Section E

Please indicate the extent to which you agree with each of the statements listed below by marking the appropriate box with an X.

Agree = A, Strongly Agree = SA, Disagree = D, Strongly Disagree =SD, Undecided =UN

E1 The School Based Support Team is a structure within the school that:	A	SA	D	SD	UN	Office Use
1. supports the teaching and learning process						<input type="checkbox"/>
2. identifies learner, educator and school needs						<input type="checkbox"/>
3. develops resource networks						<input type="checkbox"/>
4. identify and discuss educator development						<input type="checkbox"/>
5. establishes networks with learner, staff and parent interest groups						<input type="checkbox"/>
6. does references for the district based support team						<input type="checkbox"/>
7 assist teachers to plan intervention strategies to support learners who experience barriers to learning						<input type="checkbox"/>
8 plan and conduct developmental workshops for educators						<input type="checkbox"/>
						56
E2 The key purpose and function of the District Based Support Teams is:	A	SA	D	SD	UN	Office Use
1. to support all learners, educators and system as a whole in overcoming barriers so that the full range of learning needs can be met						<input type="checkbox"/>
2. to assist educators to adapt their teaching methods assessment of learning						<input type="checkbox"/>
3. provide illustrative learning programmes, learning support materials and assessment instruments.						<input type="checkbox"/>

4. to evaluate support programmes and their effectiveness and suggest modifications						<input data-bbox="1347 230 1423 282" type="checkbox"/>
5. to link schools with formal and informal support systems in the surrounding community						<input data-bbox="1342 423 1418 474" type="checkbox"/> 61

Section F

F1. The educator	A	SA	D	SD	UN	Office Use 62																									
1. The educator remains primarily responsible for the implementation of support programmes																															
F2. What constrains your effort to assist learners who experience a barrier to the LoLT? You may select more than one option	Office Use																														
1. Learning support materials		<table border="1"> <tr><td data-bbox="1370 920 1450 987"></td></tr> <tr><td data-bbox="1370 987 1450 1055"></td></tr> <tr><td data-bbox="1370 1055 1450 1122"></td></tr> <tr><td data-bbox="1370 1122 1450 1189"></td></tr> <tr><td data-bbox="1370 1189 1450 1256"></td></tr> <tr><td data-bbox="1370 1256 1450 1323"></td></tr> <tr><td data-bbox="1370 1323 1450 1391"></td></tr> </table>																													
2. Financial resources																															
3. School Policy																															
4. My knowledge and training																															
5. Teacher learner ratio																															
6. Parental involvement																															
7. Other (explain)																															

Section G

Please provide any suggestions that could help alleviate the problems associated with a barrier to the language of learning and teaching

Thank you for your time and cooperation.

Appendix C: Semi-structured Interview - Guide Questions

1. What year was this school established?

2. What is the staff establishment?

3. What is the learner total at the school?

Boys

Girls

Total

4. What is the teacher - learner ratio at the school?

5. How would you describe the socio - economic background / circumstances of the school's learner population?

6. What is the language of Learning and teaching at the school?

7. Does the school have a "Language Policy" Please explain?

8. a) Is there a functioning school Based Support Team at the school?

_____ if yes please respond to the following questions.

b) Does the SBST have a "Learning Support Policy?"

c) How are the various grades represented in the SBST? / How are members elected / appointed?

d) Are parents involved in the learning support provided to learners? Please explain.

e) Does the school have a structured plan whereby learning support in various learning areas is provided to learners in need of such support? (E.g. time allocation; / specific teacher/specific learning area.

f) Is learning support provided during normal contact time, after school or a combination of both?

9. How would you rate parental support in terms of:

(Mark with an x)

	Excellent	Good	Satisfactory	Poor
<u>Financial support:</u> School fees; fundraising etc.				
<u>Support in Academic matters</u> Assistance in completing homework, projects, studying....				

10. How would you rate the following resources at the school.

Mark with an x

	Excellent	Good	Satisfactory	Poor
Staffing (number)				
Class rooms (number and condition)				
Learning and teaching support material.				
Class room future				
Sanitary amenities				
Nutritive value of food/snacks available at school tuck shop				
Sports facilities				

**Thank you for your time and effort. Your responses are highly appreciated.
Blanche Mackay**

Appendix D: Annual National Assessment 2012, Grade 4 English Home Language Test



basic education

Department:
Basic Education
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

MARKS	
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**ANNUAL NATIONAL ASSESSMENT 2012
GRADE 4 ENGLISH HOME LANGUAGE
TEST**

MARKS: 30

TIME: 1½ hours

PROVINCE _____

REGION _____

DISTRICT _____

SCHOOL NAME _____

NATIONAL EMIS NUMBER (9 digits)

--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

CLASS (e.g. 4A) _____

SURNAME _____

NAME _____

GENDER (✓)

BOY	
-----	--

GIRL	
------	--

DATE OF BIRTH

--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

This test consists of 12 pages, excluding the cover page.

Read the passage below and then answer Questions 1 to 8.

A LESSON LEARNT



Anne was a very selfish little girl. She lived with her mom and dad in a big house in a beautiful neighbourhood. As an only child she was spoilt. She always munched sweets and chocolates in front of her friends without sharing with them. She never shared her toys either. She was quite nasty and unkind to her friends. One sunny Saturday afternoon, John, Musa and Thembi went to play with Anne. They decided to teach her a good lesson. Musa took his brand new skateboard with him. The children took turns skating up and down the long driveway at Anne's house on Musa's skateboard.

Anne, who had begged her parents for a skateboard at Christmas, became angry and sulky when her friends wouldn't let her have a turn. 'You get your own skateboard, Anne,' called John, 'then you can join in the fun!' Anne felt very down-hearted and disappointed. What should have been an enjoyable afternoon had turned out to be rather boring and dull for her. She realised how unkind she had been towards her friends and how sad they must have felt.

Suddenly she had an idea. 'Why don't you all come inside and have some juice and chocolate cake?' she announced. Anne's friends were surprised at her sudden change of attitude and heart. They were happy that Anne was no longer thinking only of herself. They thought that she would start sharing her toys and sweets more often in future.

Instructions to learners

1. Read all the instructions carefully.
2. Answer all the questions in the spaces provided.
3. The teacher will lead you through the practice exercises before you start.
4. The duration of this test is 90 minutes.
5. Write neatly and legibly.

Practice exercises

1. **Circle the letter of the correct answer.**

Cows give us ...

- A cheese.
- B butter.
- C milk.
- D ice cream.

You have answered the question correctly if you have circled C.

2. **Number the following sentences 1 to 5 in the boxes, to show the order in which Mary gets ready for the school day.**

A Mary meets her friends on the way to school.	4
B Mary wakes up and gets out of bed.	1
C Now she is ready to go to school.	3
D She washes herself and gets dressed.	2
E She arrives at school on time.	5

You have answered the question correctly if you have numbered the sentences in the boxes as shown above.

The test starts on the next page.

Circle the letter of the correct answer in Questions 1 to 4.

1. What kind of a friend was Anne in the beginning, according to the text?
 - A Generous and kind
 - B Nasty and unkind
 - C Friendly and unselfish
 - D Rude and cruel(1)

2. Where did Anne live? In a ...
 - A small quiet village.
 - B busy road near the sea.
 - C beautiful neighbourhood.
 - D tall block of flats in town.(1)

3. When did Anne's friends visit her?
 - A One sunny Saturday afternoon
 - B One cold Saturday evening
 - C One windy Saturday morning
 - D One afternoon after school(1)

4. How did Anne's friends make her aware of what she was doing wrong?
 - A They talked to her about sharing.
 - B They wanted to play with her toys.
 - C They bought her a Christmas present.
 - D They made her feel left out.(1)

5. If you were one of Anne's friends, how would you feel?

Write your answer in a full sentence.

(1)

6. Answer the following questions in full sentences:

6.1 What do you think caused Anne to be selfish?

(1)

6.2 How did Anne's friends feel about her selfish behaviour?

(1)

7. The sentences below tell us about Anne learning a lesson.

Number the sentences 1 to 5 in the blocks to show the order in which Anne learnt her lesson.

A John, Musa and Thembi decided to teach Anne a lesson.

B Anne invited her friends inside for juice and chocolate cake.

C Anne did not share her sweets, chocolates and toys.

D Anne felt down-hearted and sad.

E Anne's friends skated outside her house.

(1)

8. What important lesson have you learnt from this story?

Write your answer in a full sentence.

(1)

9. **Rewrite the following sentences in the past tense.**

9.1 The three children ride on a skateboard.

9.2 Afterwards Anne offers them cake and juice.

10. **Circle the letter of the best sentence ending.**

10.1 John, Musa and Thembi were angry with Anne ...

- A so they did not like her attitude.
- B although they did not like her attitude.
- C because they did not like her attitude.
- D but they did not like her attitude.

10.2 Tom's skateboard still went fast ...

- A although it was cracked.
- B because it was cracked.
- C so it was cracked.
- D or it was cracked.

11. Circle the letter of the correct verb to complete the sentences below.

11.1 We ... going to teach Anne a lesson!

- A am
- B is
- C was
- D are

(1)

11.2 Anne is lucky as she ... nice toys in her room.

- A has
- B have
- C is having
- D am having

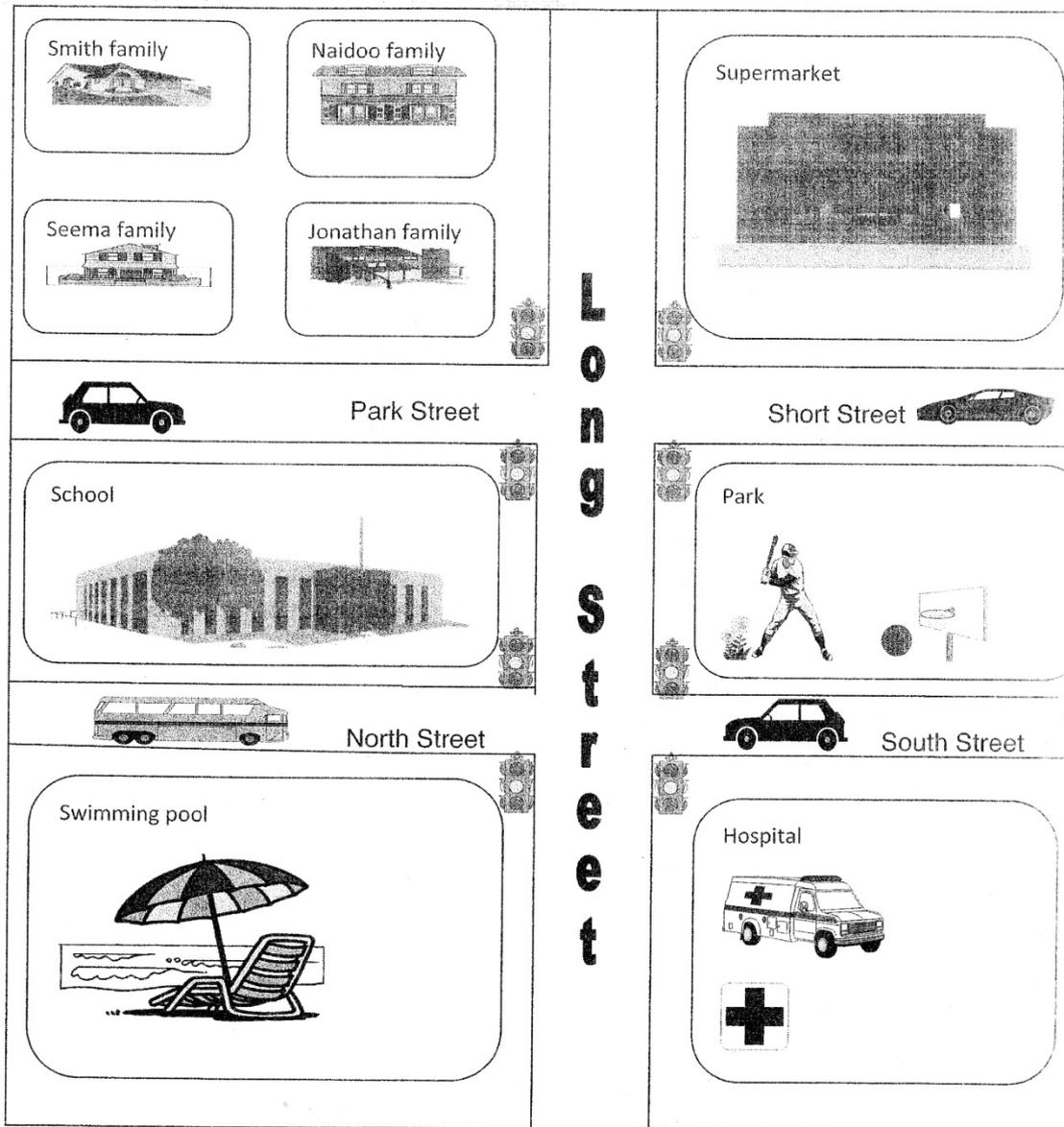
(1)

12. Rewrite the sentence below from Indirect Speech into Direct Speech. Punctuate the sentence correctly.

Anne said that she was sad.

(2)

Use the map below to answer Questions 13 and 14.



13. Circle the letter of the correct answer.

13.1 Where do the children catch the bus after school?

- A Park Street
- B Short Street
- C South Street
- D North Street

(1)

13.2 Which family lives the furthest from the hospital?

- A The Jonathan family
- B The Smith family
- C The Seema family
- D The Naidoo family

(1)

14. Circle the letter of the correct answer.

Neeshi is a nurse at the hospital and has left her bag at home with her mother, Mrs Seema. Neeshi must fetch her bag from home. Choose the best road that Neeshi must follow from the hospital to fetch her bag from home.

Turn right into Long Street, then ...

- A left into North Street.
- B right into South Street.
- C right into Short Street.
- D left into Park Street.

(1)

15. Read the paragraph below and then complete the table using the information from the paragraph.

South Africa is a country which is found on the continent of Africa. There are nine provinces in South Africa. Gauteng is the smallest province and the Northern Cape is the biggest province. The president of our country is Mr Jacob Zuma. Eleven official languages are spoken in South Africa. Lesotho is a neighbouring country within the borders of South Africa. The cold Atlantic Ocean is found on the west coast and the Indian Ocean is on the east coast of South Africa. South Africans are known as the Rainbow Nation.



A	The number of provinces in South Africa	
B	The smallest province in South Africa	
C	The president of South Africa	
D	A neighbouring country within the borders of South Africa	

16. Write a paragraph to describe the picture below.

- Look at the picture below.
- Write a paragraph of SIX sentences.
- Describe what you think is happening in the picture.
- Write your paragraph as a story.
- Marks will be given for content and use of language.

Punctuation, spelling and grammar should be used correctly.



Appendix E: Common Errors in the Standardised Test

The are hope and the are dnseing and the are
having the own buks and the seging the own seg and
that segs is nis and the cuming to school and the
have there own school uenefem and the own school
shuss and the tobs have et own dukg and the
tots is dnse^{eng} and seging the nis segs with the uths

The pond beam from so School and the ~~and~~
happy it is friday and to mary it's not school
and das seldrag the to mary we a gear
no wa we engaw nto ply the o wall day and
to mary a get to rest a wadap 1st harr tik-seget
and das desing the a t one dring a chilibrother

The Children are going to school. The mbi is
happy. Musa is have in a hand a book.
They a faning ver fast. Thandi have a bag
on his hand. John is ha jumping with
Apple in his hand.

The girls and boys are jumping.

The boy is holding an apple.

The one girl is holding a book.

The other girl is holding book.

The boy is crowing the book

The boy is holding the book

to say they are jumping and screaming
and singing jumping up and down
bouncing their book down shaking their
hair going on they singing going
like they crazy and bawling singing
♪ Ann♪ Ann♪ Ann♪ Ann♪ Ann is unhappy
at she not with them and she
miss them she don't want to
be alone again she have lost mane
but for friend she can't lose
meaning I really miss you guys

four children and a totise totise totise.

there are four children that is happy.

and the totise is so happy.

they are going to school.

and the the totise is going to school.

and they love school.

and they love playing outside.

15. Read the paragraph below and then complete the table using the information from the paragraph.

South Africa is a country which is found on the continent of Africa. There are nine provinces in South Africa. Gauteng is the smallest province and the Northern Cape the biggest province. The president of our country is Mr Jacob Zuma. Eleven official languages are spoken in South Africa. Lesotho is a neighbouring country within the borders of South Africa. The cold Atlantic Ocean is found on the west coast and the Indian Ocean is on the east coast of South Africa. South Africans are known as the Rainbow Nation.



A	The number of provinces in South Africa	9
B	The smallest province in South Africa	Gauteng
C	The president of South Africa	Mr Jacob Zuma
D	A neighbouring country within the borders of South Africa	Lesotho

10

9. Rewrite the following sentences in the past tense.

9.1 The three children ride on a skateboard.

Three children clasp on the skateboard

9.2 Afterwards Anne offers them cake and juice.

Afterward Anne invited

9. Rewrite the following sentences in the past tense.

9.1 The three children ride on a skateboard.

John • Musa • and Thembi

9.2 Afterwards Anne offers them cake and juice.

took turns skating up and down

12. Rewrite the sentence below from Indirect Speech into Direct Speech.
Punctuate the sentence correctly.

Anne said that she was sad.

Anne was ^{heart - sad.} ~~sad~~

12. Rewrite the sentence below from Indirect Speech into Direct Speech.
Punctuate the sentence correctly.

Anne said that she was sad.

The cloud sad day gow in to the shop

Circle the letter of the correct answer in Questions 1 to 4.

1. What kind of a friend was Anne in the beginning, according to the text?
- A Generous and kind
 - B Nasty and unkind
 - C Friendly and unselfish
 - D Rude and cruel
- (1)
2. Where did Anne live? In a ...
- A small quiet village.
 - B busy road near the sea.
 - C beautiful neighbourhood.
 - D tall block of flats in town.
- (1)
3. When did Anne's friends visit her?
- A One sunny Saturday afternoon
 - B One cold Saturday evening
 - C One windy Saturday morning
 - D One afternoon after school
- (1)
4. How did Anne's friends make her aware of what she was doing wrong?
- A They talked to her about sharing.
 - B They wanted to play with her toys.
 - C They bought her a Christmas present.
 - D They made her feel left out.
- (1)

Appendix F: Observation Sheet

School: 1 / 2

Date: 2 August 2013

Subject: English home language

Class: 4S

Number of learners: 32

<p>Seating arrangement: rows</p>	
<p>Teaching Method/Strategies/ Educator activities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Educator dictates 12 spelling words to learners(usually starts lesson on Fridays with spelling test) • Collects spelling tests • Starts with poetry • Reads & discusses poem with learners • Educator starts lesson on “Tenses”. • Interacts with class throughout lesson. • Hands out work sheet on tenses, explains how learners should complete activity • Explains homework activity 	<p>Learner activities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learners write down spelling words • One learner recites poem- guided by educator on intonation, facial expression, hand gestures • Learners take part in discussion on “tenses” • Complete written activity • Indicate homework activity in homework booklet. • Learners work individually- no peer or cooperative groups for this particular lesson • All learners in class complete the same activity. No differentiation evident
<p>Resources used:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Black board • Text books 	<p>Learner responses:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Majority of learners in class participate by raising hands to answer questions • Responds enthusiastically • Very confident responses

<p>Learning support/ Inclusive practices:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Educator reads out words in contextual sentences. • Educator moves around to check learners' work progress • Not much time spent in giving individual support- one period only 30 minutes long. 	<p>Assessment methods and Instruments:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Form: Test • Method: Educator assessment • Tool: Memorandum
<p>Classroom management & discipline:</p> <p>Very good classroom management and control. Learners well disciplined</p>	<p>Enrichment activities:</p> <p>None evident</p>
<p>Educator's LoLT proficiency:</p> <p>Very good. Excellent pronunciation</p>	

Appendix G: Learners' Gender, Home language & Test Results

	School			
	School 2		School 1	
<u>GENDER</u>	Row %	N	Row %	N
F	50.43%	58	49.57%	57
M	46.90%	53	53.10%	60
<u>HOME LANGUAGE</u>				
AFRIKAANS	22.22%	8	77.78%	28
ENGLISH	62.50%	60	37.50%	36
SEPEDI	15.00%	3	85.00%	17
SESOTHO	75.00%	15	25.00%	5
SETSWANA	33.33%	1	66.67%	2
TSONGA	50.00%	1	50.00%	1
VENDA	0.00%	0	100.00%	2
XHOSA	37.50%	6	62.50%	10
ZULU	51.52%	17	48.48%	16
<u>PASS/FAILURE RATES</u>				
PASS	76.99%	87	23.01%	26
FAIL	20.87%	24	79.13%	91

Appendix H: Summary of Results of the Educator Questionnaire

	School			
	School 1		School 2	
	Row %	N	Row %	N
A1. Home Language				
English	25.00%	2	75.00%	6
Afrikaans	57.14%	8	42.86%	6
isiXhosa	100.00%	1	0.00%	0
isiZulu	100.00%	2	0.00%	0
sePedi	100.00%	1	0.00%	0
A2. Gender				
Male	66.67%	2	33.33%	1
Female	52.17%	12	47.83%	11
A3. Teaching experience				
< 5 years	0.00%	0	100.00%	1
5-10 years	83.33%	5	16.67%	1
10-15 years	71.43%	5	28.57%	2
15-20 years	25.00%	1	75.00%	3
20+ years	37.50%	3	62.50%	5
A4. Learning areas				
Eng	57.14%	4	42.86%	3
Afr	66.67%	4	33.33%	2
Maths	0.00%	0	100.00%	3
NS	66.67%	2	33.33%	1

	School			
	School 1		School 2	
SS	50.00%	1	50.00%	1
EMS	50.00%	1	50.00%	1
A&C	100.00%	1	0.00%	0
Tech	0.00%	0	100.00%	1
A4.2 Learning areas				
NS	0.00%	0	100.00%	2
SS	66.67%	2	33.33%	1
EMS	60.00%	3	40.00%	2
LO	50.00%	2	50.00%	2
A&C	0.00%	0	100.00%	2
Tech	100.00%	2	0.00%	0
A5.1 Grade/s				
Grade 4	60.00%	6	40.00%	4
Grade 5	44.44%	4	55.56%	5
Grade 6	50.00%	3	50.00%	3
A5.2 Grade/s				
Grade 5	100.00%	4	0.00%	0
Grade 6	25.00%	1	75.00%	3
B1 Inclusion				
1	60.00%	3	40.00%	2
3	50.00%	10	50.00%	10
B2 Learning support				
2	56.52%	13	43.48%	10
3	33.33%	1	66.67%	2

	School			
	School 1		School 2	
B3 Barriers to learning				
1	55.56%	10	44.44%	8
2	57.14%	4	42.86%	3
3	0.00%	0	100.00%	1
B4 Curriculum differentiation				
11. Creating a new curriculum	0.00%	0	100.00%	2
2 Adapting the learning and teaching environment to improve a learner's performance	0.00%	0	100.00%	1
3 Adapting the learning & teaching environment, teaching and learning techniques, teaching and learning support materials to improve a learner's performance	63.64%	14	36.36%	8
4 Other	0.00%	0	100.00%	1
B5 Cooperative learning				
1	66.67%	4	33.33%	2
2	50.00%	9	50.00%	9
3	100.00%	1	0.00%	0
4	0.00%	0	100.00%	1
C1 Learning support provided				
Yes	52.00%	13	48.00%	12
No	100.00%	1	0.00%	0
C2 When learners with barrier to LoLT are identified				
At registration	66.67%	2	33.33%	1
As soon as academic year commences	47.06%	8	52.94%	9

	School			
	School 1		School 2	
After the formal assessment tasks	66.67%	4	33.33%	2
C3 How learners with barrier to LoLT are identified				
Observation in class	75.00%	3	25.00%	1
Curriculum based tests	100.00%	1	0.00%	0
All of the above	47.62%	10	52.38%	11
C4 Individual support programmes designed?				
Yes	44.44%	8	55.56%	10
No	75.00%	6	25.00%	2
C6 Support for learners with barriers to LoLT during lessons				
Yes	47.83%	11	52.17%	12
No	100.00%	3	0.00%	0
C7 If not during lessons, when is support provided?				
After school	50.00%	1	50.00%	1
During intervals	100.00%	1	0.00%	0
Periods specifically allocated	100.00%	2	0.00%	0
C8 Hours spent on supporting learners with barriers to LoLT				
< 1 hour	57.14%	4	42.86%	3
1-2 hours	42.86%	6	57.14%	8
2-3 hours	80.00%	4	20.00%	1
D1 A barrier to English as LoLT is too difficult to overcome in a mainstream class	Row %	N	Row %	N
Strongly Disagree	50.00%	1	50.00%	1
Disagree	55.56%	5	44.44%	4
Agree	28.57%	2	71.43%	5
Strongly Agree	71.43%	5	28.57%	2

	School			
	School 1		School 2	
D2 Class size affects learning support in a mainstream class				
Agree	50.00%	4	50.00%	4
Strongly Agree	52.94%	9	47.06%	8
D3 It is more difficult to teach learners whose home language is not English				
Strongly Disagree	100.00%	1	0.00%	0
Disagree	71.43%	5	28.57%	2
Agree	33.33%	4	66.67%	8
Strongly Agree	66.67%	4	33.33%	2
D4 Learners not proficient in English experience difficulty in most learning areas				
Strongly Disagree	100.00%	1	0.00%	0
Disagree	100.00%	1	0.00%	0
Agree	38.46%	5	61.54%	8
Strongly Agree	63.64%	7	36.36%	4
D5 I prepare all lessons in the same way, regardless of whether there are learners in need of support				
Strongly Disagree	62.50%	5	37.50%	3
Disagree	42.86%	6	57.14%	8
Agree	75.00%	3	25.00%	1
D6. Inclusive practises can combat/reduce impact of barriers to LoLT				
Strongly Disagree	0.00%	0	100.00%	1
Disagree	40.00%	2	60.00%	3
Agree	62.50%	10	37.50%	6
Strongly Agree	100.00%	2	0.00%	0
Undecided	0.00%	0	100.00%	2

	School			
	School 1		School 2	
D7 I have knowledge on adapting assessment methods to cater for learners with a barrier to English as LoLT				
Disagree	50.00%	2	50.00%	2
Agree	57.14%	8	42.86%	6
Strongly Agree	60.00%	3	40.00%	2
Undecided	33.33%	1	66.67%	2
D8. I employ different teaching styles to support learners who experience a barrier to the LoLT				
Disagree	100.00%	1	0.00%	0
Agree	38.46%	5	61.54%	8
Strongly Agree	72.73%	8	27.27%	3
Undecided	0.00%	0	100.00%	1
D9 Our School Based Support Team offers effective assistance to educators to support learners who experience a barrier to the LoLT				
Strongly Disagree	66.67%	2	33.33%	1
Disagree	100.00%	3	0.00%	0
Agree	46.67%	7	53.33%	8
Strongly Agree	33.33%	1	66.67%	2
Undecided	0.00%	0	100.00%	1
D10 I do get enough assistance from the district support team to cope with learners who experience a barrier to LoLT				
Strongly Disagree	70.00%	7	30.00%	3
Disagree	40.00%	4	60.00%	6
Agree	0.00%	0	100.00%	2
Strongly Agree	100.00%	2	0.00%	0

	School			
	School 1		School 2	
Undecided	0.00%	0	100.00%	1
D11 I prefer not to have learners with a Barrier to LoLT in my classes				
Strongly Disagree	75.00%	3	25.00%	1
Disagree	83.33%	5	16.67%	1
Agree	25.00%	2	75.00%	6
Strongly Agree	40.00%	2	60.00%	3
Undecided	66.67%	2	33.33%	1
D12. Learners with barriers to LoLT should be accommodated in special classes				
Strongly Disagree	0.00%	0	100.00%	1
Disagree	66.67%	4	33.33%	2
Agree	57.14%	4	42.86%	3
Strongly Agree	50.00%	5	50.00%	5
Undecided	50.00%	1	50.00%	1
D13 When the LoLT is not the learner's home language, it could become a serious barrier to learning				
Disagree	80.00%	4	20.00%	1
Agree	45.45%	5	54.55%	6
Strongly Agree	62.50%	5	37.50%	3
Undecided	0.00%	0	100.00%	2
D14 I am adequately trained to support learners who experience a barrier to English as LoLT				
Strongly Disagree	100.00%	2	0.00%	0
Disagree	50.00%	4	50.00%	4
Agree	60.00%	6	40.00%	4

	School			
	School 1		School 2	
Strongly Agree	25.00%	1	75.00%	3
Undecided	50.00%	1	50.00%	1
E1.1 Our SBST supports the teaching and learning process				
Strongly Disagree	0.00%	0	100.00%	1
Disagree	0.00%	0	100.00%	1
Agree	64.29%	9	35.71%	5
Strongly Agree	50.00%	5	50.00%	5
E1.2 Our SBST identifies learner, educator and school needs				
Strongly Disagree	0.00%	0	100.00%	1
Disagree	100.00%	1	0.00%	0
Agree	53.85%	7	46.15%	6
Strongly Agree	54.55%	6	45.45%	5
E1.3 Our SBST develops resource networks				
Strongly Disagree	0.00%	0	100.00%	1
Disagree	100.00%	1	0.00%	0
Agree	35.71%	5	64.29%	9
Strongly Agree	75.00%	6	25.00%	2
Undecided	100.00%	1	0.00%	0
E1.4 Our SBST identifies and discusses educator development				
Strongly Disagree	50.00%	1	50.00%	1
Disagree	100.00%	1	0.00%	0
Agree	53.33%	8	46.67%	7
Strongly Agree	50.00%	4	50.00%	4
E1.5 Our SBST establishes networks with learners, staff and parents				

	School			
	School 1		School 2	
Disagree	100.00%	2	0.00%	0
Agree	43.75%	7	56.25%	9
Strongly Agree	57.14%	4	42.86%	3
E1.6 Our SBST does references for the district based support team				
Disagree	50.00%	1	50.00%	1
Agree	50.00%	7	50.00%	7
Strongly Agree	55.56%	5	44.44%	4
Undecided	100.00%	1	0.00%	0
E1.7 Our SBST assists teachers to plan intervention strategies to support learners who experience barriers to learning				
Agree	53.85%	7	46.15%	6
Strongly Agree	53.85%	7	46.15%	6
E1.8 Our SBST plans & conducts developmental workshops for educators				
Strongly Disagree	100.00%	1	0.00%	0
Disagree	60.00%	3	40.00%	2
Agree	44.44%	4	55.56%	5
Strongly Agree	60.00%	6	40.00%	4
Undecided	0.00%	0	100.00%	1
E2 Key purposes of District-Based Support Team (DBST)				
E2.1 To support all learners, educators and the system as a whole in overcoming barriers so that the full range of learning needs can be met	Row %	N	Row %	N
Agree	66.67%	6	33.33%	3
Strongly Agree	47.06%	8	52.94%	9
E2.2 Assist educators to adapt their teaching methods & assessment of learning				

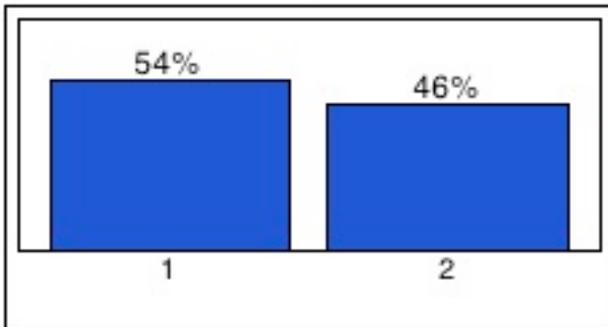
	School			
	School 1		School 2	
Disagree	100.00%	2	0.00%	0
Agree	33.33%	2	66.67%	4
Strongly Agree	58.82%	10	41.18%	7
Undecided	0.00%	0	100.00%	1
E2.3 To provide illustrative learning programmes, learning support materials & assessment instruments				
Disagree	100.00%	1	0.00%	0
Agree	66.67%	6	33.33%	3
Strongly Agree	42.86%	6	57.14%	8
Undecided	0.00%	0	100.00%	1
E2.4 Evaluate effectiveness of support programmes & suggest modifications				
Disagree	100.00%	1	0.00%	0
Agree	50.00%	5	50.00%	5
Strongly Agree	57.14%	8	42.86%	6
Undecided	0.00%	0	100.00%	1
E2.5 Link schools with formal & informal support systems in the community				
Disagree	50.00%	1	50.00%	1
Agree	63.64%	7	36.36%	4
Strongly Agree	50.00%	6	50.00%	6
Undecided	0.00%	0	100.00%	1
F1.1 Educator are primarily responsible for implementing support programmes				
Strongly Disagree	50.00%	1	50.00%	1
Disagree	25.00%	1	75.00%	3
Agree	63.64%	7	36.36%	4

	School			
	School 1		School 2	
Strongly Agree	55.56%	5	44.44%	4
F2. What constrains your efforts to assist learners with a barrier to LoLT? You can Select more than one				
F2.1 Learning support materials	57.14%	8	42.86%	6
F2.2 Financial resources	87.50%	7	12.50%	1
F2.3 School Policy	0.00%	0	100.00%	2
F2.4 My Knowledge and training	80.00%	4	20.00%	1
F2.5 Teacher learner ratio	50.00%	10	50.00%	10
F2.6 Parental involvement	54.55%	12	45.45%	10
F2.7 Other	0.00%	0	100.00%	1

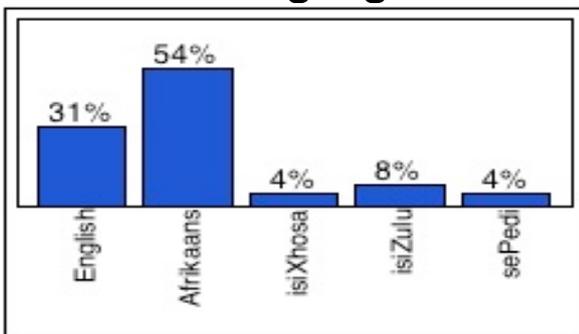
Appendix I: Graphical representation of Educator Questionnaire distribution & outcomes

NB: The graphs in this appendix represent the responses to their corresponding numbers in the Educator Questionnaire

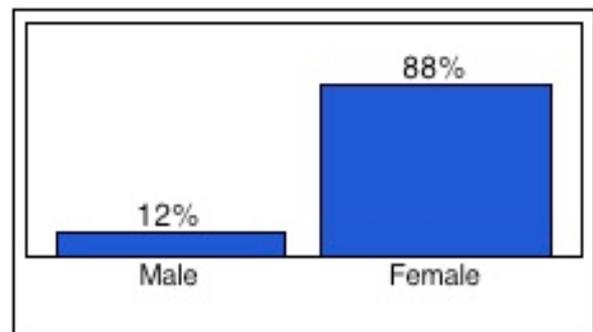
Respondents by School



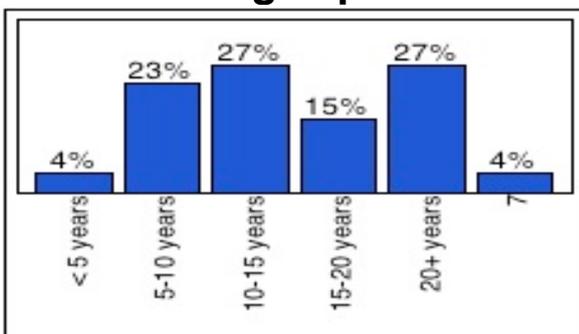
A1 Home Language



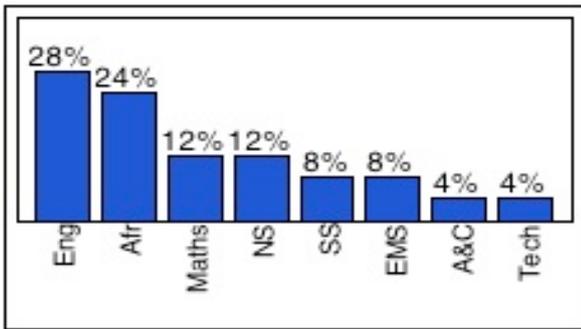
A2 Gender



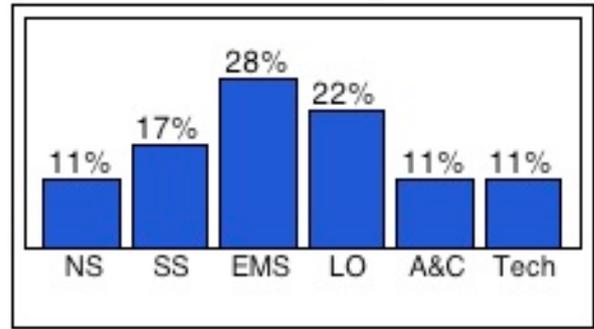
A3 Teaching experience



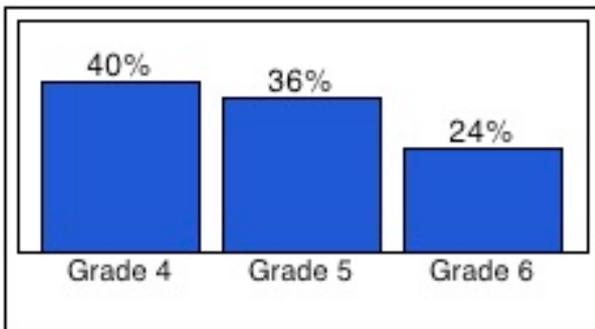
A4.1 Learning areas



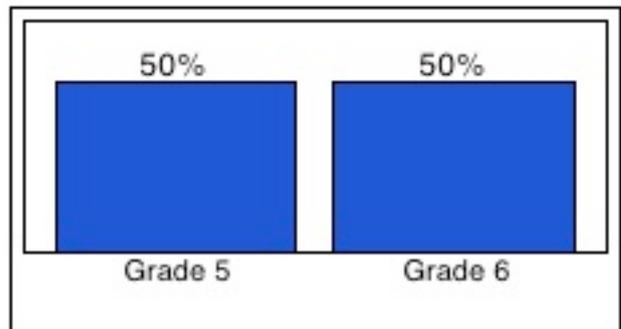
A4.2 Learning areas



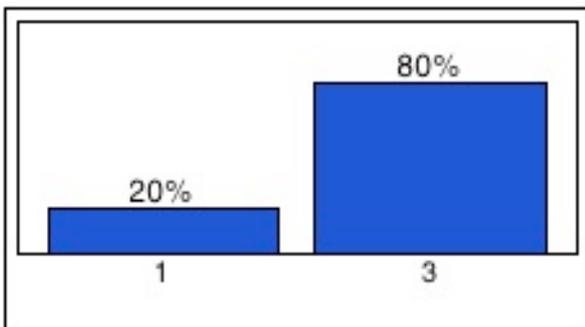
A5.1 Grade/s



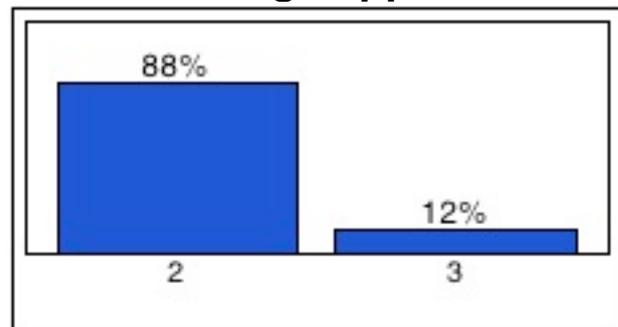
A5.2 Grade/s



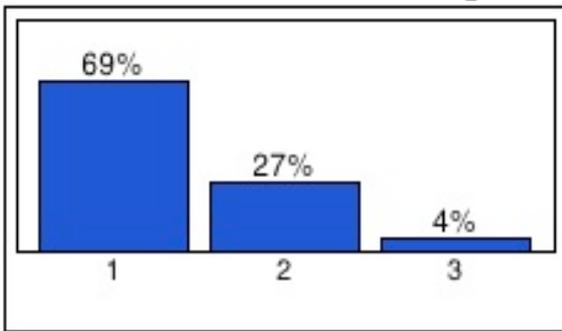
B1 Inclusion



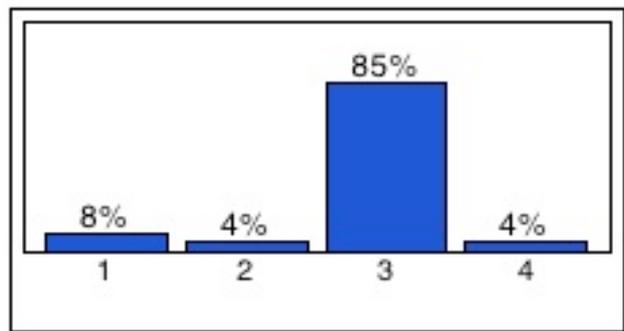
B2 Learning support



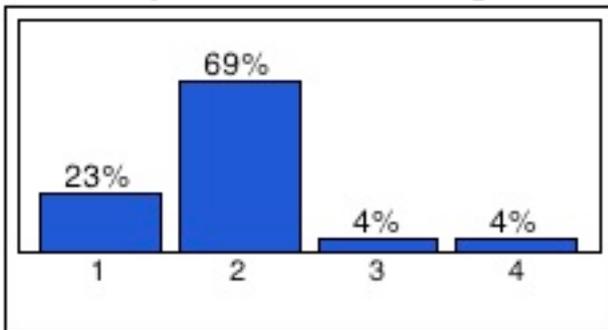
B3 Barriers to learning



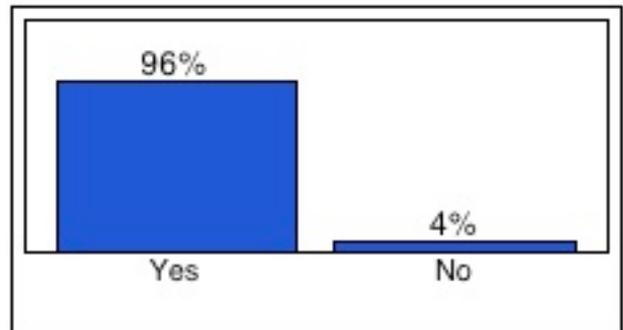
B4 Curriculum differentiation



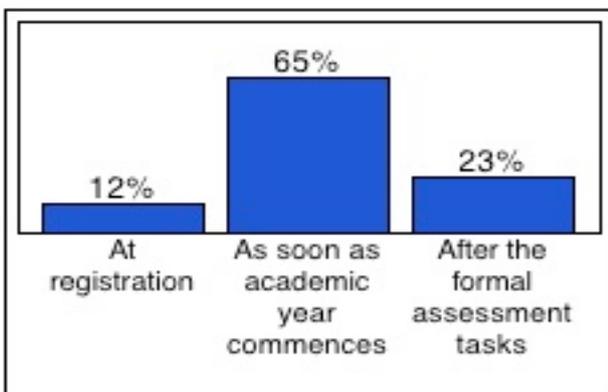
B5 Cooperative learning



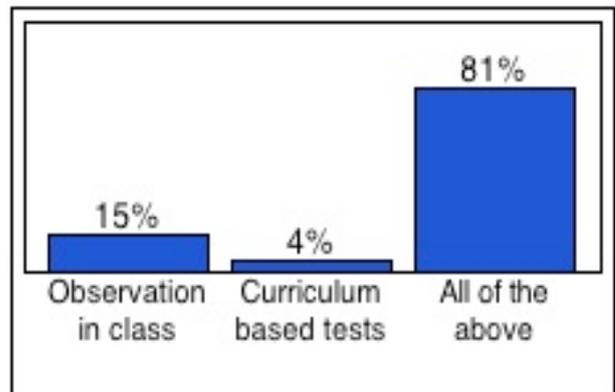
C1



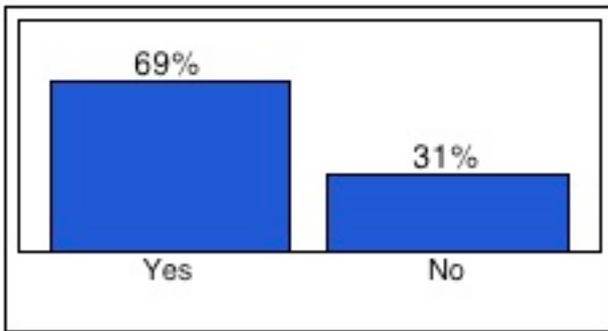
C2



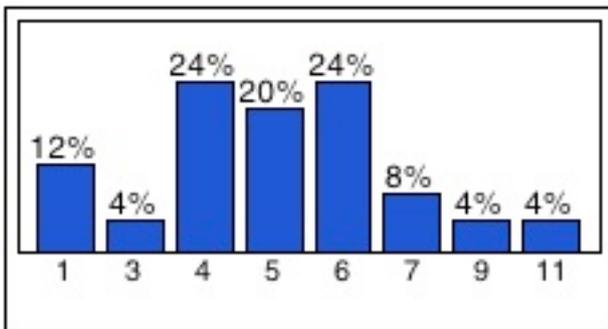
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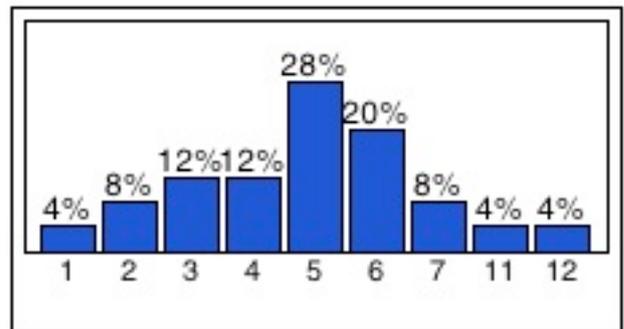
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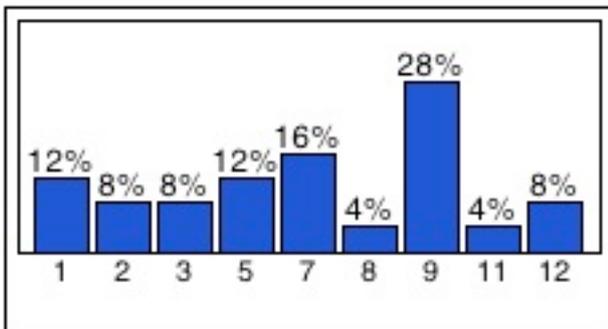
C5.1



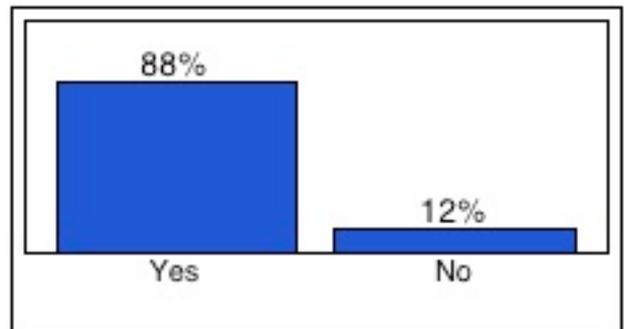
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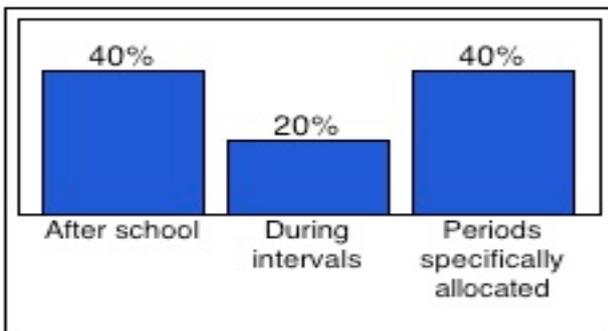
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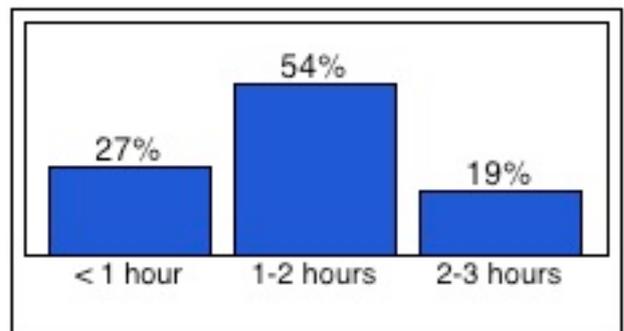
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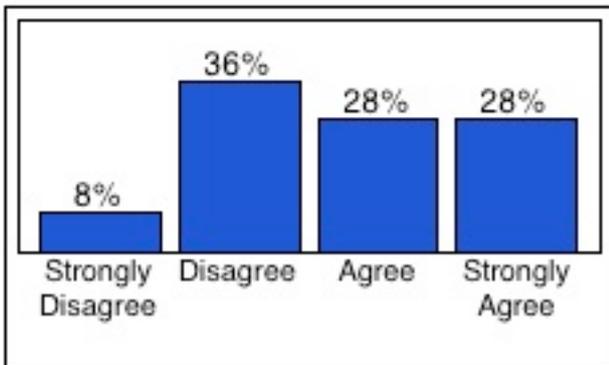
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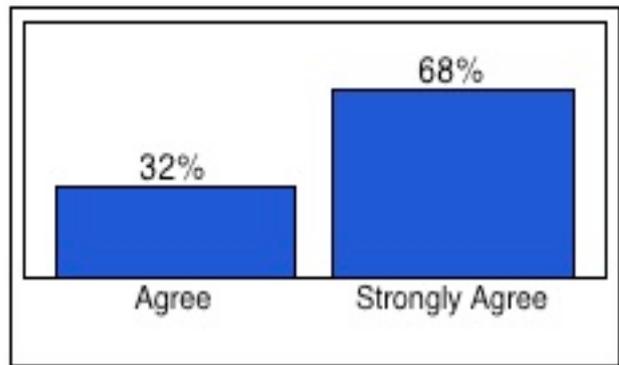
C8



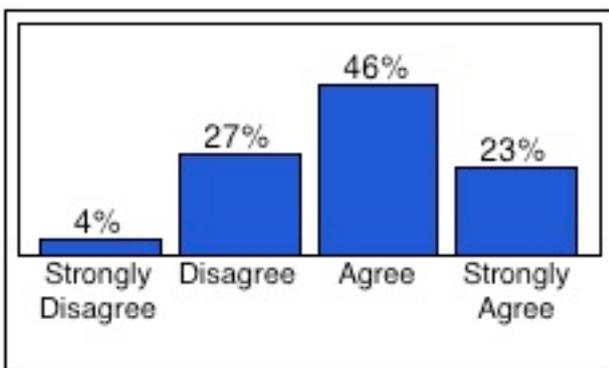
D1



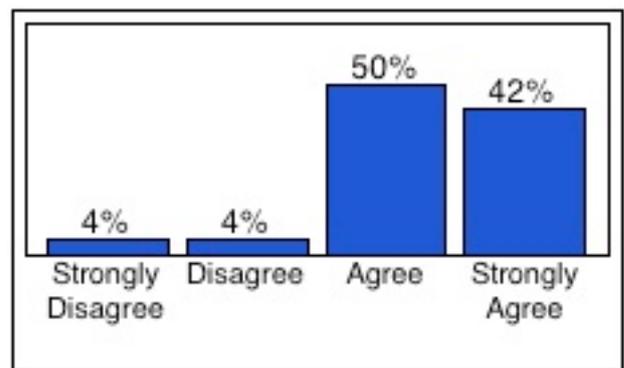
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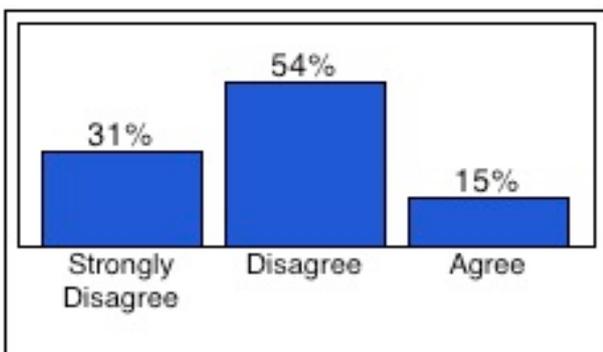
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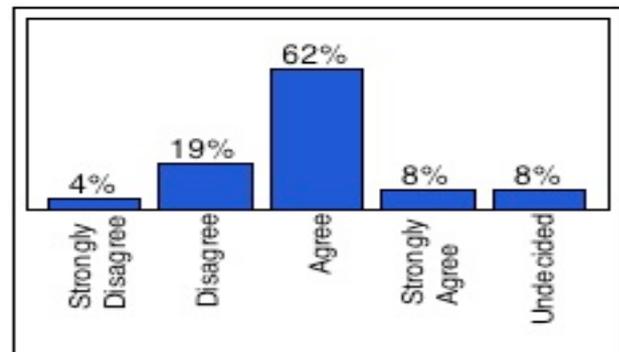
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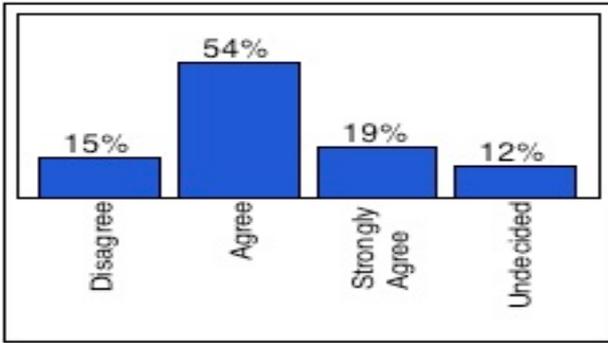
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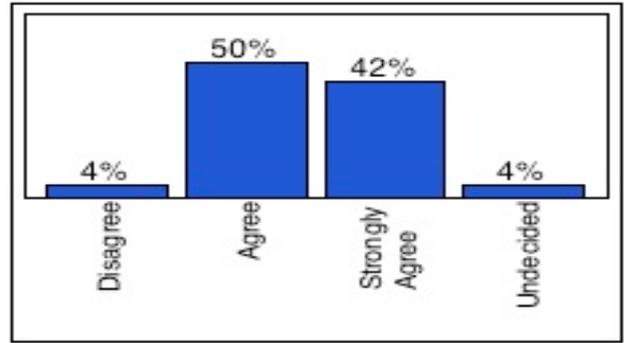
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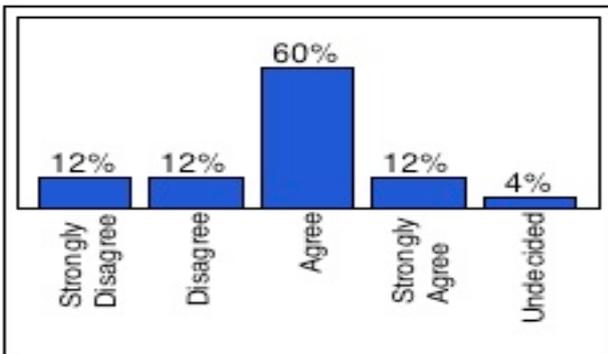
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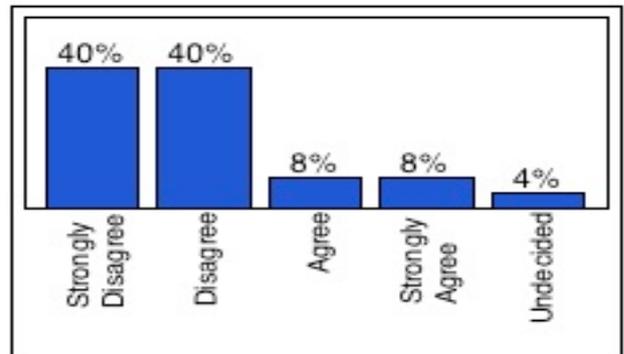
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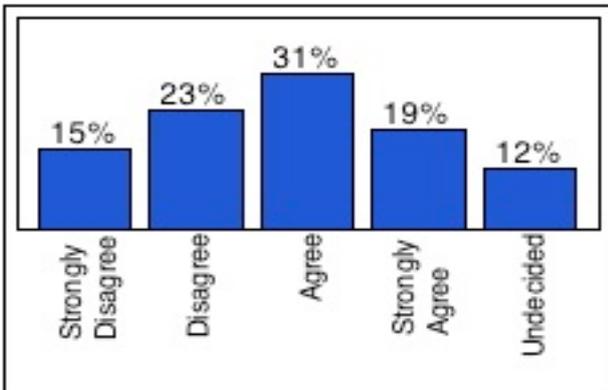
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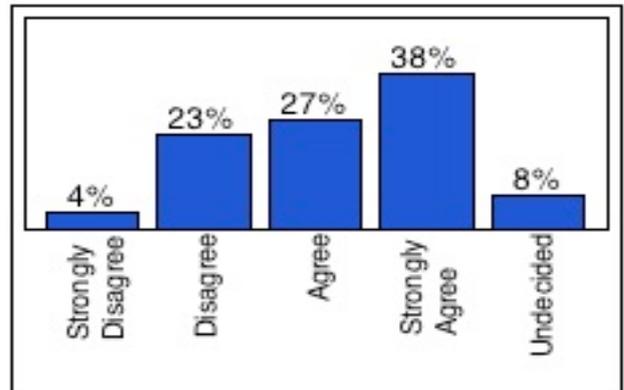
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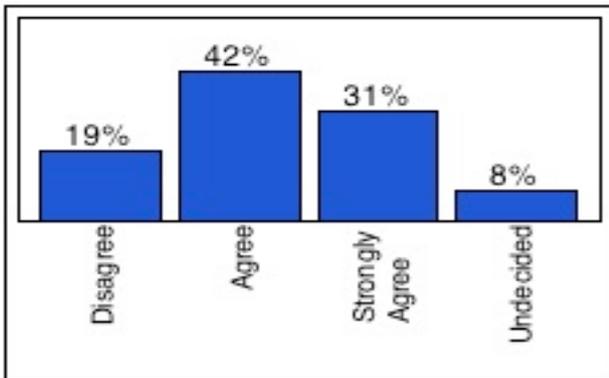
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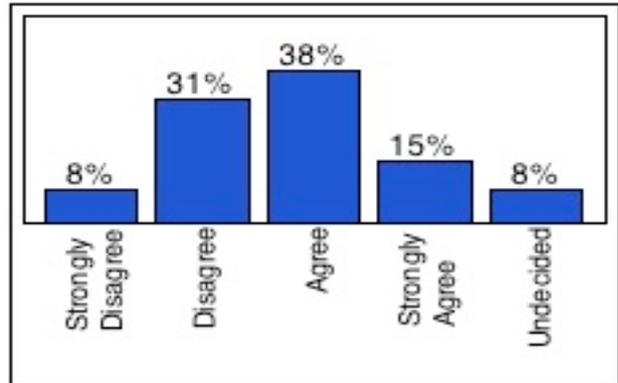
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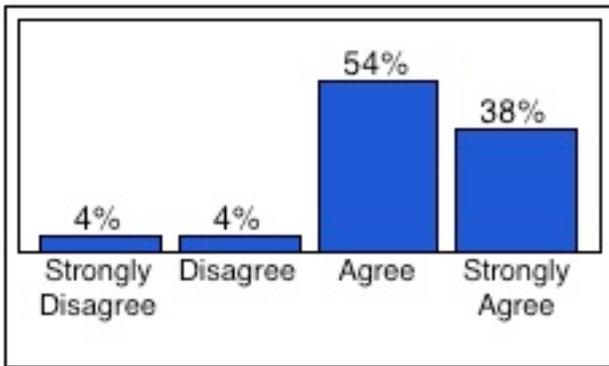
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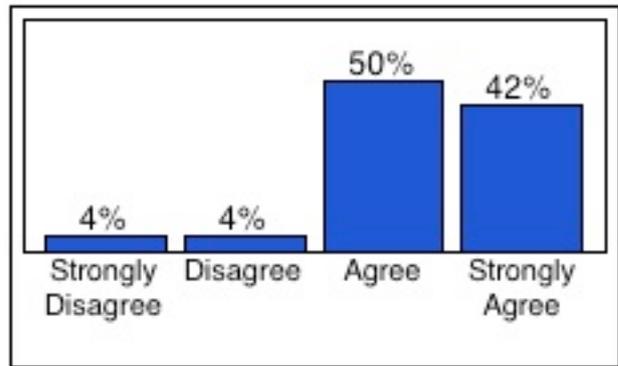
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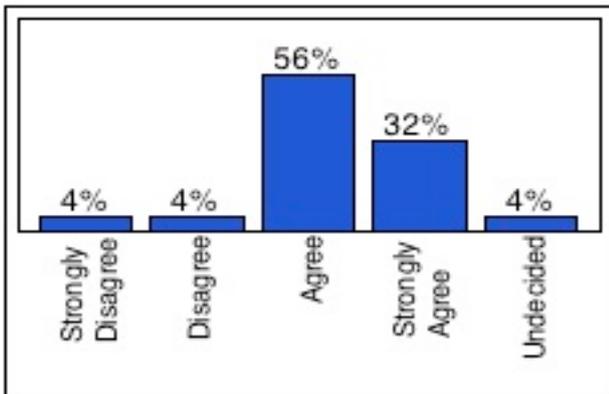
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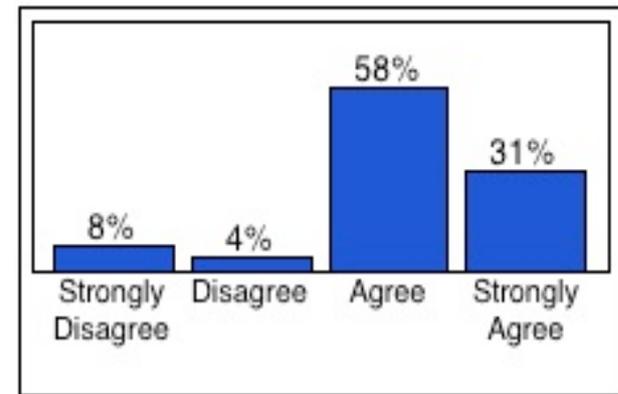
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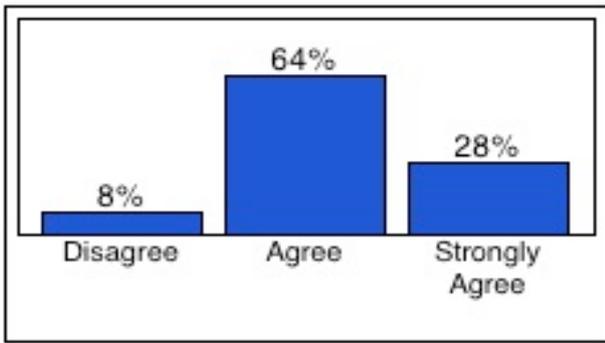
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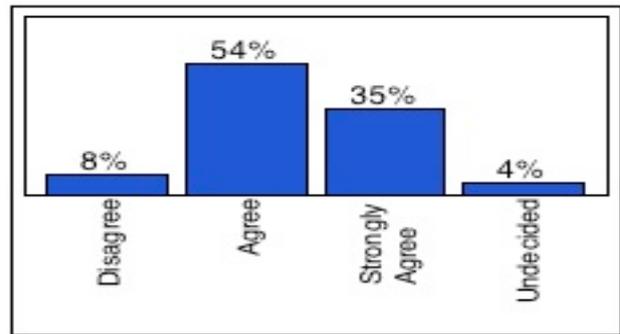
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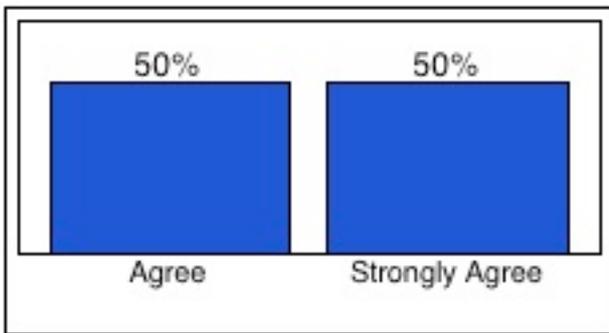
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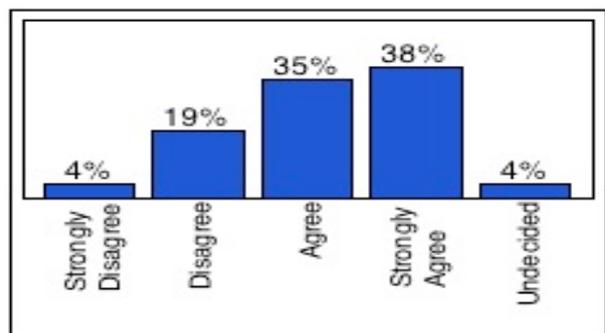
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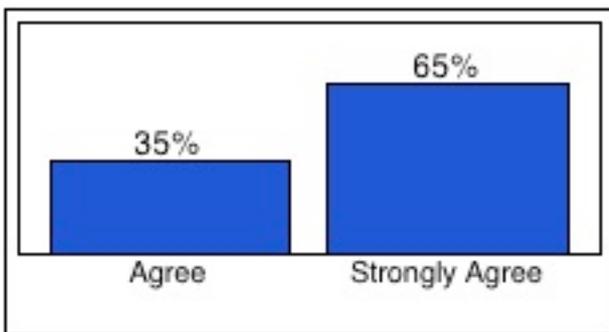
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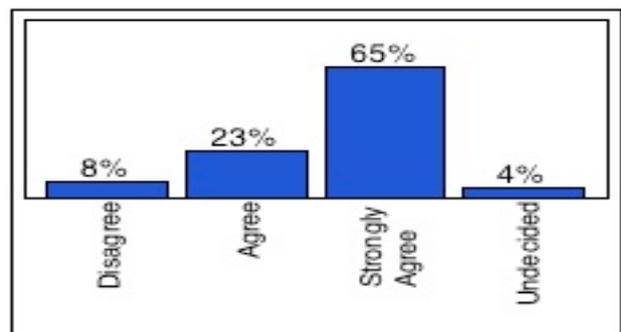
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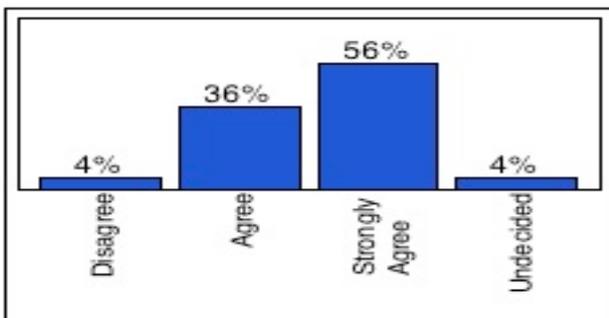
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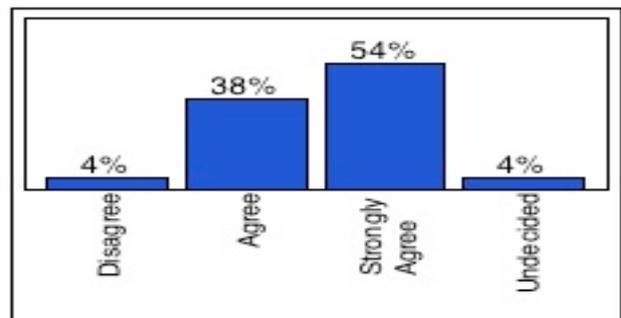
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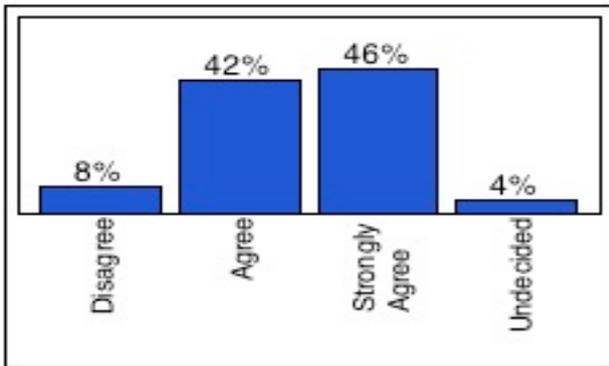
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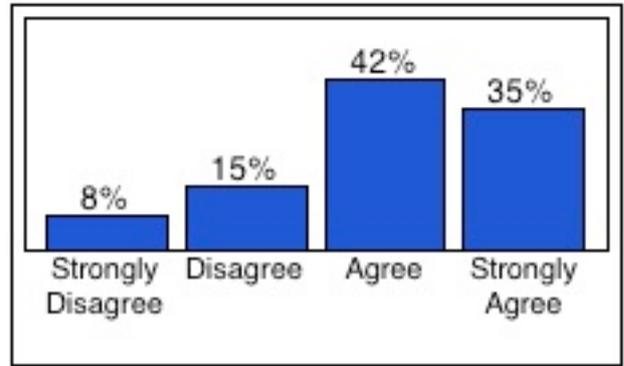
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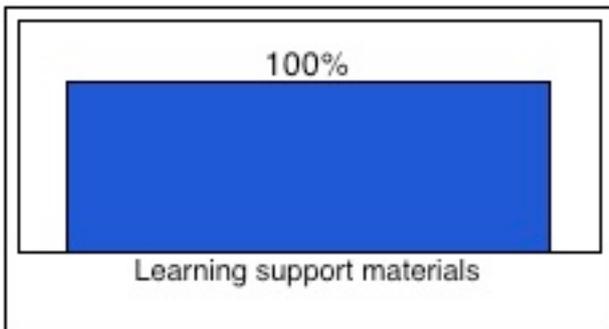
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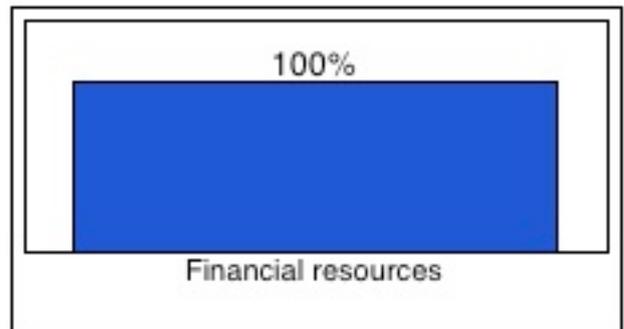
F1.1



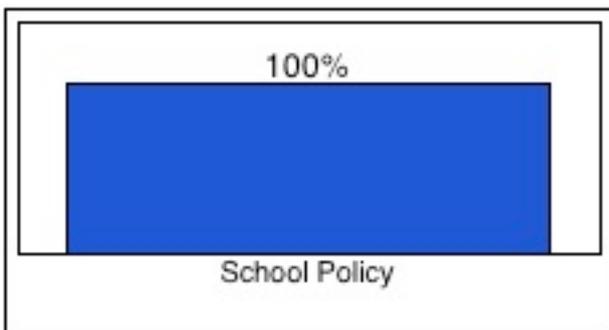
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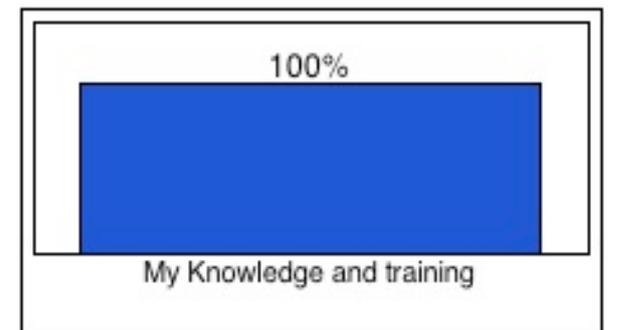
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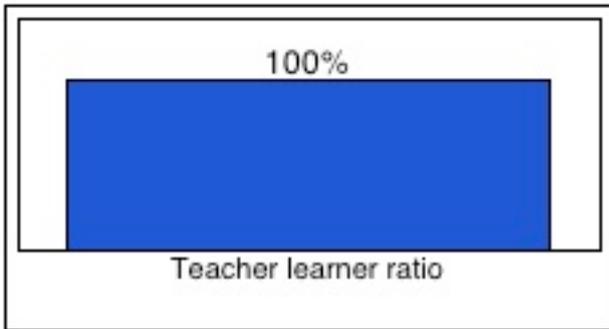
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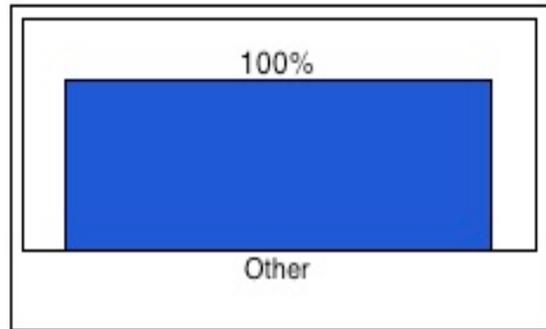
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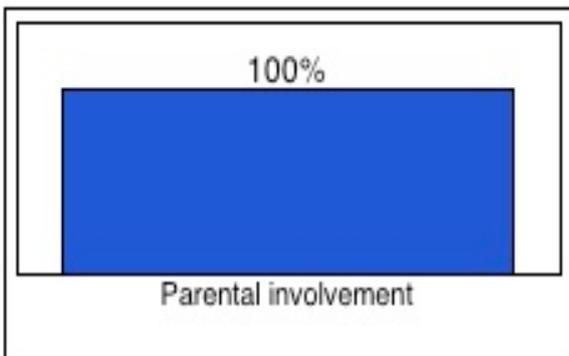
F2.5



F2.6



F2.7



Appendix J: Letter of Permission - GDEⁱ

1



Umyango WezeMfundo
Department of Education

Lefapha la Thuto
Departement Van Onderwys

EKURHULENI SOUTH DISTRICT

Enquiries: BM Mtshali

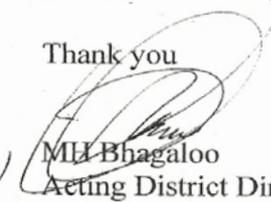
Tel No: 011 389 6236

To: The principal
..... Primary School
Boksburg

Re: Request to do research

Permission is hereby given for Ms Mackay to do research at

Thank you


M.H. Bhagaloo
Acting District Director

OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR

Telephone Number: 011 389 6000

Website: www.education.gpg.gov.za
First Floor
6 Old Vereeniging Road
Airode Alberton

Fax Number: 011 864 6142

ⁱThe school names have been omitted for reasons of confidentiality. The original letter is available.