

**TEACHER SUPPORT IN THE INCLUSIVE PRIMARY SCHOOL: ADDRESSING  
BARRIERS TO LEARNING IN THE CLASSROOM**

**by**

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## DECLARATION

I declare that: "TEACHER SUPPORT IN THE INCLUSIVE PRIMARY SCHOOL: ADDRESSING BARRIERS TO LEARNING IN THE CLASSROOM" is my own work and all the sources used have been acknowledged.

.....

**S.M. MATLALA**

.....

**DATE**

## **DEDICATION**

This work is dedicated to my children

Rasodi Sefako, Thato Molau and Kgahliso Mamolapi

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

### **The Lord is my Shepherd**

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## ABSTRACT

The study, “Teacher support in the inclusive primary school: addressing barriers to learning in the classroom”, aims to investigate teacher support in addressing and reducing barriers to learning, particularly in primary school. The objective of the introduction of the Education White Paper 6 of 2001 was to ensure that learners with different learning needs are accommodated in ordinary or mainstream schools, with the support of the District-Based Support Team (DBST) and the School-Based Support Team (SBST). Although the schools have established a team to support teachers to address barriers to learning in the class, it seems teachers are not getting the expected support from the SBST. Therefore, an investigation on teacher support addressing barriers to learning was explored.

This qualitative study employed interviews, observations and document analysis as methods of data collection. The study was collected in one primary school situated in an informal settlement in Tshwane South District in Gauteng, with eight teachers from Grade 1 to 7 as participants. Creswell’s method of data analysis was adopted, and the findings revealed that the following were factors affecting teachers when addressing barriers to learning: challenges with diverse-needs learners, systemic challenges and challenges of teacher support. Recommendations from the study were given. Key topics for future research are regarding the role of the SBST and DBST in supporting teachers, teachers’ intervention strategies, training, monitoring and evaluation, and teacher development.

**Keywords:** Inclusive Education, Barriers to learning, Support, Learners, Teachers, Classroom, School Based Support Team, District Based Support Team and Department of Education

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## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

|        |  |
|--------|--|
| ANA    | Annual National Assessment                                     |
| CAPS   | Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statements                    |
| DBST   | District-Based Support Team                                    |
| DoE    | Department of Education  |
| FP     | Foundation Phase   |
| FSS    | Full-Service School  |
| GDE    | Gauteng Department of Education                                |
| GPLMS  | Gauteng Primary Literacy and Mathematics Strategy              |
| HoD    | Head of Department   |
| IE     | Inclusive Education  |
| IEP    | Individual Education Plan                                      |
| ISP    | Individual Support Plan  |
| LSE    | Learning Support Educator                                      |
| LTSM   | Learning and Teaching Support Material                         |
| NCESS  | National Committee on Education Support Service                |
| NCSNET | National Commission on Special Needs in Education and Training |
| NDoE   | National Department of Education                               |

|        |   |
|--------|---|
| NGO    | Non-Governmental Organization   |
| OBE    | Outcomes-Based Education  |
| SASA   | South African Schools Act   |
| SBST   | School-Based Support Team   |
| SGB    | School Governing Body   |
| SIAS   | Screening Identification Assessment Support   |
| SMT    | School Management Team  |
| UNESCO | United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization                             |
| WP6    | White Paper 6 on Special Needs Education: Building an Inclusive Education and Training System |

## **CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION**

### **1.1. INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY**

The policy of inclusive education (IE) in Education White Paper 6: Special Needs Education: Building an Inclusive Education and Training System (WP6) (Department of Education (DoE) 2001:9) acknowledges that all children can learn, with support. The education system in South Africa prior to 1994, which enforced the segregation of learners on the basis of race, was extended to incorporate segregation on the basis of disability. The system separated disabled and non-disabled learners from accessing the same opportunities offered in education and denied learners from enjoying their schooling with their peers.

Education in South Africa has undergone numerous and radical changes since 1994. According to Landsberg, Kruger and Swart (2011:1), recognizing the rights of people with disabilities is enshrined in the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, No. 108 of (1996a), Section 29: (1) namely to dignity, equality and freedom as well as access to quality education.

The new approach to inclusive education arises out of the need for changes to be made to the provision of education that is responsive and sensitive to the diverse range of learning needs. Inclusive education was confirmed in Salamanca, Spain, from 7 to 10 June 1994, towards the objective of Education for All. Inclusive education will give every child the right to education as proclaimed in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. It will also oblige schools to accommodate all children regardless of their physical, intellectual, social, emotional, linguistic or other conditions (UNESCO 1994:6). The movement in the South African education system has raised doubts about the support of learners in the mainstream or ordinary schools.

The concern noted extends to how parents and the educational authorities were trying to revive the process of education, but with little success. The South African Constitution (Act 108 of 1996a) was founded on a democratic state and common citizenship based on the values of human dignity. The achievement of equality and the advancement of human rights and freedom (Section1a) values summons all people involved in the business of educating learners to take responsibility for ensuring that all learners, with or without disabilities, receive support in pursuit of optimum learning.

In October 1996, the Minister of Education in South Africa appointed a National Commission on Special Needs in Education and Training(NCSNET) and a National Committee on Education Support Service(NCESS) to investigate and make recommendations on all aspects of special needs, support, and education and training WP6 (DoE 2001:5). Findings of the above-mentioned Commission pointed out that specialized education and support had only been available for small groups of learners with disabilities within special schools and classes. The investigation further highlighted that the support services were well developed to serve whites, coloureds and Indians but were less developed in serving black learners (DoE2001:5). Kruger *et al.* (2011:17) support these findings, when stating, “a large portion of learners, specifically those experiencing barriers to learning, were not only discriminated against along racial lines, but also by policy and legislation that separated mainstream from those identified as learners with special educational needs”. However, the South African School Act (SASA), No 84 of (1996b) made provision for compulsory education for all learners in public schools.

Against this background, the purpose of this study was to explore the current situation regarding education for all and the support for teachers in addressing learning barriers in the classroom. According to WP6, an inclusive learning environment is a place in which learning and teaching take place in a supportive and accommodative manner. However, since the introduction of IE, teachers have been expected to accommodate these learners and support them. Therefore, the School-Based Support Team (SBST),

together with other stakeholders, has been mandated by the WP6 to empower and support teachers in addressing barriers to learning in the class. The researcher has, however, noted that some teachers are not properly supported to accommodate learners with barriers to learning. This was evident during a school visit as an Inclusion Facilitator. Teachers are in the centre of education, as they are in direct contact with learners in the classroom. The concerns raised included asking how school teachers can implement strategies for inclusive education if support is minimal. Support can be directed to all activities which increase the capacity of teachers to respond to diversity and which provide support for all learners with barriers to learning, thus helping make education for all a reality.

## **1.2. PROBLEM STATEMENT**

Education support services are under-resourced and unable to deal with the large number of learners in need – their barriers to learning are not being addressed (Mahlo 2011:8). Teachers at schools are supposed to support learners who are experiencing barriers to learning, but they seem not to be having the skills and the knowledge to do so. According to WP6, there should be SBSTs and District-Based Support Teams (DBSTs) that should be responsible for empowering teachers on how to address barriers to learning. Therefore, it was considered important to investigate teacher support in addressing and reducing barriers to learning, particularly in primary school.

### **1.3. RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

The problem investigated in this study is exploring the support provided to teachers in addressing barriers to learning. The specific research question or primary research question formulated to answer the research problem is:

- What type of support is available for teachers in addressing barriers to learning in the primary school classroom?

The following questions were posed to guide the study:

- What challenges are teachers experiencing in addressing barriers to learning in the classroom?
- What strategies are used to support learners experiencing barriers to learning in the classroom?

### **1.4. AIM OF THE STUDY**

Flowing from this aim, the study will pursue the following objectives:

- To investigate the type of support available for teachers in addressing barriers to learning in the classroom
- To identify the challenges faced by teachers when addressing barriers to learning in the classroom
- To find out the strategies that teachers are using to support learners experiencing barriers to learning in the classroom.



## **1.5. SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY**

The study has revealed that a skilled DBST should empower the SBST to provide knowledge to the teachers in order to address barriers to learning in class. Therefore, the significance of the study lays its provision for teachers and other parties' findings that can be used to seek corrective measures that can offer lasting solutions to the problem of lack of support to teachers in addressing barriers to learning in primary school. The study is aimed at adding value to the domain of inclusive education, especially to the support of teachers in primary schools. The study will also contribute to the knowledge base of available literature on teacher support in inclusive education. The study aims to recommend valuable guidelines to policymakers and educational planners to develop and/or improve the situation of teachers.

## **1.6. ASSUMPTIONS OF THE STUDY**

This study assumes that classroom teachers were not provided with enough support to help learners who were experiencing barriers to learning. Furthermore, teachers seem not to be provided with support from the SBST as mentioned in the White Paper 6 on Inclusive Education and Training.

## **1.7. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

McMillan and Schumacher (2001:63) describe appropriate research methods as methods that are reliable and valid for collecting data and analyzing it, particularly in research. The study sought to investigate teacher support in addressing and reducing barriers to learning, particularly in a primary school setting. The researcher aimed to understand people's perceptions, perspectives and understanding of a particular situation. The problem investigated in this study necessitated a qualitative research

because the researcher wished to understand the situation from the participant's perspective. A plan or a map for the process of finding solutions to a research problem is called research design (Merriam 1998:44). For the purpose of this study, a phenomenological design was undertaken, as primary school teachers' support was elicited, and the researcher wished to generate valuable guidelines to policymakers and educational planners to develop and/or improve the situation of teachers.

Purposeful sampling was applied to select participants who will provide the researcher with relevant information; eight teachers from one primary school were selected. Purposive sampling allows the researcher to choose a case because it illustrates some features or a process in which she is interested (Silverman 2000:104). It was assumed that these primary school teachers will yield the most relevant information about the topic under investigation.

Data collection is a vehicle through which researchers collect information to answer the research question and defend conclusions and recommendations based on the findings of the research (Mertens 1997: 285). Three methods of data collection were used, namely interviews, observations and document analysis. One-on-one interviews not exceeding one hour were conducted in English after working hours until data saturation was reached. The interviews were audio taped with the consent of the participants and transcribed by the researcher. Classroom observations were carried out during the researcher's visit as an Inclusive Education Specialist. The researcher wished to observe teachers interacting with learners experiencing barriers to learning in the classroom.

The researcher also looked at the verbal interaction of the teachers and the learners, especially learners experiencing barriers to learning. During the school visit, the following key documents were analysed: Gauteng Department of Education (GDE) 450 support form, and Individual Support Plans – this was done to check if teachers are providing support to learners with challenges. According to Maree (2010:99), data

analysis is based on an interpretive philosophy that aims at examining the symbolic content of qualitative data. Data was collected through interviews, observations and documents analysis. Creswell's method was used to find meanings and common themes that can be grouped into smaller units.

## **1.8. DEFINITIONS OF KEY TERMS**

The concepts that follow are important for the study and are defined below.

### **1.8.1. Inclusion**

“Inclusion is the process by which learners, especially those experiencing barriers to learning and development, have access to and participate in the general school system” (Mahlo 2011:15). The inclusion of learners with disabilities in mainstream schools and the commitment to Education for All was reaffirmed by the delegates of the World Conference on Special Needs Education in Salamanca, Spain from 7 to 10 June 1994. These delegates recognize the necessity and urgency of providing education for children with special educational needs within the regular education system. The inclusion recognizes the fundamental right to education which will give opportunities to all learners to achieve and maintain an acceptable level of learning. Inclusion, therefore, is about giving access, opportunities and accommodating the diverse needs of learners and provides continued support when needed.

### **1.8.2. Inclusive education**

According to Das, Das and Kattumuri (2013:40), many definitions of inclusive education have evolved throughout the world. According to United Nations Educational, Scientific,

and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) (1994:6), the guiding principle that informs the Framework for Action on Special Needs Education was that schools should accommodate all children regardless of their physical, intellectual, social or other conditions. Inclusive education is therefore seen as a way of accommodating, addressing and supporting the diverse needs of learners in the mainstream or ordinary school.

### **1.8.3. Support for learners**

Learners who experience barriers to learning require support to facilitate their access and participation in the general classroom (Walton 2006:7). According to Ainscow (2000:103), teachers have a primary responsibility of helping children to learn alongside their typically developing peers. An inclusive school enables education structures, systems and methodologies to meet the needs of all children experiencing barriers to learning in order to achieve their right to education. Das *et al.* (2013:103) highlight that “schools today should be creative and responsive places, where collaboration amongst teachers must be effective for problem-solving, shared learning and cooperative, welcoming”. However, the major challenges are the negative attitude towards the teacher’s shortage of resources and lack of training for handling diversity within the classroom (Das *et al.* 2013: VI).

### **1.8.4. Barriers to learning**

The term barriers to learning may refer to the difficulties and challenges that learners experience and that must be addressed so that learning can take place. Barriers can be located within the learner, the school, the system and within the broader community. Landsberg, Kruger and Nel (2005:363) stated that in almost all classes, there are

learners experiencing learning barriers. Some barriers were severe, while others were less severe. Although some learners are able to achieve certain outcomes in a certain period of time, others will require more time. Engelbrecht and Green (2001:28) state, “learning barriers should not be seen as residing only within the learner but equally, if not more, within the learning system itself”.

Often learners were faced with challenges in their learning process as a result of a range of experiences in their classroom, at home, in the community and in society. The joint report 1997 by NCSNET and NCESS refers to these challenges as ‘barriers to learning’ NCESS (DoE 1997). White Paper 6 envisages an education system that is accessible to all, irrespective of learning barriers. A collaborative approach was explored as a way of strengthening the support for teachers in dealing with the challenges of addressing barriers to learning in the class.

#### **1.8.5. Collaboration**

Collaboration is defined as “a commitment to an integrated approach which draws on all relevant human resource to understand and address barriers to learning, this partnership will be important towards supporting teachers to address barriers to learning in the class”(Engelbrecht and Green2001:52). A community-based approach was seen as a central feature that will draw parents, volunteers, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), natural support systems and relevant departments in providing support to teachers. The involvement and utilization of professional support services from government departments, e.g. health, were critical towards the support of teachers and the success learners with barriers. Therefore, it was important that the DBST and the SBST facilitate a holistic understanding of challenges experienced by teachers.

It was important to acknowledge that in order to solve educational challenges, it is more likely that more than one professional can be involved. The researcher assumed that

teachers should establish and maintain effective working relationship with their colleagues, non-governmental organizations and other stakeholders, for example, the Department of Health, in particular, school nurses to screen learners' vision and hearing. This collaboration was mentioned in the Screening Identification Assessment and Support (SIAS) document. However, the study has revealed limitations that might be viewed from a different perspective.

### **1.9. LIMITATION OF THE STUDY**

The researcher has learned with great concern that the major issues for discussion cannot be gathered from all the schools in Tshwane South District in Gauteng. The limitation may be viewed from different angles. One primary school in Mamelodi East was involved, and the findings have limited information on how other schools in the same area are responding to teacher support in addressing barriers to learning in the class. A further limitation was the fact that the School Management Team (SMT) was not involved in the study. The results of the findings may not be generalized to all schools in Tshwane South District; however, they will serve as the basis for similar and larger studies in other schools.

### **1.10. OUTLINE OF THE STUDY**

**The study is outlined as follows:**

Chapter 1 – Introduction to the study

Chapter 2 – Literature review

Chapter 3 – Research methodology

Chapter 4 – Data presentation and analysis

Chapter 5 – Summary, recommendations and conclusion

### **1.11. CONCLUDING REMARKS**

This study has introduced the political changes in South Africa that have resulted in a new Constitution, grounded on the principles of democracy, human dignity, and equality and non-discrimination. This chapter has introduced the challenges of learners and teachers in an inclusive class. The issue of support to learners experiencing barriers to learning was highlighted as important towards achieving education for all. Different views on support and barriers to learning were explored from different authors. More literature relevant to the study will be introduced in the next chapter.

## **CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **2.1. INTRODUCTION**

The previous chapter provided a background to the study. This chapter investigates the views and perceptions of teachers in relation to the support that the SBST was providing to teachers in addressing barriers to learning in the classroom. Policy documents and other existing literature will be used to provide in-depth information about the function of the SBST in supporting teachers in the classroom and inclusion of learners in mainstream schools by providing them with extra support as required.

White Paper 6 on Inclusive Education (DoE 2001:11) put forward the view that inclusive education is about maximising the participation of all learners in the curricula of education and applying the relevant strategies to address learning barriers. The philosophy of inclusion was expanded in an influential document, the Salamanca Statement and the Framework for Action on Special Needs Education, adopted by the World Conference on Special Needs Education: Access and Equality, Salamanca, Spain, 7 to 10 June 1994, which helped to shift the focus of special education from integration to inclusion. This study therefore focuses on the support for teachers in addressing the challenges of learners experiencing barriers to learning in the class. The study investigates the type of support that was available for teachers. It further explored the challenges that teachers were experiencing in addressing barriers to learning and the strategies that teachers are using to support learners. However, the need for teachers to address barriers to learning is crucial. The National Department of Education (NDoE) has introduced an Annual National Assessment (ANA) as an intervention to strengthen the foundation skills of Literacy and Numeracy amongst learners in Grade 3, 6 and 9. In her report on 28 June 2011, the Minister of Basic Education indicated that the conduct of the assessments requires teachers and the



system to focus on what exactly was being taught and learned. This strategy will then assist teachers to identify the needs of learners as all learners will be participating in the assessment. The DoE has put systems in place to improve the quality of teaching and learning. However, at school level, teachers were battling with the inclusion of learners with barriers to learning due to poor support for teachers.

As noted in Chapter 1, policies were in place to ensure that children's rights were protected. The DoE ensured that support structures were put in place to support the teachers in addressing barriers to learning. Within this context, it was therefore considered important that the researcher conduct an investigation into the support for teachers in the classroom.

Engelbrecht and Green (2001:40) state that the introduction of an inclusive education policy has brought a challenge to teachers as they often feel overwhelmed, frustrated and helpless – their perception being that decisions have been imposed upon them without being consulted. Ellof, Engelbrecht, Pettipher and Swart (2002:185) emphasise that the challenges with which teachers are confronted include lack of educational and teacher support, insufficient facilities, infrastructure and supportive devices. The above challenges of teachers as stated by Engelbrecht and Green (2001:19) show that ineffectively trained teachers and lack of a positive teaching and learning culture do not create a welcoming environment for learners; hence, learners with barriers to learning were struggling to reach their potential. Poor support and lack of resources to enhance teaching and learning can have a negative impact in the inclusive classroom. According to Engelbrecht, Engelbrecht, Green and Naicker (2010:158), people working in collaborative teams can accomplish more than individuals working on their own. Therefore, a team of teachers coming together, possessing different expertise, knowledge and experience can bring a change in a school and create a positive, conducive environment for learning.

Sethosa (2001:10) indicated that for teachers to be effective, members of the SBST should focus on empowering and developing teachers in identification, intervention and developing intervention programmes for learners with barriers to learning and ensure that positive learning and teaching culture are instilled in schools. In support of the statement, the WP6 indicate that the responsibility of the SBST is to coordinate learner and teacher support services that would support learners and teachers in identifying and addressing the needs of learners, educators and schools. However, it seems this was not happening; hence, this study explored more on teacher support in schools. Das, Das and Kattumuri (2013:64) affirm the above statement, stating, “teaming was one of the effective models for inclusion it requires teachers to function as a team, discuss matters and communicate amongst the members”. The WP6 does not clearly specify who should be members of the team; however, the report of the NCESS and NCSNET 1997 gives directions in this regard CESS (DoE 1997).It is against this background that the composition and functions of the team would be as indicated in the section that follows.

## **2.2. THE SBST: COMPOSITION**

The SBST was composed of the following members:

### 1. The coordinator

High School – Head of Department (HoD) for Life Orientation or chosen by staff, senior educator, volunteer or passionate educator.

Primary School – Head of Department (HoD) for Life Orientation guidance or counselling educator, volunteer or passionate educator.

- The principal (*ex officio*)

- The referring educator – any teacher who is referring the learner to the SBST
- The scribe
- The elected educator per phase, for example, deputy principal
- The elected educator per grade
- The elected educator from the following committees: Learning and Teaching Support Material School Assessment Team, Sports, Care and Support (HIV and AIDS), and Gender
- School Governing Body (SGB):one member (optional)
- Therapist Psychologist, Occupational Therapist, Speech Therapist, NGO and other stakeholders, for example, Department of Health, Social Development and other relevant departments

### **2.3. FUNCTIONS AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE TEAM**

According to the WP6 (DoE 2001:48), the purpose of the team was to put in place a properly coordinated learner and teacher support service to support learners and teachers in identifying and addressing learner, teacher and school needs. According to the Department of Education draft document (DoE 2005a:36), the functions of the SBST were as follows:

- To support the teaching and learning process in the school
- To identify learners with barriers to learning
- To coordinate all learner, educator, curriculum and institutional development support

- To collectively develop strategies, address barriers, to develop teachers and consult parents on all support decisions related to their child
- To support class teachers to develop support programmes for the learners' Individual Support Plans (ISPs)
- To develop strategies for collaboration
- To ensure parental involvement
- To refer to the DBST
- To monitor the progress of learners

WP6 emphasises the responsibilities of the SBST and assigns the principal together with the SMT to ensure that they are established and functional. This team will therefore support teachers with the supervision of the principal and the SMT. Hence, it is essential that the whole school community be involved in the process of responding to learner diversity in the class. The Ofsted report (2006) indicated that the inclusion agenda has been positively supported by schools in that learners' barriers will be removed through support. The positive support by schools to teachers should result in positive learner support; nevertheless, this seems not to be happening. Hence, this study investigates the challenges faced by teachers in addressing barriers to learning.

This study acknowledges that the DoE has put systems in place. Nonetheless, an investigation on the available support for teachers will be done as well as the challenges in implementing the available strategies. Engelbrecht and Green (2001:41) stated that it is important that inclusive education not be viewed as a burden to teachers, but they urge all role players to regard inclusive education as an opportunity to review how educational activities can be carried out differently and to participate in shaping an inclusive learning community. Therefore, the researcher sees IE as a tool used to break

down isolation in the classroom and to work collaboratively with other teachers as a team.

In light of the above, the study inquired about the support that teachers need in order to address barriers to learning in the classroom. From reflecting on observations, the researcher has concluded that only a small number of teachers can address barriers to learning in the classroom. Therefore, there might be a risk that some learners might be excluded from reaching their full potential or might fall out of the system. Thus, it is important that this study finds out how teachers can be empowered by the SBST to address barriers to learning in the classroom and thus avoid dropouts and underachievers.

#### **2.4. TEACHER SUPPORT**

According to Mahlo (2011:54), support can be defined as all activities that increase the capacity of a school in responding to diversity. The Draft National Strategy on screening, assessment and support (SIAS) (Department of Education (DoE) 2008:8) aligns with the other DoE strategy, which aims to support teachers. It will further manage and support teaching and learning processes which affect learners within the system. The SIAS document indicated, “often learners were faced with challenges in the learning process, which are the results of a broad range of experiences at the school, in the classroom at home and in the community”. This strategy was relevant to the study because it emphasises that teachers should provide support to learners. The WP6 (DoE 2001:29) requires the SBST to support learners and teachers in the classroom.

The SIAS strategy was an important tool for early identification, management and support of learners with barriers to learning. According to WP6 (DoE 2001:16), learners with barriers to learning should learn at their own pace and be provided with support. The literature further indicated that learners will need teachers to support them;

however, teachers also need to be empowered to be able to address the needs of learners. According to WP6 (DoE 2001:29), each school should establish the SBST, and through it, teachers will be empowered to address barriers to learning in the classroom.

Although teachers were still adjusting to the implementation of inclusive education, they were expected to support learners experiencing barriers in the classroom. According to Engelbrecht *et al.* (2010:53), the following are some of the critical barriers that might severely hinder learning and teaching: lack of resources, inflexible curriculum, inappropriate language, inappropriate and inadequate support, and lack of access to basic services. However, teachers need to identify factors that facilitate a welcoming and supportive environment in order to enhance teaching and learning. The anticipated challenges were that teachers were struggling to address barriers to learning, which are indirectly affected by the aforementioned factors. It was evident from observation that lack of teacher support was a disadvantage to learners with barriers to learning.

It was clear that a change in the system and curriculum as well as the retraining of teachers who qualified before and after 1994 was necessary. It also became clear – from observation – that most teachers were trained from a teacher-centred approach, diagnosing and placing learners with disabilities in special schools. Hence, this study was investigating the available support strategies in the SIAS document as prescribed by the DoE.

The SIAS (DoE2008:19) supported by WP6 (DoE 2001:48) outlined three levels of support as follows:

- Low level of support.

At this level, the process is linked with day-to-day class teaching strategies.

- Moderate levels of support and full-service school.

Chapter 1 has highlighted that learners with barriers to learning were excluded from mainstream schools simply because the medical approach was focusing on correcting the barriers rather than supporting the learners' strengths. As a result, such learners were placed in special schools; hence, the WP6 emphasises that learners should be placed according to the level of support needed so that proper and relevant support can be provided.

WP6 (DoE 2001:30) stated, "30 district would be chosen to be part of the District Development Programme and designated primary schools to be converted to Full Service Schools (FSSs), that was ordinary mainstream primary schools that would be provided with the necessary physical, material and human resources and professional development of staff so that they could accommodate the diverse needs of learners". Although Full Service Schools (those that admit learners who need a moderate level of support) have being selected in different districts, the researcher's observation was that teachers in those schools were not yet capacitated to support their own staff members and other teachers from neighbouring schools as prescribed in the WP6. Hence, most of these learners were still found in ordinary schools without support. The DoE has not yet provided all the necessary requirements to the FSSs as stated in the WP6 (DoE 2001:30); thus, poor support for teachers has let some learners to fail and/or be placed in a special school by default.

- High level of support

According to Landsberget *al.* (2005:65), learners who require a high level of support would be educated in special schools as resource centres, with their resources integrated into the DBST so that they can provide specialised support for curricular assessment to ordinary and Full Service Schools. The responsibility of the resource centre was to provide support in curriculum, assessment and instructions to the surrounding schools and also includes workshops for educators in addressing barriers

to learning, curriculum modification, early childhood development and life skills programmes that were made for less vulnerable learners.

Resource centres should make their human and physical resources available when needed for support and collaborate with parents and other stakeholders that benefited the school. The introduction of special schools as resource centres was to strengthen support to ordinary schools and give them the opportunity to benefit from them; however, ordinary schools are poorly supported. Hence, this study investigated the effectiveness of the existing support for teachers by the DoE.

## **2.5. INCLUSIVE EDUCATION**

The South African Constitution, Act 108 of 1996 (Republic of South Africa 1996a:13) states, “every child has the right to basic education”. This means that education is for all. Learners need to be taught and supported in class by teachers who are knowledgeable in addressing barriers to learning when they experience challenges. The term inclusive education is used to describe educational policies and practices that uphold the right of learners with disabilities to belong in mainstream education (Engelbrecht and Green 2001:4). According to the Salamanca Statement (UNESCO 1994:11), experience in many countries demonstrates that the integration of children with special educational needs was best achieved within inclusive schools that serve all children in the community. It was within this context that learners with barriers to learning can achieve full educational progress in the mainstream schools, provided they receive support. Inclusive education is the ultimate acceptance of learner diversity and puts more responsibility on meeting the needs of learners with barriers to learning to mainstream teachers rather than special education teachers (Engelbrecht *et al.* 2010:128). The above statement mentioned in Chapter 1 gave permission to all learners to seek admission to ordinary schools without fear.



WP6 (DoE 2001:16) maintains that “inclusive education was based on the principles of inclusion, which acknowledge that all children can learn and need support.” It focuses on accommodating teaching and providing support to all learners. Inclusive education is seen as a process of addressing and responding to a diversity of needs of all learners through increasing participation in learning from cultures and communities and reducing exclusion within and from education (UNESCO1994).

According to the DoE (2008:99), inclusive education policy is aimed at providing support to all learners in an educational setting, as close as possible to their homes. The aim of the policy was to bring support to learners rather than take learners to where the support is. The above statements gave an indication on how the policy has created opportunities for all learners to learn successfully and benefit from their non-disabled peers. The policy challenges teachers to develop a flexible learning environment that accommodates the learning needs of all learners. However, it is important to find out about the strategies that teachers are using in an inclusive class to support learners with barriers to learning. Hence, this study will investigate the challenges of teachers in implementing strategies to address barriers to learning.

The policy of inclusive education, WP6, further maintains that all schools should establish the SBST by involving teachers in participating in and strengthening support by encouraging other stakeholders, government departments and specialists or professionals to ensure the well-being of learners, including addressing their diverse needs in the mainstream classroom. This will, in turn, assist learners who are in need so that they achieve success in their academic careers.

## **2.6. SUPPORT IN INCLUSIVE EDUCATION**

Countries internationally are also experiencing difficulties in making sure that learners and teachers are supported in inclusive settings. Support for learners with special needs

in Australia, for instance, is based on the needs for equitable education opportunities that allow students to achieve their full potential. Support is categorised into two main approaches: the support provided for learners with specific disabilities (intellectual, physical, autistic, vision, hearing or language) and support for those who have learning difficulties (Forlin 2001:123). Unlike in South Africa, in USA, for example, each class is allocated personal assistance to support learners with barriers to learning. With the movement towards more inclusive schooling, support should be systematic, integrated and part of general education provision for all. The policies of interagency collaboration, focusing on child development dependence on both home and school factors have been developed in Canada (Adler, in Adler & Gardner 1994:34). Some African countries were quick to adopt policies without adequate preparations for the programme. In Zimbabwe, successful implementation of IE is yet to be a common reality due to lack of commitment by policymakers towards learners with disabilities (Mutepfa, Mpofu and Chataika 2007:54). However, in other African countries, there is still lack of commitment regarding implementing inclusive education, especially support of learners who experience barriers to learning.

In South Africa, some support strategies are in place to support teachers in primary schools. Landsberget *et al.* (2005:62) define support “as the cornerstone of successful inclusive education, emphasises that it should focus on how to change schools to become a caring and supportive environment in which everyone will be respected, accepted and accommodated”. The concept ‘support’ can be defined as activities in a school which increase capacity of the educators to address the needs of all learners, such as teacher training, information-sharing sessions, phase meetings, and case conferencing. WP6 (DoE 2001:49) makes provision for learner support through support structures within the school SBSTs, and this was strengthened by support and expertise from the DBSTs and from local communities. The Education White Paper 6 legislates teachers to be provided with support to address barriers to learning in the class.

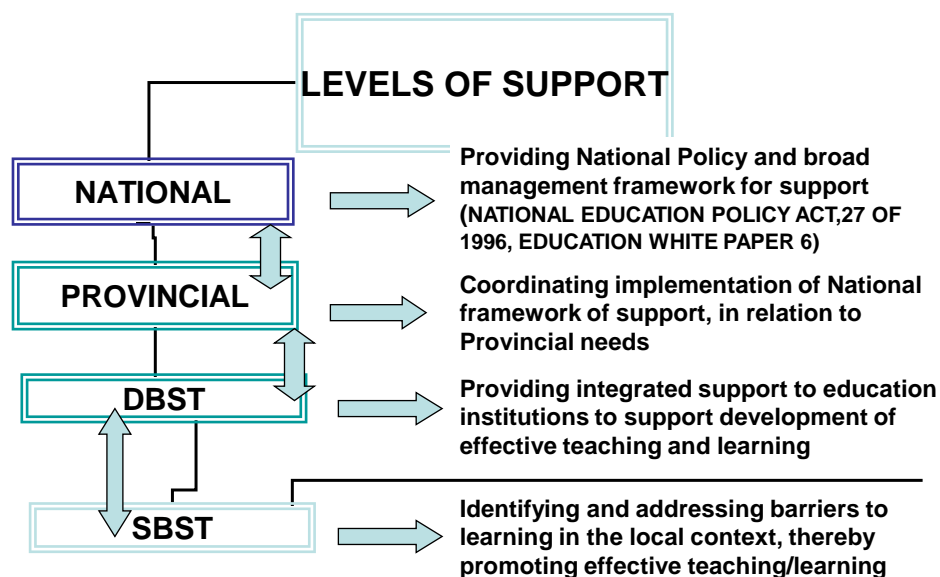
Therefore, this study aimed to determine if learning barriers were addressed by teachers in the classroom or not.

According to the DoE (2005b:5), the primary demands of an inclusive system were the training and orientation of teachers, and this will be provided at various levels and by various service providers. Swart and Pettipher (in Landsberget *al.* 2005:13) recommend that support be provided through collaboration between systems, as well as through implementation of policies designed by the DoE. The policies enable the teachers to collaborate with other stakeholders in order to support learners in totality.

The DoE (2005b:6) has put in place clear guidelines for the operational framework of including learners with barriers to learning in ordinary schools and to create a clear and common understanding amongst all levels which provided service delivery. The document provides a new conceptual framework and suggests operational procedures that are consistent with WP6 (DoE 2001). The guidelines indicate clearly, “the key to preventing barriers to learning is the effective monitoring and meeting of the different needs among the learner population and within the system as a whole”. Failing to respond to the call, some learners might fail to learn effectively or be excluded from the education system. The support was provided at all levels of government, national, provincial and district, all of which were mandated by the DoE to provide support to teachers, either directly or indirectly for service delivery in schools. Engelbrecht and Green (2001:52) highlight, “community based approach in the central feature of the support system envisaged for South Africa”. Hence, the study explored the support to teachers from national level to school level.

Figure 2.1 illustrates the support that was provided by the DoE at different levels of government. According to WP6 (DoE 2001:28), the Ministry of Education believed that the key to reducing barriers to learning within education lies in strengthening the support service.

# EDUCATION SUPPORT SYSTEM IN SA



**Figure 2.1: The education support system in South Africa (Tshwane South District Inclusive Education Workshop Handout, 23 March 2013)**

## 2.6.1. Teacher support at national level

The national policies were also informed by chapter 2 of the South African Constitution (Republic of South Africa 1996a:6), the Bill of Rights, which is the cornerstone of democracy in South Africa. The function of the DoE, in collaboration with other stakeholders in education, was to formulate policies and provide support to provinces as a guide to teachers on how to implement inclusive education. According to Bronfenbrenner's ecological theory, a macro system can be related to a national level where policies and decisions are made. It is at this level that provinces are provided with guidelines on how to implement a policy (WP6). At national level, policies should be cascaded to a province to ensure a common understanding for implementation by a district and schools. However, it was evident that WP6 of 2001 was available at the school without being clearly cascaded to teachers. Hence, teachers are indirectly

affected in addressing barriers to learning due to poor support and monitoring at this level. This study will therefore investigate the type of support that is available from the national level to support teachers to address barriers to learning.

### **2.6.2. Teacher support at provincial level**

According to Mahlo (2011:66), the province is responsible for providing support to schools through both human and technical resources, such as school building, distribution of finances and resource material, employment of teachers, and admission of learners, including learners with barriers to learning. Decisions made at this level may be influenced by what was happening in the classroom, thus placing a learner with barriers to learning at risk. Provinces were not on the same level regarding the implementation of inclusive education; hence, in Gauteng, the DoE has introduced Gauteng Primary Literacy and Mathematics Strategy (GPLMS) as a pilot project during the time of the study. The purpose was to ensure that children can read and write by the end of their primary schooling. It is clear that the DoE has good systems in place to enhance teaching and learning. However, the monitoring of teacher support at this level is still a challenge. A province does not directly monitor schools – it only monitors them indirectly – when teachers are failing to support learners in the classroom.

According to Bronfenbrenner's theory, an exosystem as defined by Swart and Pettipher in Landsberg *et al.* (2005:11) comprise one or two environments in which individuals can be directly or indirectly influenced by the existing settings. With this system, challenges such as lack of resources, health services and education system can indirectly affect teachers. For example, poor monitoring and support of the SBST as explained in WP6 might lead to poor support for teachers in responding to learners' barriers in the classroom. A province has a responsibility to put clear guidelines to the district to coordinate to schools. However, gaps were identified of poor support and monitoring at this level to ensure good implementation of policy. Hence, if teacher

support in terms of development is not addressed properly at this level, learners with barriers to learning will, in turn, fail to succeed. This study will further explore the support by the district.

### **2.6.3. Teacher support at district level**

The support at this level might be direct or indirect to the teachers. The DoE in WP6 indicates that the DBST should support the SBST in coordinating learner and teacher support. It is from this call that support for teachers should be strengthened by the DBST via the SBST.

Each district should establish the DBST and be allocated a number of schools to monitor and support. According to WP6 (DoE 2001:47), the primary function of this team will be to evaluate (through supporting teaching) and to build the capacity of schools – especially the SBST – early childhood and adult basic education training centres, colleges and higher education institutions. The DBST should ensure that schools establish SBSTs that will coordinate both learner and teacher support. The DoE has put systems in place to ensure teacher support; however, many teachers feel that they did not have sufficient training and support to meet the challenges of learners (Engelbrecht *et al.* 2010:157). Poor support at this level compromises service delivery at schools and creates gaps on teaching and learning, which led to poor performance of learners. The information just discussed raised questions about the support for SBSTs that were mentioned in WP6 in Chapter1. However, it appears that the SBST was not properly supported by the DBST. Hence, this study investigated the challenges faced by teachers when applying the existing support in the classroom.

According to Bronfenbrenner's theory, a mesosystem is defined as the relationships between the school and the district. These two environments directly interact with each other. Swart and Pettipher in Landsberg *et al.* (2005:11) define this system as the

relationships between different environments – the school and district – as they interact and support one another. If the district fails to support the SBST or teachers, learners will not be able to respond positively to the curriculum. The researcher acknowledges the existence of the policy; however, the implementation in terms of the DBST supporting the SBST or teachers is still a challenge. That being the case, teachers are struggling to draw proper intervention strategies for learners with barriers to learning.

#### **2.6.4. Teacher support at school level**

According to Engelbrecht *et al.* (2010:128), teachers are central to the success of inclusion. In an inclusive classroom, all learners are important, but those who experience barriers to learning make special demands on teachers who need to find a way to address their needs by providing support. Support is not a new thing to teachers, as their task is to ensure that learning takes place in the classroom. However, teachers have to deal with complex situations in the process of delivering the curriculum. Engelbrecht *et al.* (2010:157) indicate that they need concrete advices on handling the situation. With that said, this study investigated the existing support for teachers and the strategies they applied in meeting the challenges presented by the learners in class.

Engelbrecht *et al.* (2010:159) highlighted that to make the class more inclusive is the greatest challenge that faces teachers. A teacher can be someone who plays a pivotal role in imparting knowledge to learners so that they can be successful in their lives. This can be achieved if proper support is provided. According to Bronfenbrenner's approach, a microsystems the immediate environment in which an individual develops. The theory indicates that the system can either have a direct or indirect effect. In the context of the study, the immediate environment was the school, the environment where learners came into contact with teachers directly to develop their potential to succeed in life. Teachers at this level feel overwhelmed by the challenges they experience in class. As indicated above, teachers did not receive sufficient training and support. Because of

that, the school should ensure that the challenges of teachers are addressed. The empowerment of the SBST should be prioritised by the DBST so that referrals can be attended to through proper support.

## **2.7. LEARNERS EXPERIENCING BARRIERS TO LEARNING**

Engelbrecht and Green (2001:43) state that learning barriers should be seen as residing not only within the learner but equally, if not more, within the learning system itself. A few questions arise: Who were the learners experiencing barriers to learning? Does the school have these learners in the classroom? Can teachers identify and support the needs of such learners? To answer these questions, the study has investigated the support of teachers in addressing barriers to learning. Landsberg *et al.* (2005:363) confirmed that in most classes, there are learners experiencing barriers to learning.

The term barriers to learning may refer to the difficulties and challenges that learners experience and that must be addressed so that learning can take place. Barriers can be located within the learner, home, school, system and the broader community. Systemic challenges are outside the learner but are caused by the system, and teachers do not have control over them. The key to preventing them from occurring was through support from the SBST and continuous monitoring by the DBST. This study therefore looked at the challenges that teachers were experiencing in addressing barriers to learning.

Barriers to learning may arise from a range of factors outside the learner and within the community. These barriers might have a negative impact towards the success of learners if proper support was not given to teachers to address them. Some of the factors were indicated in WP6 (DoE 2001:7) as follows:

- Social and economic aspects, such as poverty and lack of basic services.
- Lack of Learning Support Materials and teaching aids.



- Physical, emotional, spiritual, sexual abuse, violence, e.g. domestic or political, HIV/AIDS or any factors that place learners at risk.
- Inadequate and inappropriate provision of support services.
- The focus is on the learner as a problem but not on the system as a barrier, e.g. poor teaching strategies, failure to provide the required support system, and inaccessible and unsafe building environment.
- An environment that lacks ramps for wheelchairs and access for the physically disabled.
- Lack of parental involvement. If parents are not recognised or their participation is not well facilitated, effective learning will be hindered.
- Lack of human resource development strategies.
- Inflexible curriculum. The pace and style at which teaching is facilitated may limit the involvement of learners with barriers to learning, classroom management, materials and equipment.
- Language and communication.
- Disability. Focusing on the disability rather than the learner in totality may raise barriers because it does not mean that if a learner is in a wheelchair, he or she cannot read or write. Dignity and respect must be maintained by the teachers.

These factors might compromise teaching and learning if the DoE does not attend to them. To further investigate the type of support available for teachers to address barriers to learning, this study has revealed that the DoE has introduced good strategies to support teachers; however, there were gaps – hence, they struggle with the implementation. The DoE has piloted the SIAS documents in order to create uniformity

in the referral system for learners with barriers to learning, which enabled teachers to identify the needs for support. The need to implement the existing strategies to improve learning and teaching for learners with barriers to learning is a priority in this study. Be that as it may, they are challenges that need to be explored. Hence, the researcher considered points from the SIAS document.

The DoE (2008:12) highlights the four stages of SIAS process, for early identification of barriers to learning and development.

### **Stage 1 – Gaining background information about the learner**

The teacher should gather background information about all learners in Grade R and 1, and it should be recorded in the learner diagnostic profile. Through the diagnostic profile, a teacher would be able to identify learners experiencing barriers to learning.

### **Stage 2 – Identifying barriers to learning and development**

The SIAS strategy explains that stage 2 will review the curriculum challenges experienced by the learner in one or more areas of learning. The teacher in consultation with the SBST and the parents gets a clearer understanding of the context in which the learner was experiencing a range of barriers. The teacher gathered evidence from the curriculum assessment process, which included observations, learners' portfolios, workbooks and interviews with parents and other teachers. During this process, the teacher's personal, contextual and other factors related to the classroom and school were considered. The learners' parents, teachers, SBST, Learning Support Educators (LSEs) and other relevant stakeholders were involved in the drawing up of an Individual Support Plan (ISP). This plan is compiled with to outline what support is provided and how it was monitored.

### **Stage3 – Assessment of support: establishing the levels of support**

At this stage, all stakeholders were involved together with the DBST in determining the level of support needed by the learners. According to the Education White Paper 6 (DoE 2001), there were three levels of support that were provided to learners as mentioned in the above information. This study focused on the mainstream school which caters for learners with low levels of support. Teachers alone cannot provide proper support to learners. An eco-systemic approach can be holistically applied to address barriers to learning. The involvement and networking of other stakeholders might improve teacher performance and reduce barriers to learning amongst learners.

### **2.8. COLLABORATION OF SPECIALISTS**

According to WP6 (DoE 2001:50), the Ministry of Education will continue the discussion with all national community-based organisations, NGOs, organisations for the disabled, health professionals and other members of the public who will play a central role in supporting the building of an inclusive education and training system. The policy further recommends that the involvement of professionals in collaborative teams at school and at district level would allow more involvement of educators and promote ownership of issues.

Figure 2.2 illustrates specialists who can be involved in addressing barriers to learning, as recommended by the Education White Paper 6 (DoE 2001:50).



**Figure 2.2: Specialists involved in addressing barriers to learning**

The illustration in Figure 2.2 indicates the importance of specialists in strengthening the support for teachers to address barriers to learning. The national policy has emphasised the principle of collaboration as an important element to developing an inclusive education. The DoE (2008:16) indicates other sources of support apart from those

within the school and home. Therefore, the study has discussed the involvement of specialists in teacher support.

Engelbrecht and Green (2001:52) state, a “community based approach is key and emphasises the involvement and utilisation of professional support service from other government departments (e.g. health, welfare)”. The emphasis was further on the role of teachers in the process, that sharing human and material resources between the school and other sites of learning is important.

It was therefore important that teachers establish and maintain effective working relationships with their colleagues, NGOs and other stakeholders, e.g. the Department of Health. Outcomes-Based Education (OBE) encourages teachers to change their approach, strategies and activities they use in teaching, to collaborate more with colleagues and involve other experts and specialists within and outside the community. The involvement of specialists enables teachers to address learners’ needs holistically however; the researcher investigated the challenges faced by teachers when collaborating with stakeholders to address barriers to learning.

An eco-systemic approach involving all stakeholders, society, community, school, parents and peers and other departments can help teachers address barriers to learning because it focuses on the learner in totality. A holistic approach was used to identify and address barriers to learning and development in the classroom. It involves bringing a diverse perspective to the problem and striving to devise a common solution. Partnership enabled teachers and other stakeholders to share their knowledge, expertise and skills for the benefit of all learners.

WP6 (DoE 2001:49) brings out that a community-based approach highlights that the introduction of a collaborative problem, self-help groups amongst teachers, is one way in which teachers have sought to further the development of learners experiencing barriers to learning. The White Paper 6 further states, “DoE and the Department of Health and Welfare had assisted in the screening of learners, for early identification of

barriers to learning”. The DoE, guided by White Paper 6, expects that the SBST should collaborate with other departments to strengthen their expertise. However, from what was happening around the schools, it looks as though the SBST was struggling to receive appropriate support from the DBST, parents, NGOs, and other government departments.

Mabuya (2003:47) highlighted, “inclusion would work only if everyone is ready to implement it in totality”. In the researcher’s view, inter-collaboration of units within the district, interdepartmental collaboration and collaboration within the school and the community could make inclusion work and learners with barriers to learning to benefit from all the support that their teachers may be receiving from all the structures. The involvement of stakeholders, NGOs, and SGBs might strengthen support to the SBST. That being so, the aim of this study was to determine the effectiveness of teacher support. The above information indicates the importance of teamwork as a way forward towards achieving excellent support amongst all stakeholders.

## **2.9. CONCLUDING REMARKS**

According to Engelbrecht and Green (2001:259), lack of support can cause stress to teachers. It was evident from the above information that the DoE has put in place systems to address the challenges of inclusive education, including the support of learners with barriers to learning. However, this study has highlighted the importance of a multidisciplinary approach where all stakeholders collaborate to provide holistic support. The next chapter will introduce the reader to the methodology that was used in the study.

## **CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

### **3.1. INTRODUCTION**

The preceding chapter provided a review of literature relevant to this study. The focus of this chapter is on the description and discussion of the research design and methodology used to collect data on teacher support in addressing barriers to learning in the primary school classroom. This study gathered data by using a qualitative approach to investigate the support for teachers in addressing barriers to learning in the classroom. The chapter will also provide a detailed description of data collection processes, ethical considerations, and limitations of the study. The chapter concludes by explaining the importance of the study in a broader context.

### **3.2. QUALITATIVE APPROACH**

Denzin and Lincoln (2000:3) define qualitative research as a situated activity that locates the observation in the world. A qualitative approach was adopted because it is the most appropriate method, as the researcher wanted to understand the perceptions of teachers, their perspectives and understanding of a particular situation. The aim was to gain in-depth information about the support provided for teachers in addressing barriers to learning in the classroom.

Qualitative research consists of a set of interpretive, material practices that make the world visible. These practices transform the world and turn it into a series of representations, including field notes and interviews. This involves a qualitative study of experiences of teachers in the classroom. According to Neuman (2000:126), qualitative researchers emphasise on gathering first-hand information from participants in a research setting. This study also explored other contextual factors that might have an

impact on teachers when addressing the diverse needs of learners. In qualitative research, the researcher poses general, broad questions to the participants and allows them to share their views relatively unconstrained by personal perspectives.

A qualitative approach was used because it enters the lives of participants, allows the researcher to interact directly with them, and elicits more information and understanding of the research topic. Therefore, the researcher got the opportunity to interact directly with the participants and get more information and understanding about the research topic.

### **3.3. RESEARCH DESIGN**

The study used a phenomenological design to explain and define how this would facilitate data collection, with a focus on understanding teacher support. A plan or a map for the process of finding solutions to a research problem is a research design (Merriam 1998:44). For the purpose of this study, a phenomenological design was undertaken, as primary school teachers' support was elicited, and the researcher wished to generate valuable guidelines for policymakers and educational planners in developing and/or improving the situation of teachers.

According to Babbie and Mouton (2003:74), the research design can be defined as a plan or blueprint of how one intends conducting the research. The design will show which individual will be studied, where, when and in which circumstances they will be situated. The research design has its origin in the research problem, which is investigated and reflects a number of major decisions made by the researcher in an attempt to discover the best approach to the research question.



### **3.4. POPULATION**

Tshwane South District, in particular circuit 5, has 26 primary schools in Mamelodi East, and one school was selected because it was chosen by the GDE to become a Full Service School (FSS). The school was selected because the SBST was offering extra lessons after school for learners with barriers to learning, and some learners have shown some improvement after attending the lessons. Individuals possessing the same characteristics are called a population, whereas elements in a population that need to be considered for inclusion in the study refer to sampling.

### **3.5. SAMPLING**

Sampling refers to the process used to select a portion of the population for study (Maree 2010:79). Best and Kahn (2006:248) mentioned that purposeful sampling is a technique used to select certain persons, settings or events on the grounds that they can provide the necessary information. In this study, all phases in the school were represented (Grade 1 to 7). Eight teachers were selected as participants and identified as Participants A, B, C, D, E, F, G and H. The following participants were selected as they will provide relevant information about the research topic:

- Four Foundation Phase teachers (Grade 1, 2 and 3)
- Three Intermediate Phase teachers (Grade 4, 5 and 6)
- One Senior Phase teacher (Grade 7)

These teachers were included because they teach learners who were supported in the primary school. They were chosen because of their willingness and interest to participate in the study, and they will provide the relevant information about support in IE.

### **3.6. DESCRIPTION OF THE STUDY SITE**

Neuman (2000:352) highlights that a site is a place in which events and activities occur. A site can only be accessible after relevant procedures were followed, such that the permission to conduct a study was requested from the Department of Education Tshwane South District and the principal of the selected school. The suitability and relevance of the data to be collected was considered when choosing a site.

According to this study, the geographical focus was on one primary school situated in Gauteng in Tshwane South District (D4) in the far east of Mamelodi, a so-called informal settlement. The school was chosen because it is affected by poverty, has a high rate of unemployment, HIV/AIDS, poor infrastructure and illiteracy amongst the parent community. The school was unique because it was chosen by the GDE to pilot the FSS, which involves the ordinary school that is converted to accommodate the diverse needs of learners.

In addition, this study was conducted in one of the poorest communities in the far east of Mamelodi, a so-called informal settlement in Pretoria. The school admits learners who require a moderate level of support. The DoE chose it because some learners displayed great improvement after being enrolled at the school. The school was allocated a Learner Support Educator who visits the school twice a week to reinforce support for the SBST. As an Inclusive Education Specialist at the DoE, the researcher's core duty was to support the SBST of all primary schools in the east of Mamelodi. The researcher had an opportunity to work with the school and see how they practice the principles of inclusive education. Hence, this study has investigated the support for teachers in addressing barriers to learning.

The school has enrolled learners from African countries such as Mozambique, Zimbabwe and most of the learners whose home language is different from South African languages. As such, most learners experience challenges at school when they are taught and supported to learn. The school was chosen because it has provided in-

depth information from the teachers about the type of support they receive to address barriers to learning.

### **3.7. DATA COLLECTION**

Data was collected through interviews, observations and document analysis. During the interviews, field notes were taken on the outcome of the interaction between the educator and the learners experiencing barriers to learning. Further notes were taken on challenges that the teachers experienced in identifying and addressing problems, and curriculum modification. Field notes were made after each session to facilitate data analysis and interaction with relevant stakeholders until satisfied with the collected data.

#### **3.7.1. Interviews**

According to Delport, De Vos, Fouche and Strydom (2011:342), interviewing is “the predominant mode of data or information through direct interchange with an individual expected to possess the knowledge they seek”. This study used a one-on-one interview method for information collection. The researcher obtained information through direct interchange with an individual expected to possess the knowledge of the phenomenon under investigation. One-on-one interviews which took 30 minutes were conducted to gather in-depth information from the participants. The interview method was used for data collection because it gives the researcher and participant much more flexibility and allows the researcher to follow up on particularly interesting points that give a fuller picture about the research topic (Delport *et al.* 2011:352). Open-ended questions were asked; field notes were taken, and the interviews were audiotaped with the participants’ permission.

During the interviews, the teachers shared ideas and information about the challenges they were experiencing in addressing barriers to learning. Mertler and Charles (2008:193) highlighted that qualitative research involves the collection, analysis and interpretation of data, largely narrative and visual in nature in order to gain insights into a particular phenomenon of interest.

According to Maree (2010:87), an interview is a two-way conversation in which the interviewer asks participants questions to collect data and to learn about their ideas, beliefs, views, opinions and behaviours. The researcher used semi-structured interviews because they allow for probing and clarification of answers (Maree 2010:87). The interviews were audiotaped and transcribed. Denzin and Lincoln (2000:107) bring out that semi-structured interviews provide the researcher with the opportunity to ask individually tailored questions and do not limit the field of inquiry of using the one-on-one interview approach, with questions posed directly to one participant at a time within the agreed period.

The interview schedules were used to ask questions that required the participants to formulate their views in their own words. The issues that were covered in the interview schedules include questions on the following:

- Biographical information
- General environment of the classroom
- The structures that give support to the teachers
- The challenges experienced by teachers in addressing barriers to learning in the classroom
- The strategies teachers use to support learners presented with barriers to learning

- The available documents that inform teachers to provide learning support
- The resources available to support learners with barriers to learning

The interview was conducted in English. After the interview, all participants were observed in the classroom, and field notes were taken during the observation.

### **3.7.2. Observations**

Observation entails a systematic noting and recording of events, behaviour and objects in a social setting. The researcher chose observation as appropriate for observing teachers interacting with learners experiencing barriers to learning in the classroom. The advantages of observation include the opportunity to have first-hand information and to record information as it occurs in a natural classroom setting. However, in research, observation is more systematic and formal. Leedy and Ormrod (2005:145) mentioned, “there are two types, non-participants observation and participants’ observation”. Therefore, this study has focused on non-participation observation. The reason for non-participation was that teachers were observed while teaching, without interference with the lesson. The researcher observed the strategies that the teacher was using to support learners with barriers to learning, challenges and other contextual factors that hinder support. During the class visit, field notes were taken.

### **3.7.3. Document analysis**

Documents can be a valuable source of information in qualitative research, pertaining to the site or participants in the study. In this study, documents that were analysed include WP6 of 2001, GDE 450 support forms and the ISP. These sources have provided valuable information in helping the researcher to understand the phenomena with the

advantage that they are ready for analysis. The GDE 450 support form provides information about the background of learners in need of support, the area of needs, intervention strategies, parental involvement and the outcome of the intervention. These documents serve as evidence of identification and support for a particular learner that was observed. The ISPs were requested for analysis; however, they not available. As a result, no teacher has mentioned them during the interviews.

### **3.8. DATA ANALYSIS**

According to Maree (2010:99), as indicated in Chapter 1, qualitative data analysis is based on an interpretive philosophy that is aimed at examining meaningful and symbolic content of qualitative data. The participants were interviewed, and notes were transcribed. Observations were made during teaching, and documents were collected and analysed. According to Creswell (2009:175), qualitative researchers used inductive data analysis, where they build their categories and themes by organising data into a more abstract unit of information. In this study, data was broken down into smaller segments which consist of ideas, thoughts and perceptions. This study therefore collected data that led to identifying common themes in the participants' perceptions of their experiences. Common information gathered from the discussion of the findings was then put together to form themes.

Data was collected at one school to determine the support of teachers in addressing barriers to learning in the classroom. One-on-one interviews were conducted, and information will be presented verbatim so that participant's voices can be heard. The observation was made in the classroom during lessons, and notes were taken and transcribed. Documents that teachers are using to support learners with barriers to learning were requested and analysed. According to McMillan and Schumacher (2001:483), Qualitative data analysis is primarily an inductive process of organising data into categories.

The researcher visited one school in Stanza Bopape area (informal settlement) in Mamelodi East and interviewed eight teachers. The data was collected and supported by the information from the participants through interviews, observations and data analysis. Several themes have emerged from the data and grouped into smaller units. Before listing the identified themes, the following steps were followed:

- Data collected was read through and different responses were considered.
- Data was grouped and narrowed according to the similarities of the responses.
- Data was broken down into smaller groups.
- Possible themes were identified.

### **3.9. TRUSTWORTHINESS**

According to Gay, Mills & Airaian (2006: 403) trustworthiness can be established to address credibility, transferability, dependability and conformability of the findings from the study. Although the positivist often question the trustworthiness of the qualitative research because validity and reliability cannot be addressed in the same way in a naturalistic work (Shenton 2004: 63). Mahlo (2011:97) indicate that, trustworthiness is a method of ensuring rigour in qualitative research without compromising relevancy. The following strategies were discussed to ensure the trustworthiness of the study.

#### **3.9.1. Credibility**

Bower (2005: 215) refers credibility as the confidence one have in the truth of the findings. Therefore to ensure credibility in-depth information was gathered during the interview with the teachers, about teacher support in addressing barriers to learning in

the classroom. Credibility can be the ability to collect the relevant information from the findings.

### **3.9.2. Transferability**

Transferability means that, the researcher can apply the findings of the study to their own (Bower 2005:216). The findings from the selected teachers representing Grade 1-7 could be transferred to other schools that are having learners with barriers to learning in the classrooms. Shenton (2004:64) support the statement that, the findings of a qualitative project are specific to a small number of particular environment and individuals and is impossible to conclude that the findings and conclusions are applicable to other situations and populations. Contrary to the above statement, Gay *et al.* (2006:405) stated that, to accomplish transferability of research findings, a detailed descriptive and description of the context need to be collected. Based on the above information, the researcher collected sufficient information about teacher support and the challenges thereof to enable the reader to understand the context and nature of the school.

### **3.9.3. Dependability**

Dependability refers to the consistency of the research findings if they produce the same results when the enquiry is replicated with the same subjects or in a similar context. (Gay *et al.* 2006:405). Shenton (2004:7) indicate that, in order to address the dependability issue more directly, the processes within the study should be reported in detail, thereby enabling a future researcher to repeat the work, if not necessary to gain the same results. It is against this background that the researcher covered in-depth information about the research design and the research method. The following data



collection methods, interview, observation and documents analysis were explicitly explained to assist the reader to understand the context of the study.

#### **3.9.4. Conformability**

Shenton (2004:72) describe the concept of conformability as the qualitative investigator's comparable concern to objectivity. Further highlights the importance of the role of triangulation to reduce the effect of investigators biasness to the findings. The effect of body language, non - verbal communication, emotions and feeling were taken in to considerations, to minimise any assumptions and bias towards the findings.

### **3.10. ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS**

The study was conducted under the principles below

Research permission was requested from the GDE (see Appendix A). A research permission letter was issued to the principal and the teachers about the study and their involvement (see Appendix D). Participants were informed and assured about the confidentiality of the interviews and the right to withdraw at any stage (see Consent letter). Participants were informed that the interview will be audiotaped and kept confidential until the end of the study. Participants were requested to give written consent to be observed, interviewed and to analyse their documents. Participants were assured that the outcome of the research will be shared with them once the research is completed.

### **3.11. CONCLUDING REMARKS**

This chapter has outlined the research methods and design used in the study. It has also highlighted the challenges that teachers were experiencing in the classroom. The results of the study might guide debates about teachers' support in addressing barriers in the primary school. The findings may be used as a guide towards appropriate support for teachers. The chapter that follows will be a presentation and analysis of data for this study.

## **CHAPTER 4: DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS**

### **4.1. INTRODUCTION**

The foregoing chapter discussed the research methodology employed in this study. This chapter deals with data obtained through interviews, observations and document analysis. The data was analyzed and interpreted using the Creswell method as explained in Chapter 3. Before presenting and interpreting the data, it was necessary to give brief background information about the participants. The profiles of the eight respondents were determined by the information provided during the interviews.

### **4.2. PROFILES OF PARTICIPANTS**

Eight teachers, four from the foundation phase, three from the intermediate phase and one from the senior phase were involved in this study. As mentioned in Chapter 3, these teachers were chosen for the reason that they teach learners that were supported while in the foundation phase because of class teaching in the lower classes. Teachers in that phase have the opportunity to find the means of supporting learners in the intermediate and senior phase, they receive minimum support. Grade 1 to 7 support is minimal due to subjects teaching. One teacher, for example, teaches three different subjects in different classes. These teachers were willing to participate in the study because they have some qualification in inclusive education as such they understand and have knowledge on the principles thereof. Five of them are members of the SBST.

The participants were asked to give the researcher information about themselves in the first few minutes of the interview. In order to protect their identity and keep confidentiality, letters have been used to identify the participants as A to H.

**Table 4.1: Profiles of the participants**

| <b>Participants</b> | <b>Teaching Experience</b> | <b>No. of learners in class</b> | <b>Grade</b> |
|---------------------|----------------------------|---------------------------------|--------------|
| A                   | 20 years                   | 40                              | 1            |
| B                   | 21 years                   | 47                              | 3            |
| C                   | 8 years                    | 58                              | 5            |
| D                   | 30 years                   | 47                              | 6            |
| E                   | 23 years                   | 40                              | 4            |
| F                   | 29 years                   | 46                              | 7            |
| G                   | 3 months                   | 40                              | 2            |
| H                   | 7 years                    | 44                              | 3            |

The profiles of the participants were indicated to give the reader background information of the teachers involved and general the setup of their class. It was also provided to indicate the type of learners they were teaching and the challenges of accommodating learners with barriers to learning.

Participant A was a female teacher, teaching 40 learners in Grade 1 and with 20 years teaching experience, i.e. at the time of the study. She indicated that some of her learners are experiencing barriers to learning, and she cannot assist them because the class is overcrowded. Her wish is to have 35 learners. She mentioned that the GPLMS is running very fast, and she cannot manage time and give individual attention to learners experiencing barriers to learning. She further mentioned that it was difficult to complete the GDE 450 support forms because of the number of learners who are struggling and further indicated that she was not sure of how to answer some questions in the form. She has acknowledged and appreciated the trainings conducted by the DBST; however, she indicated that she never received any support directly in her class either by the DBST or SBST.

Participant B was a female teacher, teaching 47 learners in Grade 3 and with 21 years teaching experience at the time of the study. She mentioned that about 15% of her learners are experiencing barriers to learning and the seriousness of barriers to learning of seven learners are very severe. She highlighted that most of the learners with barriers to learning did not start their Grade 1 at her school; they come from other schools. She indicated that they were using GPLMS, and the lessons at her school are prepared for them in advance and do not cater for learners with barriers to learning. Because of that, they have to rush and cover the work. She mentioned that in her class, some learners are unable to write and transcribe from the board.

Participant C was a female teacher, teaching 58 learners in Grade 5 and with eight years teaching experience. She mentioned that she is an SBST coordinator, a resource and an adviser to other teachers. In her class, she had diverse learners, those who do very well, those who are average and those who do not do well at all. She classified one group of learners as underachievers but highlighted that those learners were good with practical and oral work but struggle to write. She was assessing them orally, but her dilemma was that she was not sure if it is allowed to assess learners orally for the whole year. She was adapting the curriculum and recommended that teachers should also do

the same. When she was asked about the support within the school, she responded by shaking her head and said, “No, I am the resource at my school.” According to her, the Department of Education is not managed very well; as a consequence, there is poor support coming from their side. She mentioned that she had attended one workshop long time ago and received documents, but since then, nothing was done again.

Participant D was a female teacher, teaching 47 learners in Grade 5 and with 30 years teaching experience. She mentioned that she had different types of learners in her class: gifted, moderate and slow learners. She indicated that some learners reach Grade 6 with little knowledge; some struggle to pronounce simple words like “umbrella” – they write the word as they pronounce it. Her interventions when addressing barriers was to go down to their levels, teach them slowly and be patient with them. She indicated that she is a member of the SBST, and they provide materials to teachers to support learners. She highlighted that she never received any support from the Head of Department (HoD) but only from the LSE who gave them the GDE 450 support forms.

Participant was a male teacher, teaching 40 learners and with 20 years teaching experience in the senior phase during the time of the study. He mentioned that he had heterogeneous learners and they differ in IQ; some are fast, while others are slow. He indicated that when he was marking the learners’ workbooks, he was able to identify learners experiencing barriers to learning. He used a textbook to support learners, since he never received any documents or training from the SBST or the DBST. He highlighted that he is a new teacher who just joined the school from Mpumalanga where he attended training on barriers to learning. Because of the challenges that learners were experiencing, some teachers joined members of the SBST in order to offer extra lessons after school. The teacher indicated that some of the learners were showing some improvements in the classroom. This information raises concerns about learners and teachers that were not participating in the initiative. The researcher therefore concluded that the school has a dysfunctional SBST and no uniformity on teacher support was mentioned. This situation leaves the majority of learners and teachers in

the dark and without support. Consequently, some teachers were expressing their frustrations for teaching learners with barriers to learning. Poor functionality of the SBST might lead to poor or lack of support for teachers, which will directly affect learners with barriers to learning.

Participant F was a female teacher with 29 years of experience and teaching 46 learners in Grade 7. Her class had different types of learners: naughty, hyperactive, fast and, slow learners and one of them joined the school in 2012 when doing Grade 6 and was then promoted to Grade 7. She raised a concern about the promotion of the learner to Grade 7 as he was still struggling to cope in the classroom. She described him as being a shy and quiet learner, but one who is good in artwork. She gave him less work that he can cope with and requested his peers to support him through discussions and sharing of information. She highlighted that although she has been teaching for many years, she was still a learner because the curriculum was changing all time. She mentioned that in the past, she was using an aptitude test to determine the IQ of the learners, but now because of the new curriculum, she has nothing to use. According to the participant, she has discovered that the learner was an orphan, as he was displaying some emotional problems.

This has revealed that teachers are not only faced with learning challenges but also emotional and behavioral. Her concern about the impact of the reduced amount of work she was giving to the learner is when he will be admitted to a higher grade. As much as she supports her learners, she is not sure about the effects of the strategies she used. This indicates poor support by the SBST in clarifying the support strategies that teachers might use to address barriers to learning in class. She mentioned that the only support was from her HoD who was a language teacher, and the SBST coordinator gave her the GDE 450 support forms to complete for learners experiencing barriers to learning. This indicates that the SBST exists at the school but not providing proper support to teachers. These findings reveal that the HoD was sharing information with

the teachers; however, the support seems not to be making an impact in addressing their challenges.

Participant G was a female teacher with three months teaching experience and teaching 40 learners in Grade 1. She described herself as being fresh from the university and was never trained to teach learners with barriers to learning. Thus, her wish is that the curriculum of dealing with learners with barriers to learning will be included at the university level so that it will be easier when student teachers are in the field. She indicated that she had learners experiencing barriers to learning, but she did not know what to do with them because she was not a specialist. Hence, she recommends that such learners be referred to a special school. This raised a concern as many universities in South Africa are having programmes on IE. As she had these learners in her class, she gave extra lessons from Monday to Friday for an hour after school, and her learners have shown a great improvement. She has described her relationship with the SBST and the HoD as a good one; nevertheless, she had never received any documents or intervention strategies to support learners. When asked about the policy documents, she mentioned that she only heard about the policy document at the school but never saw any. She only got some documents from the HoD and from three days workshops arranged by the district and described it as interesting and effective.

Participant H was a female teacher who was teaching Grade 3 at the time of the study. She had 58 learners. She mentioned that in 2012, she was teaching Grade 7, but in 2013, she was allocated a Grade 3 class. Her teaching performance went down as she had to adjust to being a Grade 3 teacher. Some learners in her class were not disciplined; some struggle to write and read, while others are either asleep or looking outside during class. She indicates her challenges as lack of resources and poor parental involvement. Her main challenge was the GPLMS. The strategy was introduced by GDE to teach learners to read, write and do mathematics. However, it has posed challenges to teachers, as the pace was fast and there was too much work to be done. She highlighted that she ignored some learners and focused only on the good



ones, as she did not want to fall behind with her work. She emphasised that she was able to give learners support once a week. However, sometimes she was not able to do that as she was working at the pace prescribed by the GPLMS. She expressed her frustrations about the monitoring by the coaches, as the lesson plans were not learner phase; therefore, learners with barriers to learning were ignored and not attended to. During her intervention, she indicated that she was working with the learners separately going step by step with the questions. When reading, she would put them around her, next to the table and do guided reading – they were reading after her. The DoE has introduced the GPLMS to improve the standards of teaching and learning in schools. Nonetheless, teachers feel more frustrated as it only caters for a small number of learners that are able to move with the fast pace and exclude the rest of the class.

#### **4.3. SUMMARY OF FINDINGS**

The researcher was able to obtain valuable information from the school. The findings of this study have revealed that teachers in the primary school that participated in the research study are supporting learners in the classroom. However, these teachers are faced with other factors within the system and the school, which make their intervention unsuccessful. The data obtained during interviews revealed that teachers need support to deal with learners who experience barriers to learning. The study indicated that the learner was a key figure because the focus was on the support they receive from teachers. The data from the interview has revealed some factors that are hindering teachers in addressing the needs of the learners. However, with proper intervention of the DoE through the SBST, teachers' support can reduce the barriers. If the DoE is not monitoring the functionality of the SBST, then teachers will continue to have challenges that in turn will affect the learners negatively. The findings from the interviews have revealed the gaps that can be addressed by the DoE and the SBST.

#### **4.4. INADEQUATE SUPPORT FOR TEACHERS**

As indicated in Chapter 3, analysis of the following documents was done: WP6 (DoE 2001), GDE 450 support form, and the ISP. Teachers have mentioned the challenges they experience when supporting learners experiencing barriers. It is evident from the analysis of data that teachers were willing to support learners. However, poor support from the SBST and the DoE had a negative impact on the support for learners. The WP6 (DoE 2001) was introduced to ensure that learners with barriers to learning are included in schools with support as mentioned in Chapter 2. Nevertheless, lack of access to the policy document was evident in the words of one teacher: "I never saw the policy document, but I heard that the school has a copy." This raises a concern that the DoE has distributed WP6 of 2001 during the roll out of IE in South Africa, in particular, in Gauteng where the study was conducted. It was therefore important to study the documents that were mentioned during interviews.

The SBST has a responsibility to support teachers in addressing barriers to learning and to draw an ISP with intervention strategies for individual learners. However, the analysis of data has revealed that teachers did not have a common understanding on how to support learners; consequently, each teacher is using different strategies.

The following information affirms inadequate support for teachers:

- Teachers did not have a copy of WP6 and were not sure of the content.
- Teachers did not understand how to fill in GDE 450 support form.
- Learners did not have any ISPs.

The above information was supported by teachers when they were asked, "Do you have any documents that help or give you guidance on how to address barriers to learning?" The respondents had the following to say in response:

Participant A: "I received the GDE 450 support forms from the district to complete, but the challenge I encountered with those forms is that I didn't know how to answer the questions at the back. I was not sure whether I should answer the questions myself or the district should complete them."

Participant H supported the other respondent when saying: "I have a GDE 450 support form; it's a form that explains how to assist learners with such challenges and the type of interventions that we can use. Outcomes are okay, but they will even be great if parents provided support as well on the GDE 450 support form."

Participant F: "Yes. I filled in the GDE 450 support forms that I got from the Coordinator of SBST, who is very open and helpful."

Participant G: "I only have documents that I got from the HoD, which they also received from the district office." They have lists of methods with different interventions which the teacher can use, and I have been using them ever since."

Participant H stated: "None, I don't have any document ... The SBST only come when they give us GDE 450 support forms in which we have to explain the barriers that learners experience in class. They give these forms every term for completion."

Participant E: "I use textbooks for support, as I don't have any other documents that I can refer to."

The analysis of the above revealed that the distribution of the GDE 450 support forms amongst teachers was inconsistent. The interpretation of the form was different from one teacher to another; therefore, there was no uniformity in using the document. This raises a concern that this document comes from GDE, but not all teachers can complete it or understand its purpose. The above confirm that the GDE might not have properly monitored the document that they instructed schools to implement.

The analysis of the ISP indicated that teachers do not have any clue about it, since they never mentioned anything about it. When asked about the documents they received from the SBST for support, all teachers gave different answers, but none of them have mentioned the ISP as a tool for support. This shows that teachers cannot be effective if the GDE is not providing them with the necessary training for support.

The frustrations of teachers about lack of support has resulted into a negative expression when asked about the policy document, she has ever received. Her reply was that, "I only heard about the documents but I have never saw any." The above statement confirms that teachers do not have access to the departmental documents like WP6:2001 at the school, hence little information was provided by other participants on the matter. The information provided led to the classroom observation to understand the frustrations and confusion they have highlighted. Based on the provided information, it was important to analyze the documents that teachers were using and the impact they have in supporting learners with barriers to learning. In all the documents requested only the GDE 450 support forms and the textbook were found in all the classes. The few classes had copies search on Google by the teacher who referred herself as a source of information to the school. These confirm that although teachers are getting the GDE 450 support forms their need to provide support to learners with barriers to learning was still a challenge. The statement was affirmed by a participant who said, "the challenge I encountered with those forms is that I didn't know how to answer the questions at the back". This confirms the findings in the interviews hence the observation reveal some incomplete sections of the forms. The section of area of needs and intervention strategies by teachers was not comprehensively completed and in some instances the information was too general, for example, "the child cannot read". When asking teachers, "what is it that the child cannot read and what interventions did you apply?" about 60% of teachers were not confident about the answers they have provided.

## **4.5. DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS**

The data from the eight participants was around the topic “Teacher support in the inclusive primary school: addressing barriers to learning in the classroom”. The findings revealed four major themes which are discussed below and are as follows:

- Challenges with diverse learners in the classroom
- Systemic challenges
- Challenges within the school
- Support in the classroom

### **4.5.1. Challenges with diverse learners in the classroom**

In Chapter 1, the Education White Paper 6 of 2001 supported by other policy documents indicated the need for learners to be included in mainstream schools while receiving support. However, there seems to be no strategy that is functional in supporting the teachers as indicated in Chapter 2 from national, provincial, district and school level to support teachers in addressing barriers to learning.

During the interviews, all the respondents indicated that learners in their classes are slow, average, moderate and fast. Some respondents have described their learners as hyperactive, underachievers, gifted and learners with different IQs. In Chapter 1, different policies were mentioned, in particular, White Paper 6 (DoE 2001), which indicates that is an approach that is addressing discrimination of learners and ensuring that learners with diverse IE needs are accepted and accommodated in mainstream schools with support. However, it was noted that teachers were having different types of learners, and the learners display the following characteristics:

- Struggle to read
- Lazy and not interested
- Struggle to pronounce simple words like umbrella
- Naughty, hyperactive, not disciplined, and not paying attention
- Sleeping and not showing interest in their school work

The findings revealed that there were other factors that might affect learners such as overcrowding, poor support by the DoE, learners coming from other schools, and behavioral and social problems. This was also evident during observations in the Grade 1 class. Respondent G mentioned that some learners must be referred to special schools. The researcher's observation was that some learners were not school ready or did not attend preschool or nursery school because they were struggling with sitting positions and pencil gripping when they were writing. Some learners seem to be lazy and less interested because they were losing concentration, looking outside, and disturbing other learners. The teacher was trying very hard to make them write and concentrate, but some were struggling very much. During observation, it was evident that Respondent A's class had 40 learners, and she did not give attention to learners with barriers to learning. Participant H was visited to affirm her responses during the interview that she does not have time for learners with barriers to learning, that they waste her time, and that she was concentrating on the fast learners so that she can finish their lesson plan on time.

An interaction with three teachers from Grade 1 to 3 has affirmed the findings of the interviews that some learners with barriers to learning were admitted in the school without proper support. According to the researcher's observation, no intervention programme was used, no curriculum adaptation to reach the level of the learners took place, the learning styles of learners were not considered, and the teacher has

continued with her lesson without supporting learners who were experiencing barriers to learning. These are some of the challenges that teachers were experiencing in their class on a daily basis without getting any support. Participant D emphasized: “some learners with barriers to learning learn easy when they use artwork and responding orally”. This was affirmed by Participant F: “The learner was good with artwork, so I usually use it to reach his potential. I’ll ask him to draw for me his feelings for the day, whether he is happy, sad or angry.” Participant C shared the same sentiments, that some learners that were classified as underachievers by the teachers are very good in practical work but have difficulties with writing and reading; hence, it was important that learners’ learning styles should be considered in an inclusive classroom. Therefore, teachers should be empowered by the DBST to accommodate the diverse needs of learners in an inclusive classroom. This was affirmed by Respondent G: “I have no experience at all to be able to deal and help such learners, and I feel that I am not helping them enough to solve their problems.” Participant H emphasized: “teachers don’t have the resources to support learners”.

The WP6 emphasizes that learners with barriers to learning should be accommodated with support, and a school should establish an SBST to coordinate learner and teacher support as mentioned in Chapter 2.

Contrary to other respondents, Participant E indicated: “the SBST was offering extra lessons after school for learners with barriers to learning and some learners have shown some improvement after attending the lessons”. He further highlighted: “I give them extra time to do their work and if they still don’t catch up in class, I arrange to teach them after school hours and I do this every day (Monday to Friday).” This proved that the school has established an SBST; nonetheless, it was not supporting teachers properly to address barriers to learning. During the interview, Participant D indicated that she was a member of the SBST and was assisting other teachers with information.

Participant C highlighted that she was the coordinator of the team and a resource to the school. She would Google information and uses her own research to support learners and share information with the teachers. Participant G echoed the sentiments: “Most learners have improved after giving extra support.” She mentioned: “I am only left with thirteen (13) learners who are still struggling out of thirty (30) that had very severe problems.” Some teachers strongly feel that peer tutoring was a good way of assisting learners with barriers to learning, as they learn easily from their peers. The statement was supported by Participant E when she said: “the fast learners assist those that are struggling by explaining to them what was taught in class so they can understand better”.

The findings from the interview revealed that all respondents had diverse learners in their classes; however, they were providing different strategies to support them. Participants A and F mentioned: “we gave learners easy and lesser work, but we are not sure if they will cope in the next grade with the workload or not”. Participants D and F indicated that they go down to the level of the learners and teach them slowly. On the other hand, Participant H indicated that she goes slowly step by step until they understand; during reading time, learners will sit around the table and do guided reading and use counters for mathematics.

Contrary to other respondents, Participant E revealed: “I used the textbooks for support as I don’t have any other document that I can refer to.”

During the interviews, different interventions unfolded, and it was evident during observation that different strategies were used by individual teachers with the motive of supporting learners. It was affirmed during the observation that teachers were willing to support learners with barriers to learning; thus, they were using different strategies. It was evident that proper interventions must be put in place by the DBST to support teachers. With that said, this study highlighted “teacher support” as the central focus



during the literature review in Chapter 2 and as the most important factor of addressing barriers to learning.

During the interview, Participant B was concerned about 14 learners that she identified for support by the SBST; however, only five were provided with support. She mentioned: “they took only five learners and since then never received any feedback from them”.

Participant G echoed the same sentiment when she said: “They take learners with severe barriers for two days, but never received any feedback from them about the learner’s progress.” Participant F shared the sentiments: “I do interact with the HoD who is a Language Practitioner, and I also receive extra support from other teachers, but not from the SBST”. Participant E supported the statement and said: “No, so far I haven’t received anything from them since I started to work in this school.” All the above teachers have expressed a feeling of dissatisfaction and disappointment by the SBST.

All the participants shared the view that they were not well supported to address barriers to learning; however, some were positive that the intervention of the SBST was good. The findings confirmed that the SBST exists at the school but is not fully functional because they were not well trained to provide support to teachers. As a consequence, they were frustrated and not confident with their interventions. The DBST has a responsibility to train, evaluate and monitor the functionality of the SBST so that teachers can be empowered by the SBST to address barriers to learning in the classroom.

#### **4.5.2. Systemic challenges**

Several areas of challenges in the system emerged during the interview. These challenges are discussed below.

The DoE has introduced the GPLMS in Gauteng as a strategy to ensure that learners can read and write by the end of their primary school and indicates that the pillars of the strategy is to improve the programmes of learner support. However, teachers have highlighted challenges that had a negative impact on learners with barriers to learning when implementing a strategy. During the interviews with the teachers, several systemic challenges emerged. Some of the challenges were coming from the DoE, and some are from within the school. From the interviews, three out of four respondents highlighted: “It is a lot of work because it is running very fast, and the lesson plans were already prepared for implementation.” Participant H mentioned that she followed the lesson plan exactly as was prepared by the DoE, and she was rushing the lesson to keep up with the pace without accommodating learners with barriers to learning. This was evident in the words of Participant H when she said: “Normally I just continue with the ones that are catching up fast and deal with others later, as I feel they are wasting time for other learners and also frustrate me at the same time. To cover my lesson plan, I move with the fast learners and try to assist the slow ones twice a week, but chances to do that are always very slim.”

Contrary to the above, Participant A mentioned: “GPLMS helps a lot, though it is very fast.” This indicates that the GPLMS might be a good strategy only if the DoE can close the gaps and ensure that it benefits all learners in the school. This clearly indicates that the DoE should revise the strategy to cater for all learners and put proper monitoring systems in place. These statements confirm the challenges that teachers are facing when trying to support learners with barriers to learning in class. All the efforts that teachers took to support learners show their commitment and love towards their work. It can be concluded that the DoE has put good strategies in place to support teachers. However, monitoring and evaluation of those interventions is still critical; hence, teachers are overwhelmed with the challenges.

### **4.5.3. Challenges within the school**

There are many ways in which the school can structure itself to address the needs of learners in the classroom. For the implementation of IE to be successful, the DoE should look at the problem of overcrowding of learners in the classroom. Many respondents raised the concern that too many learners in the classroom threatened the successful support that the teachers received. Teachers tend to ignore many learners due to overcrowded classrooms.

#### **4.5.3.1. Overcrowding**

According to the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa and the South African Schools Act (SASA) as mentioned in Chapter 1, learners with barriers to learning should be admitted in mainstream schools with support, and it is a human right that learners attend a school near their home. Schools are requested by policy to accept and accommodate learners with barriers and provide support. This becomes a challenge when teachers implement policy without proper support. In Chapter 2, challenges of teachers were highlighted, in particular, the support of learners with barriers to learning in mainstream schools. During the interviews, the following question was posed: “What are the challenges in addressing barriers to learning?” Participant A mentioned: “My classroom is overcrowded as it has 40 kids, which makes it difficult for me to manage time and attend to each child’s individual needs.”

The policies that were mentioned above were silent about what should be done with overcrowding in the classroom. This indicates that admission of learners in terms of overcrowding schools was not clearly defined by the DoE, i.e. when a school should be declared full or overcrowded. This has led the school to admitting many learners without guidance from the policy. This has raised a concern that the system can be a barrier because of unclear policies. Participant A further emphasized: “the problem is the

exceeding number of children in my classroom”. Thus, it was not easy to accommodate all the learners. It was evident that when learners are overcrowded in the classroom, it was difficult for the teacher to identify and reach them. This had a negative impact on learners because some learners can be neglected due to lack of one-on-one intervention.

#### **4.5.3.2. Resources**

During the interview, Participant H indicated: “the great challenge was that we as educators do not have enough resources to help these learners”. Contrary to lack of resources, Participant A highlighted: “I also use practical objects to help them understand the work, but still they are not progressing.” Participant F added: “The learner was good with artwork, so I usually use it to reach his potential. I’ll ask him to draw for me his feelings for the day, whether he is happy, sad or angry.” Teachers who were using resources were more likely to address barriers to learning. They were showing some knowledge about different learning styles of learners. Based on the fact that some teachers did not mention lack of resources as a challenge raises a concern on what they are using to enhance their teaching in the classroom.

This was also evident during the observation. Counters were only resources that were used during the mathematics period to support learners, and this was a challenge because other methods of support and learning styles were not considered. It was evident during observation that there was no consistency and uniformity amongst teachers. The DoE has a responsibility of writing policies and guidelines for the province to cascade information to the district that must monitor and support schools. It can be concluded that the existing policy is not clear on how resources should be budgeted for in schools.

#### **4.5.3.3. Reading and writing**

Learners who cannot read and write will have a serious backlog in future if proper interventions are not in place. Teachers were experiencing challenges when trying to teach learners how to read and write. The responses from the interviews revealed that some learners in Grade 6 cannot read and write. This was confirmed by Participant D when she said: “Teachers need to be alert about other factors outside the learners that are barriers towards creating a space for learners to be taught how to read and write.” The following are challenges that class teachers were experiencing in the classroom:

Participant B: “Some learners were unable to write properly and to transcribe from the chalkboard. Others cannot spell correctly, count or associate letters with their sounds.”

Participant C: “they can answer questions correctly but when they have to answer in writing, they experience challenges. When they were orally assessed, they do exceptionally well. They do understand the work, but they struggle to put it on paper, as they find it difficult to express themselves in writing.”

Participant D: “Those learners arrived at Grade 6 with very little basics. They struggle to pronounce simple words like ‘umbrella’. They write the word as they pronounce it.”

Participant H: “they don’t like to write or do their homework when the SBST comes to take children; they take a certain number of kids and not all of them at once, as there are lots of kids with such learning.”

From the preceding statement, it was evident that teachers were faced with learners who struggle to read and write, and they were expected to support them. According to the policy, the DoE has a responsibility to monitor the support structures at the schools in order to ensure that learning barriers are reduced. Teachers mentioned the support they gave learners without the interventions of the SBST. Participant A was not specific about the challenges of her learners, but she indicated: “I gave them easy work to do,

but my biggest concern was that if I give them easy work, would they be able to cope in the next grade (Grade 2), as their work would be of lower standard.” Participant C said: “I had to be at their level and teach them slowly and try to be patient with them.” This was affirmed by Participant F: “I gave him lesser work, but I’m not sure if this will help him when he has to progress to the next class.” This indicates that some teachers were using different strategies to reach the level of learners without support from the SBST or the SMT. Participant C added: “I think they should be assessed orally, but I’m not sure if that is acceptable or not to assess them this way throughout the year; this is the dilemma I have at the moment.” Participant B goes on to say: “most of the learners who are struggling were not attending the school before they come from other schools or places”. Participant H highlighted: “The great challenge is that we as educators do not have any enough resources to help these learners with.”

Contrary to the above, Participants A, F and H shared the same view in that they interact with the HoD and also receive extra support from other teachers to support learners but emphasis that they never received any support from the SBST. Participant E mentioned:” sometimes I use peer assistance to support my learners so that it would be much easier for them to understand”. Teachers brought out: “The department is not managed very well as there is not much support which comes from them teachers assist each other as things are not formally organized and discussed with them; hence, we struggle with interventions that can make a difference in learners that are challenged.”

Participant C stated: “Curriculum Adaption was the most effective method to use and to implement if learners can read sentences; they can start with words then progress to sentences and paragraphs.” This indicates that some teachers had knowledge about adaptations but need the SBST to empower them so that they can be confident when supporting learners. The DoE needs to ensure that teachers are empowered so that the number of learners with barriers can be reduced and so that learners will not drop out of school because of being neglected in the classroom.

It can be concluded that teachers are neglected without assistance, and the DBST was not properly monitoring the SBST. Because of this, teachers were doing their own thing without proper monitoring. This clearly affirms the findings during the interviews that the DoE did not train teachers properly in order to address barriers in the classroom.

#### **4.6. SUPPORT IN THE CLASSROOM**

Teacher support was the central concept in this study, and it was defined thoroughly in Chapter 2. During the interviews, different responses had emerged, which indicated the challenges of support. In Chapter 2, different levels of education had a role to play in terms of teacher support, in particular, the role of the SBST as mentioned in the White Paper 6 of 2001. According to the policy, the SMT was responsible for monitoring the admission of learners and ensure that the SBST has proper systems in place to support such learners on admission. The researcher had revealed some challenges.

During the interviews, teachers had indicated their frustrations as follows:

Participant A: “The SBST don’t provide us with anything; they come and take learners, they take a certain number of kids, and not all of them at once as there are lots of kids with such learning barriers.”

Participant G: “they take one and then come back next time to fetch another”.

Participant E: “No, so far I haven’t received anything from them since I started in this school because I have been teaching in another province. I only have documents that I got from the HoD, which they also received from the district office.”

Participant F: “I do interact with the HoD, who is a Language Practitioner, and I also receive extra support from other teachers, but not from the SBST coordinator.” Contrary to the other respondents, Participant D – who is a member of the SBST Committee –

mentioned: “we do get support from the SBST and I also give support to other teachers by providing them with necessary materials which help them for reference”.

Participant A indicated: “Other times I do request another teacher for assistance to come to my class and explain better to the kids and also share information with me as to how to deal with the situation.” Participant C stated further: “Unfortunately, I don’t receive any support. I do my own interventions because the strategies that I use I pass on to my peer teachers so they can also use them. I advise other teachers on how to implement these strategies when dealing with learners with learning barriers in their classrooms.” Participant H carried on: “I can say that the peer teacher assistance is very helpful.” From the statement above, it was evident that there are gaps between teacher and learner support.

All participants shared the same sentiments about lack of support for learners with barriers within the school. This reveals a weakness in the monitoring and evaluation of the SBST, which leads to lack of consistency and interaction amongst teachers. The finding confirms the poor monitoring between the DBST and the SBST.

#### **4.7. CONCLUDING REMARKS**

The purpose of this study was to seek reasons on why teachers are not receiving support to address barriers to learning in the classroom. In this chapter, various data, in this case interview, observation and document analysis was explored to confirm the comments and the discussions with teachers during interviews. The data that was collected has revealed the experiences of teachers when addressing learning barriers in the classroom. Their commitment and willingness to support these learners in the classroom was revealed during interviews and observations.



However, the study has also revealed other challenges that were beyond the teachers, which are systemic and learning challenges which have caused frustrations to teachers not to perform to their level best as they want to. Teachers were seen as pillars of education; they were requested by the DoE policy to spend seven hours of each school day with the learners in class. These challenges have caused lack of confidence in teachers as they were not sure about whether they are doing the right thing or not. They have mentioned the importance of peer tutoring and teacher-to-teacher support as another way to address barriers to learning. They further indicated the importance of sharing information with other teachers and stated that it is helpful. They shared the same sentiments with other teachers that they partly receive support from the SBST.

All the participants shared the same views about lack of information to address barriers to learning and poor support by the SBST. All foundation phase teachers shared the same sentiments about the challenges they experienced when implementing the GPLMS. However, some of the teachers indicated the importance of the strategy and appreciated the support they are getting from the HoD. All Senior Phase teachers shared the same views about poor support of the SBST and lack of information to address barriers to learning in the intermediate and senior phase. These challenges lead teachers not to be confident when addressing barriers to learning in the classroom. Hence, they expressed feelings of being frustrated. The findings revealed both the challenges and the successes of teachers in addressing barriers to learning in the classroom.

Lack of teacher support in addressing barriers to learning was discussed at length, and the recommendations of the study will follow in the next chapter. The findings further revealed the gaps from all levels of education, i.e. on a national, provincial, district and school levels as mentioned in Chapter 2. The next chapter will focus on the summary of the findings and recommendations of the study.

## **CHAPTER 5: SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **5.1. INTRODUCTION**

The study investigated the challenges of teachers in addressing barriers to learning. This chapter covers the summary, conclusions and the recommendations of the study. The approach to achieve this was to ascertain whether teachers are getting support or not. A qualitative approach as mentioned in Chapter 3 was used to gather information about the challenges of teachers in addressing barriers to learning in the classroom. Creswell's method was used to analyze the data collected through interviews, observations and document analysis. The study has put the following objectives forward in answering the research question:

- To investigate the type of support available for teachers to address barriers to learning in the classroom
- To identify the challenges faced by teachers when addressing barriers to learning in the classroom
- To find out the strategies that teachers are using to support learners experiencing barriers to learning in the classroom

### **5.2. SUMMARY OF THE FINDINGS**

The DoE has introduced the White Paper 6 of 2001 to accommodate, reduce, minimize, or remove barriers and to provide support in addressing barriers to learning. The study has revealed that although the DoE has introduced the WP6: 2001 as stated in chapter

1, there might be other challenges within the school and the system. Some of these challenges are the results of poor support by the SBST and the DBST to teachers.

However, the findings revealed that teachers are willing to support learners with barriers to learning; nonetheless, it seems the support from the SBST to teachers in addressing barriers of learning seems to be a challenge. The penultimate chapter presented and analyzed the data for this study. The concluding chapter will provide a summary, conclusions and recommendations of the study.

The data collected centered around the main research question, “What type of support is available for teachers in addressing barriers to learning in the primary school classroom?” The data presented was obtained through qualitative methods of collecting data, and the main participants were teachers. Data was collected through interviews, observations and document analysis.

The findings revealed that six teachers have more than 20 years teaching experience and two have less than 10 years teaching experience. They all had more than 40 learners in each class; this indicates that all classrooms were overcrowded, as according to the DoE, the learner-teacher ratio should be 40 per class. Hence, teachers were struggling to provide support according to the challenges experienced by individual learners. All foundation phase teachers attended GPLMS training, while senior and intermediate phase teachers attended the Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statements (CAPS) training. These two strategies by the DoE have made an impact to a certain extent; thus, it can be assumed that during trainings, teachers were able to gain information on how to address barriers to learning. With that said, teachers were able to apply some intervention strategies to support learners. However, they were not confident about what they were doing; hence, they expressed their frustrations. The researcher can conclude based on the findings that support from national level to schools has revealed some gaps that existed due to poor management at all levels.

Poor relationship and lack of consultation by the SBST has resulted in poor performance of addressing barriers to learning.

The findings further revealed that teachers were not empowered on how to draw the ISPs; as a result, ISPs were not available during document analysis. Hence, teachers have used their experiences by sharing information with peers, peer tutoring, using textbooks, searching information through the Internet to support learners in the classroom. The findings revealed both positive and negative comments about the SBST and DBST as well as the HoD and the DoE. Teachers have different perceptions about learner diversity and how the system and the school respond to it.

### **5.2.1. Challenges with diverse learners in the classroom**

Teachers have indicated their willingness to support learners with barriers to learning; however, all were concerned about lack of proper information and little support from the SBST. Teacher support within the school depends on the functionality of the SBST. The findings have revealed that some teachers were interacting with the SBST and have received little support to address barriers to learning. This confirms that the SBST exists at the school but did not functional properly, as not all teachers are benefiting from its interventions. This study also revealed the gaps between the SBST and other teachers. That being the case, some teachers have mentioned that they were attending extra classes arranged by the SBST, and some learners have shown some improvement. On the other hand, some teachers mentioned that they never received any support from the SBST. The commitment and willingness of teachers to support learners has been proved during interviews and classroom observations. Thus, it was important that the SBST shows interest and commitment to improving its functionality, which will then strengthen the support for teachers in addressing barriers to learning in the classroom. Proper teacher support will improve the confidence and knowledge of teachers to address barriers to learning. Such support was benefiting learners' performance and

improving positive results towards the achievement of the principles of inclusive education in schools.

Teachers have indicated that they have learners with different challenges in their classes, and they do not know what to do to support them. The findings revealed that learners with diverse needs are admitted in the school with less support to address their challenges. This was revealed when one respondent indicated that she carries on with her work and ignores learners with barriers to learning. The respondent's statement was supported by another teacher when she mentioned that she is not trained to work with learners with barriers to learning. Findings confirm the frustrations of teachers in addressing barriers to learning with no or little support from the SBST. The statement was confirmed by a Grade 6 teacher when he said that he has only received training on how to support learners with barriers to learning when he was teaching in Mpumalanga. Lack of support by the SBST was seen as a major barrier to the teachers in addressing barriers to learning in the classroom. The gaps were identified when teachers were using different strategies to support learners in the classroom.

The support that the SBST provided to teachers with extra lessons after school has improved the performance of some learners. However, this intervention seemed not to be making an impact on other teachers as the programme was mentioned by only one teacher. The assumptions might be that other teachers were not informed about the programme or it might be concluded that it was some teachers' initiative to request support from the SBST to offer extra lessons after schools to the learners. This confirms existence of a poor relationship between the SBST and the teachers, which can be improved by the DBST through trainings, school visits and monitoring. Barriers to learning might be reduced by the SBST as mentioned in the White Paper 6 of 2001 as highlighted in Chapter 2 in the literature review – “the SBST should coordinate both learner and teacher support”.

The findings revealed that the SBST is not functional; hence, teachers were using limited interventions to support learners with barriers to learning. The following interventions were used: textbooks, google information and gifted learners to help learners with barriers to learning and share information with other teachers in order to support learners with barriers to learning. The findings revealed that little improvement has been seen in using the above strategies. Hence, the SBST should strengthen support for teachers by empowering them through trainings or workshops and also collaborate with other stakeholders to provide a holistic support to learners. However, the findings revealed that few teachers have mentioned that they have attended the trainings by the DBST and also that little improvement has been seen even after the training. Thus, it can be concluded that teachers were not well trained. Therefore, it is important for the DBST to train the SBST thoroughly so that it can be able to support teachers. The findings have revealed few positive responses from teachers who are receiving support from the SBST. The view of the researcher is that teachers are being ignored in terms of support to learners; because of this, they are struggling with all the challenges that learners are displaying, including other factors that are caused by the system, e.g. overcrowding. The findings from the interviews revealed the negative impact of these factors when teachers are addressing the diverse needs of learners. The DoE has a responsibility to ensure that the needs of teachers in supporting learners with barriers to learning are addressed to benefit the entire learner population in schools.

For the above statement to be addressed, the recommendations that follow were made.

### **Recommendations**

- It is recommended that the DBST should properly train the SBST on the following:
- Importance of the establishment of the team, function and responsibility.

- The DBST should regularly monitor and support the functionality of the SBST and ensure that the following trainings are held for teachers: early identification and support for learners, intervention programmes for the diverse needs of learners, and resources and teaching aids to enhance learning.
- It is recommended that the SBST should empower teachers on how to draw the ISPs in order to support learners experiencing barriers to learning.
- To ensure the functionality of the team, it is recommended that the SBST submits monthly reports and minutes of the meetings held to the DBST. In this way, the challenges of teachers can be identified, and proper intervention by the DBST can be done.
- The DBST should provide quarterly trainings for the SBST, which will be followed by teachers' training done by the SBST at the school.

### **5.2.2. Systemic challenges**

The DoE has introduced the GPLMS to address reading and writing amongst all foundation phase learners. The findings revealed that the strategy was introduced to improve the reading level of learners and to prepare them for future purposes. Teachers saw the strategy as a good approach to teach learners how to read properly. However, this seems not to be happening as revealed by teachers' frustrations about the lesson plan that was excluding learners with barriers to learning because it should be completed in a stipulated time. This has led teachers to ignore or give less time to learners with barriers to learning, as they want to complete the lesson according to the stipulated time. The findings from the interviews revealed the gaps that left teachers desperate to complete the lesson plan rather than accommodating learners with barriers to learning.

The contradiction of the GPLMS and inclusive education has revealed poor monitoring by the DoE in ensuring the success of the strategy, which if planned properly would benefit and improve the reading ability of all learners including learners with barriers to learning. This was affirmed by teachers' frustrations when using the lesson plan which was readily planned for implementation and indicating the time to be completed. Lack of policy consideration by the DoE compromises the inclusive education principles that all learners should be accommodated in the mainstream school with support and focus on the phase of teachers to complete each lesson. This indirectly has promoted the exclusion of learners with barriers to be accommodated and be taught in the same class and benefit from the same education as their peers.

The foregoing statements indicate that the DoE has overlooked diversity in the classroom; as a result, they have overlooked the negative impact it might have on learners with barriers to learning. The finding has revealed that some teachers were happy about its implementation; however, they were frustrated by the facilitators when monitoring the completion of the lesson plan. The DoE has a responsibility to ensure that all lesson plans are as inclusive as possible and avoid one-size-fit-all approach. The learning style and multi-level teaching should be considered when planning the lesson; nevertheless, the findings reveal that these factors were ignored when the strategy was introduced.

The relationship between all levels in the education system from national to school level was highlighted as important in Chapter 2. However, the findings seem to reveal poor communication. On that account, the GPLMS was rolled out without considering the diversity of learners and promoting inclusive education. Positive comments from teachers indicate that the GPLMS is a good approach towards improving the reading of learners in the foundation phase, and the DoE can relook into the gaps and revise the strategy to benefit all learners. As an argument, it is no use to have a good strategy that will only benefit a certain group of learners and exclude others. Exclusion of learners with barriers to learning by the GPLMS might cause confusion to teachers and have a



negative impact on the success of the implementation of Inclusive Education in the classroom. The findings reveal that the DoE introduced the strategy with a positive mission of addressing reading as a challenge to learners in the foundation phase. However, the gaps mentioned above resulted in the programme not achieving its objectives as expected by the DoE. Recommendations in respect of the above are highlighted next section.

## **Recommendations**

- The DoE has introduced a good strategy that can improve the standards of language and mathematics in the foundation phase. Because of the challenges mentioned in this subsection, it is recommended that the DoE revise the GPLMS so that it can be inclusive and accommodate all learners. An ad hoc committee should be formed, which includes Curriculum personnel, Inclusion and Special Schools personnel and Assessment personnel. The team should focus on how best the strategy can benefit learners with barriers to learning. A holistic and ecosystemic approach should be considered for better results.
- It is recommended that the lesson plan should be structured in a way that the teacher can design the lesson to reach learners with learning barriers and to expand opportunities to accommodate gifted learners.
- Time allocated for each lesson plan was a major challenge in implementing the GPLMS. Therefore, the researcher has recommended that the allocation of time should consider that learners are learning at different phases and different levels of diversity.
- Monitoring and evaluation should not be based on the amount of work covered or completed by the teacher. The recommendation is that monitoring should be more on support and empowerment of teachers. Support should be on ensuring

that all learners achieve according to their ability. It should also consider the quality of work achieved by all learners and promote quality education for all.

### **5.2.3. Challenges within the school**

A number of factors within the classroom have been revealed to be challenges towards the support of learners with barriers to learning. Teachers have mentioned their unhappiness when talking about these challenges that seem to be hindering their interventions when supporting learners.

#### **5.2.3.1. Overcrowding**

The study revealed that a high number of learners in the classroom pose a challenge for teachers to give attention to individual learners. Overcrowding has a negative impact on both teachers and learners in a sense that some learners might not be identified in the early stages of their challenges. This could create a challenge, as these learners might be unintentionally excluded and later be discovered when the problem is irreversible. This means that even if teachers try to adapt the curriculum to support the learners, this group of learners will be excluded. The findings from the interviews have revealed the importance of monitoring by the DoE to ensure that learning and teaching are not compromised by overcrowding and other related factors.

The study found that there is no proper control on admission of learners in schools. The policy of the SASA as mentioned in Chapter 2 also poses some gaps as it is not clear on what should happen to learners that are residing within the vicinity of the school who are looking for admission after the school has been declared full. This indicates that the DoE should review the SASA in the best interest of learners and the teachers. This was revealed by a teacher during the interview who mentioned that the school keeps on bringing new learners in her class without considering the number of learners already admitted. This frustrates teachers as they are unable to support learners to their potential.

## Recommendations

- It is recommended that the SGB and the SMT should include the screening of learners in Grade 1 as part of the admission process and ensure that proper interventions are put in place to address the needs of identified learners with barriers to learning. The SBST should collaborate with other departments, e.g. Department of Health and Department of Social Development, to assist during the process of screening of learners. This means that the SIAS strategy should be implemented by the DoE to guide teachers in early identification of learners with barriers to learning.
- A twinning system is strongly recommended in areas where learners cannot be turned back, as there are no other schools to go to in the area. The school can place two teachers in one class; each teacher will have his or her own number of learners allocated to him or her. This means “a register teacher”. When the one teacher is busy with the lesson, the other teacher will be focusing on learners who need additional support.
- Grouping of learners is recommended so that cooperative learning can be done easily. Learners will be able to benefit from one another. Child-to-child approach or twinning system is recommended as it encourages peer tutoring whereby learners work in pairs and learn from one another. This strategy was revealed to be effective by teachers during the interviews.

### **5.2.3.2. Resources**

Teaching and learning cannot be done alone without some reinforcement to enhance the classroom atmosphere. During the interviews, teachers highlighted their concern about limited resources that are available at school. This was evident during observation, as teaching aids were pasted on the walls but were not used during the time of the research, and textbooks and worksheets were the only documents that teachers were using during the lesson. This revealed that teachers have limited resources in the classroom to enhance teaching and learning in order to support learners. It seems the school has bought some teaching aids; however, they are limited and not relevant to addressing the needs of learners –as such, teachers are not using them. The DoE has a responsibility to monitor the budget allocated for Learning and Teaching Support Materials (LTSMs) in schools. The findings revealed that little has been done either by the SBST or the LTSM Committee to provide support to teachers with relevant resources, especially for learners with barriers to learning.

The above indicates that when the school is procuring for LTSMs, it seems to be ignoring the resources and other teaching aids. In the researcher's view, teaching aids and classroom resources are very important for stimulation of learning and enhancement of the classroom environment. The SBST should ensure that its members know their roles and responsibilities, especially the person representing the LTSM in the SBST. It seems the LTSM representative is not performing the duties as stipulated in Chapter 2 under the functions of the SBST. This reveals the gap between the DBST and the SBST in monitoring teacher support by the LTSM Committee.

Poor support by the SBST to the teachers was highlighted. This confirms that relevant resources should be provided to teachers to support learners with barriers in class. The challenges of teachers not having relevant resources might be the result of the SBST not functioning properly. Based on the information discussed, the recommendations that follow are recommended by the researcher.

## **Recommendations**

- It is recommended that the member of the LTSM in the SBST should ensure that the needs of learners identified by the SBST are considered during the procurement of the LTSMs. This person should advise the LTSM Committee to include relevant teaching aids and learning material to support teachers in class to enhance teaching and learning.
- The SBST should ensure that after identifying and screening learners with barriers to learning, proper learning materials and teacher resources should be identified and be available to support both teachers and learners.

### **5.2.3.3. Reading and writing**

Reading is the foundation of learning. The findings in the study reveal a huge number of learners who struggle to read and write. When teachers indicate that some learners in their classroom cannot read and write properly, this is of great concern. The study found that other factors mentioned above have contributed towards a high number of learners who cannot read and write. Teachers in the study indicated the different strategies they have used to overcome the reading challenges as barriers to learning. However, the strategies seem not to be making a difference or improving the levels of reading of the learners. It might be concluded that because of the reading challenges, learners were not showing any improvement due to lack of capacity by teachers to improve the reading skills of learners. The findings revealed that some teachers have indicated that they have attended the training on how to introduce the phonic sounds. Some teachers mentioned that they did not attend the training as it was arranged for teachers in a certain grade. The findings reveal that it seems the training has made little impact to support teachers in addressing reading as a challenge to support learners experiencing barriers to learning. This might have been caused by poor monitoring after the

intervention to support teachers. The challenge of not involving all teachers in the training as mentioned have revealed poor support for teachers in addressing barriers to learning.

This was confirmed by some teachers who did not attend the training and who struggle to support their learners. Although teachers have attended the GPLMS training and sounds training, the study has revealed little improvement on the side of teachers, as they use textbooks and depend on gifted learners to teach learners with barriers to learning. The training seems not to be making an impact in reducing the number of learners who struggle to read because of poor support by the SBST to ensure that all teachers are empowered to improve the reading of learners, which might reduce the number of learners with barriers to learning in the classroom. During the interviews, the majority of teachers confirmed their frustration of not knowing exactly what to do to support the learners with reading challenges; as such, they depend on supporting one another, sharing information and using strong learners. However, these interventions by teachers seem not to be effective; as a result, some learners are still struggling to read. The findings confirm poor support for teachers and suggest that regular training to be done by the DoE to empower the SBST so that both teachers and learners can benefit. The recommendations that follow are made with regard to addressing the challenges of reading and writing.

### **Recommendations**

- To reduce the number of learners with reading challenges, the DBST should effectively train the SBST, which will later train the teachers on intervention strategies to support learners in the classroom. The strategies should include the Individual Education Plan (IEP) that can help learners to improve their reading.
- Collaboration within the units at the district is strongly recommended. The DBST should work closely with the language facilitator to empower the SBST to develop

reading and writing programmes that are relevant to learners with barriers to learning.

- The DoE has put good strategies in place to improve reading and writing through ANA in the primary school. It is recommended that the SBST should support teachers in preparing learners for the assessment by empowering them to draw reading programmes and offer extra classes.

### **5.3. SUPPORT IN THE CLASSROOM**

Support for teachers is the core of this study. Proper support by the SBST to teachers will reduce the number of learners with barriers to learning. During the interviews, the teachers revealed lack of support by the DoE. They have indicated that they support one another in terms of addressing barriers to learning. This was affirmed by a teacher who indicated that she was removed from teaching Grade 7 to teaching Grade 3 without any support. This confirms that the school does not have a clear plan in allocating classes to the teachers. The teacher further emphasized the challenges of adjusting from a higher to a lower grade. Most of the teachers mentioned that they share information with their fellow colleagues. The findings revealed the lack of consistency in terms of teachers attending trainings as part of development and support. They indicated that some training was meant for foundation phase teachers; hence, they were excluded, and follow-up was never done with those who did not attend.

The study suggested that continuous training by the DoE should be a priority. Teachers highlighted that they depend on other teachers for support. Foundation phase teachers indicated that they get support from the HoD, but not from the SBST. Some senior phase teachers indicate that they partly get support. This confirms that the SBST is not functional as it is required by policy to support teachers. Such support seems to be



lacking, and it seems the SBST does not have a proper structure in place to support teachers. In order to meet this challenge, the recommendations below are suggested.

### **Recommendations**

- It is recommended that the DoE should monitor policy compliance in schools. They should monitor and evaluate strategies that were initiated by Government and close the gaps that lead to poor support for teachers.
- A needs analysis is recommended to be done by the DBST so as to have an idea of what to develop and support the SBST on.
- It is recommended that the SBST should encourage other stakeholders, NGOs and government departments, e.g. the Department of Social Development to be represented in the team. Collaboration should be done for teachers to have access to wider support without solely depending on the SBST for support. This will assist teachers during admission when they are required to screen learners for proper intervention. Professional nurses, for example, will be relevant with their expertise to assist and strengthen the support for the future.
- It is recommended that grade representatives through the SBST have regular information sharing sessions within the phase to address issues of learners with barriers to learning.

### **5.4. CONCLUSIONS BASED ON THE FINDINGS**

Support of learners was seen as a process, and the extent to which learners achieve during teacher intervention in the classroom. The admission of these learners in an ordinary school has been described in White Paper 6 of 2001. Teachers have ensured support to learners by implementing different strategies to respond to the call of

inclusive education. The targeted respondents gave the required information about the challenges they were experiencing in addressing barriers to learning and the support they are receiving. The SBST has partly given support to teachers. Appropriate measures must be taken by the DoE to make sure that the SBST is fulfilling its duties. The DBST has provided poor training and monitoring of teachers, with little support on how to address barriers to learning. The DoE in consultation with the DBST has a responsibility to do a need analysis of the SBST and act on it for proper intervention. The study has revealed that the SBST has poorly supported teachers; hence, they were willing to support learners with barriers to learning with the little information they had. However, if teachers were to benefit from the strategies of the DoE, the number of learners with barriers to learning was going to decrease and improvement in teacher intervention would improve, and therefore the standard of teaching was going to improve for the benefit of all learners.

## **5.5. LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY**

- The study was conducted at one school in Tshwane South District. This has limited the researcher in exploring information from other districts on how teachers are getting support to address barriers to learning in class.
- The researcher has focused only on one school. The findings from this one school can create concerns to other schools in the same district, i.e. schools which have a functional SBST and which are receiving support from the DBST. These schools might have good systems in place to support teachers in addressing barriers to learning. Parents, teachers and stakeholders work together to support teachers to address barriers of learning.
- The voice of the principal, SGB and the SMT was not given a chance to be heard. This can create a contradiction in the information given by teachers.

- The limited literature of the study deprived the readers about what is happening in other schools in supporting teachers to address barriers to learning.

## **5.6. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH**

The study has revealed that teachers are not well supported to address the needs of learners due to a number of factors that were already mentioned. The above-mentioned factors have proved to be the contributing factors for teachers not performing to their best ability. The admission of learners in ordinary schools without proper support in place has a negative effect on both learners and teachers. The study found that future research may focus on the following:

- The role of the members of the SBST in supporting teachers to address barriers to learning
- Involvement of the DBST in supporting teachers in the classroom
- Intervention strategies and programmes provided by the SBST
- The training, monitoring and evaluation of the implementation of the intervention strategies
- Teacher development within the school by the SBST and SMT, at district level by the DBST, and outside the system by other departments and NGOs

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## **APPENDICES**

APPENDIX A: Letter requesting permission to conduct research (GDE)

APPENDIX B: GDE Research Approved letter

APPENDIX C: Letter requesting permission to conduct research (District)

APPENDIX D: Letter requesting permission to conduct research (School)

APPENDIX E: Consent letter for participation

APPENDIX F: Interview schedule for teachers

APPENDIX G: Observation schedule for teachers

APPENDIX H: Sample of interviews for teachers

APPENDIX I: Letter from language editor

## APPENDIX A

P.O. Box 328  
Wapadrand  
0050

ATT: THE CHIEF DIRECTOR

GAUTENG DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

Dear Sir/Madam

Request to conduct a study

I hereby request to conduct research at a primary school in the Tshwane South District (Gauteng Province). I am currently studying MEd (Inclusive Education).

The purpose of my study is to investigate teachers' support in inclusive primary school: addressing the barriers to learning. The aims of the study are:

1. To investigate the type of support available for teachers to address barriers to learning in the classroom.
2. To investigate the type of support available for teachers to address barriers to learning in the classroom.
3. To find out the strategies that teachers are using to support learners experiencing barriers in the classroom. Participants will be teachers from the foundation, intermediate and senior phase. Confidentiality and anonymity of the participants will be assured. The interview will be recorded, and field notes will be taken. The recorder will be destroyed once the study has been completed, and transcripts will be returned to the participants.

Thank you in advance

Seemole Matlala

## APPENDIX B



### GAUTENG PROVINCE

Department: Education  
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

For administrative use:  
Reference no. D2013/222

#### GDE RESEARCH APPROVAL LETTER

|                                |   |
|--------------------------------|---|
| Date:                          | 30 November 2012  |
| Validity of Research Approval: | 4 February 2013 to 27 September 2013  |
| Name of Researcher:            | Matlala S.M.  |
| Address of Researcher:         | P.O. Box 328<br>Wapadrand<br>0054   |
| Telephone Number:              | 079 522 7247  |
| Fax Number:                    | 086 525 0093  |
| Email address:                 | Seemole.Matlala@gauteng.gov.za  |
| Research Topic:                | Investigation on why inclusive teacher support programme is not addressing learning barriers in primary schools |
| Number and type of schools:    | TWO Primary Schools   |
| District/s/HO                  | Tshwane South   |

**Re: Approval In Respect of Request to Conduct Research**

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

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

*Making education a societal priority*

**Office of the Director: Knowledge Management and Research**

8<sup>th</sup> Floor, 111 Commissioner Street, Johannesburg, 2001  
P.O. Box 7710, Johannesburg, 2000 Tel: (011) 355 0508  
Email: David.Makhado@gauteng.gov.za  
Website: www.education.gpg.gov.za

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'D. Makhado'.

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

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

Kind regards

*David Makhado*

Dr David Makhado

Director: Knowledge Management and Research

DATE: 2012/12/03

**Making education a societal priority**

**Office of the Director: Knowledge Management and Research**

9<sup>th</sup> Floor, 111 Commissioner Street, Johannesburg, 2001  
P.O. Box 7710, Johannesburg, 2000 Tel. (011) 355 0506  
Email: David.Makhado@gauteng.gov.za  
Website: www.education.gpg.gov.za

## APPENDIX C

P.O. Box 328  
Wapadrand  
0050

ATT: THE DIRECTOR

TSHWANE SOUTH DISTRICT

Dear Sir/Madam

Request to conduct a study at a primary school.

I hereby request approval to conduct research at a primary school in the Tshwane South District (Gauteng Province). I am currently studying MEd (Inclusive Education).

The purpose of my study is to investigate teachers' support in inclusive primary school: addressing the barriers to learning. The aims of the study are:

1. To investigate the type of support available for teachers to address barriers to learning in the classroom.
2. To investigate the type of support available for teachers to address barriers to learning in the classroom.
3. To find out the strategies that teachers are using to support learners experiencing barriers in the classroom.

Participants will be teachers from the foundation, intermediate and senior phase. Confidentiality and anonymity of the participants will be assured. The interview will be recorded, and field notes will be taken. The recorder will be destroyed once the study has been completed, and transcripts will be returned to the participants.

Thank you in advance

Seemole Matlala

## APPENDIX D

P.O. Box 328  
Wapadrand  
0050

### LETTER TO THE PRINCIPAL

Name of the School:

Dear Principal/School Governing Body

### REQUEST TO CONDUCT A RESEARCH STUDY

My name is Seemole Mariam Matlala. I am a Senior Education Specialist as well as a Master's Degree student at the University of South Africa. I am looking for the following teachers to participate in the research study: foundation phase (Grade R-3) and intermediate and senior phase teachers (Grade 4-7). The purpose of the study is to investigate the support for teachers to address barriers to learning in the classroom. The study proposes to develop a programme that will help the SBST in supporting teachers to address barriers to learning.

Participation in the study is voluntary, and teachers may withdraw at any time. I will keep the identity of teachers as well as your school anonymous. The results of this study will be published in the form of a dissertation, and the collected data will be kept confidential. Participants will have access to the transcripts, and the recorder will be destroyed. Participants will be given feedback of the study. The findings can be used for future reference or be presented at a conference, seminars or appear in an article.

I will also discuss the final results in the form of feedback. The findings of the inquiry may also be presented at conferences, as well as appear in books or articles, where the teachers' names will not be mentioned.

Thank you in advance

Yours truly

Seemole Mariam Matlala

## APPENDIX E

### CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN THE STUDY

Dear Participants

I request permission to do the following that relate to my research:

- Classroom organisation
- Classroom resources
- Teacher-learner interaction

I guarantee that the following conditions will be met:

1. Your real name will not be used at any point of information collection or in the final write-up of the data.
2. Your participation in the research is voluntary. You have the right to withdraw at any point of the study, for any reason, and the information collected will be kept safe and be available when requested.
3. You will receive a copy of the final report before it is handed in and have the opportunity to suggest changes to the research, if necessary.
4. Participation is voluntary and no monetary or any reward will be provided.
5. The collected information will be used for research purposes only.

Do you grant permission to be quoted directly? YES/NO

I agree to the terms: Respondent

----- Date -----

I agree to the terms: Researcher

----- Date -----

Thank you in advance

Researcher: Seemole M Matlala

## **APPENDIX F**

### **INTERVIEW SCHEDULE FOR TEACHERS**

The interview schedules were used to ask questions that required the participants to formulate their views in their own words.

- What are the challenges experienced by teachers in addressing barriers to learning in the classroom?
- Which strategies do teachers use to support learners with barriers to learning?
- What support do teachers receive in addressing barriers to learning in the classroom?



## APPENDIX G

### OBSERVATION SCHEDULE FOR TEACHERS

1. The classroom environment was observed to determine if it contributed to the challenges to support learners with barriers to learning. The following were observed:
  - Classroom arrangement
  - Learner-teacher ratio
2. Teaching materials are important variables that influence successful teaching and learning. These will include:
  - Teaching aids
  - Chalkboard work
  - Learner textbook
3. Inclusive teaching methods used to address barriers to learning in the classroom were observed for their effectiveness on learners' successful learning.
  - Curriculum adaptation
  - Learning style

## **APPENDIX H**

### **SAMPLES OF INTERVIEWS FOR TEACHERS**

R: Good afternoon

R: I would like to ask you a few questions regarding my study. Tell me about yourself and your experiences with the learners in your class?

R: Do you have any challenges in your classroom?

R: Which strategies do you use to address challenges for children with learning barriers?

R: Do you have documents that help or give you guidance on how to address these challenges?

R: Do you have any documents that assist learners with learning barriers or inclusive education?

R: Is there any type of support that the SBST is providing to you as a teacher?

R: How can you define your relationship with the SBST in terms of support on children with learning barriers?

R: Are you free enough to go to them and ask for assistance, or do they come to you?

R: What can you say about the support they provide?

R: Have you ever received any training from the SBST?

R: Any training received from the District (outside the school)?

- R: Do you have any comments in regards to trainings that you have received so far from the District?
- R: How often would you like to have this type of Training?
- R: Do you have any additions on Training or Workshops?
- R: How many learners do you have in your classroom?
- R: Do you have learners in your class that have learning barriers and how many of them?
- R: What type of challenges do you experience as a teacher in addressing these specific challenges?
- R: Based on the challenges you experience in class, can you roughly tell me the number of learners who have this problem?
- R: How long have you been teaching?
- R: Which grade are you currently teaching and how many learners do you have in your class?
- R: Can you describe the type of learners you have in your classroom?
- R: What makes you say that these learners have barriers in learning?
- R: What interventions do you have in place which helps you to support these learners?
- R: Have you received any support from the HoDs or SBST to help you with the interventions?
- R: Is there anything that you have received from the HoDs in terms of support?

- R: Have you ever received any documents from the HoDs or the District that you can use for interventions?
- R: Any forms from your Colleagues or HoD?
- R: Have you received any documents from the District office or the Department of Education which guide you with learning barriers? Ever attended any workshops or training?
- R: How long have you been teaching and which grade are you teaching?
- R: How many learners do you have in your classroom?
- R: Describe the type of learners you have in the classroom?
- R: How can you describe those who experience barriers with their learning?
- R: Any programmes you have received or are currently using to address these challenges in your classroom?
- R: Have you ever received anything from the HoDs or SBST?
- R: Are these materials useful?
- R: Any support from the SBST?
- R: Any support from the District office?
- P: They work hand in hand with SBST. If the SBST is not sure of what they are supposed to do, the District intervenes.
- R: What type of support do you get from the Managers or HoDs?
- R: Have you ever received a document which informs you on how to identify learners with learning barriers and how to assist them?

- R: How long have you been teaching and which phase are you teaching?
- R: How many learners do you have in the classroom and what type of learners are they?
- R: Do you have learners which have learning barriers?
- R: What strategies do you have in place that helps you to support these learners?
- R: Do you have documents to address these challenges?
- R: Have you ever received materials or handouts from the HoDs, SBST, or Deputy Principal?
- R: Any particular support from the SBST?
- R: Are you noticing any progress from the learners?
- R: Have you ever attended a workshop that addresses these learning barriers?
- R: How long have you been teaching?
- R: Describe the type of learners you have in your class?
- R: What type of interventions do you use to support this particular learner?
- R: What interventions did you use in the past to assist learners who had similar challenges?
- R: Do you involve Guardians to participate in their kids' school work?
- R: What type of support do you get from the HoDs or SBST?
- R: Any documents that you have received to help you with this challenge?
- R: What type of challenges have you encountered since joining the school?

- R: Which strategies do you have or do use to assist them?
- R: Are these interventions working?
- R: Do you have any documents which inform you on how to support these learners?
- R: What type of documents are those?
- R: Any policy document which addresses such barriers?
- R: Do you get any support from the SBST to address these barriers?
- R: Do you interact with the SBST? Do you go to them or they come to you?
- R: Any training or workshop you have attended that was organised by the SBST?
- R: How many trainings have you attended since you started at this school?
- R: Do you have any comments about the trainings you've attended?
- R: Any Workshop you've attended that was organised by the District?
- R: Any further comments in regards to Training and Workshops?
- R: What interventions do you have that you use to address these problems in your class?
- R: Any other challenges you experience as a teacher?
- R: Which strategies do you use to help these learners?
- R: Any documents you've received to address these barriers?
- R: Any support that SBST provides?
- R: Do you have any relationship with the SBST?

R: Do you go to them or they come to you?

R: Have you ever attended any training organised by the SBST?

R: Any training from the District?

R: Received any training here at school about these challenges?

R: Any more challenges you would like to add?

## APPENDIX I

### DECLARATION BY LANGUAGE EDITOR



12 September 2014

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

#### **DECLARATION: LANGUAGE EDITING of MEd Dissertation**

I hereby declare that I have edited the Master of Education (Inclusive Education) dissertation of SEEMOLE MARIAM MATLALA (Student number: 33771820) entitled "**TEACHER SUPPORT IN THE INCLUSIVE PRIMARY SCHOOL: ADDRESSING BARRIERS TO LEARNING IN THE CLASSROOM**" and found the written work to be free of ambiguity and obvious errors. It is the final responsibility of the student to make sure of the correctness of the dissertation.

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