DISTRICT BASED SUPPORT TEAM PROFESSIONAL PREPARATION IN SUPPORTING THE IMPLEMENTATION OF INCLUSIVE EDUCATION IN SCHOOLS: THE CASE OF GAUTENG PROVINCE IN SOUTH AFRICA

by

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DECLARATION

I Rhulani Gilbert Mabaso, declare that DISTRICT BASED SUPPORT TEAM PROFESSIONAL PREPARATION IN SUPPORTING THE IMPLEMENTATION OF INCLUSIVE EDUCATION IN SCHOOLS: THE CASE OF GAUTENG PROVINCE IN SOUTH AFRICA is my own work and that all the sources that I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by means of complete references.

_________________________   ________________________
SIGNATURE                  DATE

MABASO R.G

STUDENT NUMBER: 47188480
DEDICATIONS

I dedicate this study to my late mother, Mjaji Nwathlelani Mabaso. She was a special needs child on her own, as she could not read or write. I thought God would keep you until you witnessed the fruits of having believed that education could alleviate poverty and shape the special need product to be something respectable in the society and delete negative labels. To my beloved wife, ‘Masingita’, and my three boys, Mfanelo, Yinhla and Ntoto: thanks for your unconditional love and support throughout my academic journey. Hope we are going to enjoy the fruits of this together. This work is also dedicated to all District Based Support Teams, School Based Support Teams, teachers and students within the Gauteng province in acknowledgment of their trials and their triumphs in ensuring that inclusive education is implemented successfully.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to thank the Almighty God for his grace who gave me strength and courage to continue until the completion of my study.

My sincere thanks and appreciation goes to Professor T.N Phasha for her unequivocal support, this work would not have been possible without her inspiration and motivation and knowledge in this field of study.

My colleagues Dr Perumal, Ms Razia Osman: you gave me encouragement to continue under our tight schedule and management plan.

Judith Inglish and Dr Ntshangase: you remained my counsellors, when I could not see any progress in my work; thanks for the support.

Prophetic Worship Centre: thanks for your prayers

Lastly my peers Dr Maseko, Dr Mavuso, Dr Mazibuko and Mr Fred Mandlazi: thanks for always being available to rescue me, when I struggled to climb part of the hills, you were always there. I really appreciate your support, Ms Nthabiseng Mahetlana, for consolidating the entire study to become a professional document.
ABSTRACT

This study explored the professional preparation of District Based Support Teams in supporting the implementation of inclusive education in a sample of schools in the Gauteng Province of South Africa. It was a qualitative study and a phenomenological design. Twenty participants who were members of a DBST from two selected districts in different regions participated in the study. In-depth individual interviews and focus group interviews were used to collect data. Interviews were recorded verbatim. Phenomenological analysis was used to analyse data, forming themes and sub-themes. Findings revealed inconsistencies around professional preparation of DBST members in supporting the implementation of inclusive education. Most participants indicated that the professional preparation they received did not adequately prepare them to support the implementation of inclusive education. These participants, however, displayed a positive attitude towards the implementation of inclusive education in schools. Some of them indicated that, instead, they felt more prepared to become subject specialists for different subjects and to be able to support learners in ordinary schools. Participants who reported that they received adequate specialised training in inclusive education and in learning support or remedial education felt that they were well prepared to support the implementation of inclusive education. They said that, as a result of the training they received, they were able to identify and use the curriculum to cater for learners coming from diverse backgrounds and bringing different learning styles. Such findings suggested that DBST members understand their role in supporting the implementation of inclusive education in schools. Furthermore, the findings revealed that DBST members use various strategies to support the implementation of inclusive education, such as cluster workshops, cluster meetings and on-site support. The findings also revealed the strategies that can enhance professional preparation of DBST members in supporting the implementation of inclusive education in schools. Based on these findings, recommendations for strategies that can be used to enhance professional preparation of DBST members and recommendations for future research are presented.

Key concepts: District Based Support Teams; professionalism; professional preparation; Support; inclusive education; schools; Gauteng province
ISIFINYEZO ESIQUKETHE UMONGO WOCWANINGO


\textbf{Amagama abalulekile:} Amathimba okweseka aseziyingini; Ubuchwepheshe; Ukucijwa ngokobuchwepheshe; Ukwesekwa; Imfundo ebandakanya bonke abafundi; izikole; isifundazwe sase-\textit{Gauteng}
NKATSAKANYO WA NDZAVISISO

Dyondzo leyi yi valanga ndzulamiso wa xiphurofexinali wa ntlawa wa seketelo wa xifundzha ntsongo (DBSTs) eka ku seketela ku humelerisa dyondzo yo katsa hinkwavo eswikolweni; ku kongomisa eka Xifundzakulu xa Gauteng, Afrika-Dzonga. A yi ri dyondzo yo kongomisa eka nkoka (qualitative), yi tirhisa dizayini yo languta swilo hilaha swi humelelaka hakona (phenomenological) ku yi simeka. Ku tirhisiwile maxopaxopele yo mbulavulo kumbe burisano lowu nga katsa ;munhu hi un‘weun’we na ta mitlawa yo kongoma, ku hlengeleta vuxokoxoko (data).

Vatekaxiave va makumembirhi lava a va ri swirho swa ti ntlawa wo seketela (DBST) kusuka eka swifundza swimbirhi leswi hlawuriweke eka swifundzha –ntsongo timbirhi eka Xifundzakulu xa Gauteng va tekile xiave eka dyondzo leyi. Ku tirhisiwile maxopaxopelo ya ku ya hi leswi swilo swi humelerisa xiswona ku xopaxopa vuxokoxoko lebyi nga hlengeletiwa, laha tinhlamulo ta vatekaxiave ti nga rhekodiwa ritohirito, ti vumba mikongomelotsongo. Leswi swi nga kumiwa swi paluxile nkalafanano eka ndzulamiso wa xiphurofexinali wa DBST eka ku seketela ku humelerisa dyondzo yo katsa hinkwavo. Vatekaxiave xo tala va kombisile leswaku ndzulamiso wa vona wa xiphurofexinali a wu va lulamisela ngi ku seketela humeleriso wa dyondzo yo katsa hinkwavo. Ematshan’weni ya swona van‘wana va kombisile leswaku va lulamiserewe ku va vatativiti va tyidyondzo to habananahambana na ku kota ku seketela vadyondzi va le ka swikolo swa ntolovel. Vatekaxiave lava nga va na ndzetelo wo hlawuleka eka dyondzo yo katsa hinkwavo, nsekete wo dyondzo kumbe dyondzo yo lulamisa (remedial) va vone onge va lulamerile swinene ku seketela ku humelerisiwa ka dyondzo yo katsa hinkwavo hikuva va kotile ku habanamu kharikhulamu ku va yi kota ku angarhela vadyondzi vo huma eka vundzhaku byo habana na lava va nga na switayili swo habana swa madyondzelo, leswi nyikaka miehleketo ya leswaku swirho swa DBST swi twisisa ntirho wa swona eka ku seketela ku humelerisa dyondzo yo katsa hinkwavo eswikolweni. Dyondzo leyi yi paluxile naswona leswaku swirho swa DBST swi tirhisa maqhinga yo habana ku seketela ku humelerisiwa ka dyondzo yo katsa hinkwavo; maqhinga lawa ya katsa miletelodyondzo ya mitlawa (clusters), tinhlengetano ta mitlawa na nsekete wo le ndhawini (on-site). Hambileswi vunyengi bya vatekaxiave va nga paluxa leswaku malulamisiwelo ya vona ya xiphurofexinali a ya nga ringanangi ku va ya va kotisa ku seketela dyondzo yo.
katsa hinkwavo, va kombisile maendlelo lamanene eka ku humelerisa dyondzo yo katsa hinkwavo eswikolweni. Ku engetela kwalaho, vatekaxiave va tlhele va ringanyeta maqhinga lama nga antswisaka ndzulamiso wa xiphurofexinali wa DBST eka ku seketela ku humelerisiwa ka dyondzo yo katsa hinkwavo eswikolweni. Xo hetelela, swibumabumelo swa maqhinga lama nga tirhisiwaka ku antswisa ndzulamiso wa xiphurofexinali wa DBST na mbhumabumelo wa ndzavisiso wa nkarhi lowu taka na swona swi tlakusiwile.

**Marito ya nkoka:** Ntlawa wa seketelo wa xifundzha ntsongo, vuphurofexinali, seketelo, Ndzulamiselo, ndzulamiselo ya vu phurofexinali, Dyondzo ya nkatsakanyo vadyondzi hinkwavo.swikolo XIfundzha nkulu xa Gauteng.
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

DECLARATION ........................................................................................................... i
DEDICATIONS ........................................................................................................... ii
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS ............................................................................................ iii
ABSTRACTS ............................................................................................................. iv
TABLE OF CONTENTS ............................................................................................ ix
LIST OF FIGURES ................................................................................................... xii
LIST OF TABLES .................................................................................................... xii
ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS ........................................................................ xiii

CHAPTER 1: ORIENTATION TO THE STUDY ......................................................... 1
  1.1 INTRODUCTION ............................................................................................... 1
  1.2 BACKGROUND ................................................................................................. 1
  1.3 PROBLEM STATEMENT ................................................................................... 7
  1.4 RESEARCH QUESTIONS .................................................................................. 9
  1.5 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY .................................................... 9
  1.6 RATIONALE .................................................................................................... 9
  1.7 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY AND DESIGN ................................................. 11
      1.7.1 Research Paradigm .................................................................................. 11
      1.7.2 Research Approach ............................................................................... 11
      1.7.3 Research Design .................................................................................... 11
  1.8 SITE SELECTION, POPULATION, SAMPLING AND DATA COLLECTION
      METHODS .......................................................................................................... 12
      1.8.1 Site Selection .......................................................................................... 12
      1.8.2 Population .............................................................................................. 12
      1.8.3 Sampling ................................................................................................ 12
      1.8.4 Data Collection Methods ........................................................................ 12
  1.9 DATA ANALYSIS ............................................................................................ 13
  1.10 ENVISAGED CONTRIBUTION OF THE STUDY ........................................ 13
  1.11 CLARIFICATION OF CONCEPTS ................................................................. 13
  1.12 OVERVIEW OF THE STUDY ....................................................................... 14
  1.13 CHAPTER SUMMARY .................................................................................. 15

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW .................................................................... 16
  2.1 INTRODUCTION ............................................................................................... 16
  2.2 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK ...................................................................... 16
      2.2.1 Bronfenbrenner’s Ecological Systems Theory ...................................... 16
  2.3 PROFESSIONAL PREPARATION AND PREPAREDNESS OF SUPPORT TEAMS
      20
      2.3.1 Adequacy of Support Teams’ Professional Preparation in supporting the
            Implementation of Inclusive Education ...................................................... 21
  2.4 INCLUSIVE EDUCATION: INTERNATIONAL PERSPECTIVE ..................... 27
  2.5 INCLUSIVE EDUCATION: SOUTH AFRICA’S PERSPECTIVE .................... 29
  2.6 DBST ROLE IN SUPPORTING THE IMPLEMENTATION OF INCLUSIVE
      EDUCATION ...................................................................................................... 32
      2.6.1 Composition of the District Based Support Team ................................. 32
      2.6.2 Main Education Support Service Providers at District Level ................ 33
      2.6.3 Creating an Inclusive Curriculum ............................................................ 35
      2.6.4 Assessment in Inclusive Education ......................................................... 35
  2.7 COLLABORATION WITH PARENTS ............................................................... 39
      2.7.1 Collaboration with the Community .......................................................... 40
      2.7.2 Collaboration with Full-Service and Resource Centres ......................... 41
      2.7.3 Collaboration with Special Schools as Resource Centres ...................... 41
2.8 SUPPORT FROM THE PROVINCIAL OFFICE IN IMPLEMENTING INCLUSIVE EDUCATION ............................................................... 42
2.9 SUPPORT STRATEGIES IN SUPPORTING THE IMPLEMENTATION OF INCLUSIVE EDUCATION ........................................... 43
  2.9.1 Co-teaching ......................................................................... 44
  2.9.2 Consultation ....................................................................... 44
  2.9.3 Collaboration ...................................................................... 45
2.10 CHAPTER SUMMARY ..................................................................... 49

CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY AND DESIGN ........................................... 50
3.1 INTRODUCTION .............................................................................. 50
3.2 RESEARCH PARADIGM ................................................................. 50
3.3 RESEARCH APPROACH ................................................................. 51
3.4 RESEARCH DESIGN ...................................................................... 52
  3.4.1 Background of the Design ...................................................... 52
  3.4.2 Definitions of Phenomenology ................................................ 52
  3.4.3 Dimensions of Phenomenology .............................................. 53
  3.4.4 Advantages of Phenomenology and Phenomenography ........ 54
  3.4.5 Researcher’s Role ................................................................. 55
3.5 POPULATION AND SAMPLING ..................................................... 56
  3.5.1 Research Sites ..................................................................... 57
  3.5.2 Description of the Participants .............................................. 57
3.6 DATA COLLECTION METHODS AND PROCESS .................................. 58
  3.6.1 Individual Interviews ............................................................ 58
  3.6.2 Focus Group Interviews ........................................................ 60
3.7 DATA ANALYSIS ........................................................................... 62
3.8 MEASURES TO ENSURE TRUSTWORTHINESS OF THE STUDY .......... 63
  3.8.1 Credibility .......................................................................... 63
  3.8.2 Transferability .................................................................... 64
  3.8.3 Dependability ..................................................................... 64
  3.8.4 Conformability .................................................................. 65
3.9 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS .......................................................... 66
  3.9.1 Permission to Conduct the Research ..................................... 66
  3.9.2 Informed Consent ............................................................... 66
  3.9.3 Violation of Privacy ............................................................. 66
  3.9.4 Protection from Harm .......................................................... 67
3.10 PILOT STUDY ............................................................................ 68
3.11 LIMITATIONS ............................................................................. 69
3.12 CHAPTER SUMMARY .................................................................. 70

CHAPTER 4: RESEARCH FINDINGS .............................................................. 71
4.1 INTRODUCTION ............................................................................. 71
4.2 PROFESSIONAL PREPARATION IN SUPPORTING THE IMPLEMENTATION OF INCLUSIVE EDUCATION .............................. 71
  4.2.1 Subject Specialists ............................................................... 72
  4.2.2 Ordinary School Training ..................................................... 76
  4.2.3 Specialised Training ............................................................ 77
  4.2.4 In-Service Training ............................................................. 82
4.3 DBST ROLE IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF INCLUSIVE EDUCATION ......................... 89
  4.3.1 Circuit Meetings ................................................................. 90
  4.3.2 Cluster Workshops ............................................................... 91
  4.3.3 On-Site Support ................................................................. 92
4.4 SUGGESTED STRATEGIES FOR ENHANCING DBST PROFESSIONAL PREPARATION ......................................................... 95
4.4.1 Linking the Theory to Practice during Training ................................................................. 95
4.4.2 Collaboration between Schools, Universities and Department of Basic Education .................................................. 97
4.4.3 Competency Assessment before Employment ................................................................. 98
4.4.4 Online Support .................................................................................................................. 99
4.5 CHAPTER SUMMARY ............................................................................................................. 100

CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS ................................................................................ 102
5.1 INTRODUCTION ....................................................................................................................... 102
5.2 PROFESSIONAL PREPARATION IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF INCLUSIVE EDUCATION .......................................................... 102
5.3 DBST’S ROLE IN SUPPORTING THE IMPLEMENTATION OF INCLUSIVE EDUCATION .......................................................... 106
5.4 PROPOSED STRATEGIES TO IMPROVE DBST PROFESSIONAL PREPARATION .......................................................... 111
5.5 CHAPTER SUMMARY ............................................................................................................. 112

CHAPTER 6: IMPLICATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE STUDY ................ 113
6.1 INTRODUCTION ....................................................................................................................... 113
6.2 UNIQUE CONTRIBUTIONS OF THIS RESEARCH .................................................................. 113
  6.2.1 Contribution to Policy, Theory and Practice ...................................................................... 113
  6.2.2 Contribution in terms of applying Bronfenbrenner Ecological Systems Theory ................ 114
6.3 CONCLUSIONS ....................................................................................................................... 115
6.4 RECOMMENDATIONS ........................................................................................................... 116
  6.4.1 Recommendations for the DBE .......................................................................................... 117
  6.4.2 Recommendations for the Provincial Departments of Basic Education ......................... 117
  6.4.3 Recommendations for the District Officials ...................................................................... 118
  6.4.4 Recommendations at the School Level ........................................................................... 118
  6.4.5 Recommendations for All Stakeholders ........................................................................... 118
6.5 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH ............................................................... 119

REFERENCES ............................................................................................................................. 120

APPENDICES ............................................................................................................................ Error! Bookmark not defined.
APPENDIX A: GDE RESEARCH REQUEST LETTER- HEAD OFFICE ........................................ 146
APPENDIX B: GDE APPROVAL LETTER ................................................................................... 148
APPENDIX C: GDE RESEARCH REQUEST LETTER- DISTRICT ............................................. 150
APPENDIX D: LETTER TO THE PARTICIPANTS WITH CONSENT ......................................... 151
APPENDIX E: INTERVIEW SCHEDULE ....................................................................................... 153
APPENDIX F: EXTRACT FROM FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSIONS ............................................... 154
APPENDIX G: EXTRACT FROM INDIVIDUAL INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPT ............................... 159
APPENDIX H: LETTER FROM THE EDITOR .............................................................................. 162
LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 2.1: Bronfenbrenner's ecological system theory ........................................... 17
Figure 2.2: The SIAS process ................................................................................... 37

LIST OF TABLES

Table 3.1: Participants' details .................................................................................. 57
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Full Form</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ACE</td>
<td>Advanced Certificate in Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ALN</td>
<td>Additional Learning Needs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BA</td>
<td>Bachelor of Arts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CAPS</td>
<td>Curriculum Assessment Policy Statement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CPD</td>
<td>Continuous Professional Development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DBE</td>
<td>Department of Basic Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DBST</td>
<td>District Based Support Team</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DCES</td>
<td>Deputy Chief Education Specialist</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DES</td>
<td>Department of Education and Skills</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DNE</td>
<td>Department of National Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DoE</td>
<td>Department of Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DTT</td>
<td>District Training Team</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ECD</td>
<td>Early Childhood Development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FBO</td>
<td>Faith-Based Organisation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ESL</td>
<td>English Second Language</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FET</td>
<td>Further Education and Training</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FSS</td>
<td>Full-Service School</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GDE</td>
<td>Gauteng Department of Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GET</td>
<td>General Education and Training</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ICT</td>
<td>Information and Communication Technologies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IE</td>
<td>Inclusive Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IEP</td>
<td>Individualised Educational Plan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IESP</td>
<td>Individual Educational Support Plan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ILP</td>
<td>Individualised Learning Plan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ILSP</td>
<td>Individualised Learning Support Programme</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ISS</td>
<td>Inclusion and Special Schools</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ITE</td>
<td>Inclusive Training Education</td>
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<tr>
<td>LSE</td>
<td>Learning support educators</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LSEN</td>
<td>Learners with Special Education Needs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LTSM</td>
<td>Learning Teaching Support Materials</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MEC</td>
<td>Member of the Executive Council</td>
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<tr>
<td>Acronym</td>
<td>Full Form</td>
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<tr>
<td>NCATE</td>
<td>National Council for Accreditation of Teacher training</td>
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<tr>
<td>NCESS</td>
<td>National Committee for Education Support Services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NCSNET</td>
<td>National Commission on Special Needs in Education and Training</td>
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<td>NGO</td>
<td>Non-Government Organisation</td>
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<tr>
<td>NTT</td>
<td>National Training Team</td>
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<td>OBE</td>
<td>Outcomes-Based Education</td>
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<td>PD</td>
<td>Professional development</td>
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<tr>
<td>PSP</td>
<td>Primary Support Program</td>
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<tr>
<td>PTT</td>
<td>Provincial Training Team</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RSA</td>
<td>Republic of South Africa</td>
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<tr>
<td>RTI</td>
<td>Response-to-intervention</td>
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<td>SASA</td>
<td>South African Schools Act</td>
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<tr>
<td>SBST</td>
<td>School-Based Support Team</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Special Educational Needs Coordinator</td>
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<td>Senior Education Specialists</td>
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<td>SESS</td>
<td>Special Education Support Service</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SGB</td>
<td>School Governing Body</td>
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<tr>
<td>SIAS</td>
<td>Screening, Identification, Assessment and Support</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SLSS</td>
<td>Second Level Support Service</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SMT</td>
<td>School Management Team</td>
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<tr>
<td>SNA</td>
<td>Support Needs Analysis</td>
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<td>SP</td>
<td>Senior Phase</td>
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<tr>
<td>SSRC</td>
<td>Special School as Resource Centres</td>
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<tr>
<td>TED</td>
<td>Transvaal Education Department</td>
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<tr>
<td>UK</td>
<td>United Kingdom</td>
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<tr>
<td>UN</td>
<td>United Nations</td>
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<tr>
<td>UNESCO</td>
<td>United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>USA</td>
<td>United States of America</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WHO</td>
<td>World Health Organisation</td>
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CHAPTER 1:
ORIENTATION TO THE STUDY

1.1 INTRODUCTION

This study explored the professional preparation of District Based Support Teams (DBST) in supporting the implementation of inclusive education (IE) in Gauteng Province, South Africa. This chapter presents the background to the study, the problem statement, the rationale for the study, the main research question, the sub-research questions, the objectives of the study, the contribution of the study, a brief overview of the research methodologies including the research paradigm, research design, research approach, population and sampling, data collection instruments, data analysis, ethical considerations and clarification of terminology. The next section presents the background to the study.

1.2 BACKGROUND

Before the global adoption of IE in 1994, several countries, including the United Kingdom (UK), China, the United States of America (USA), Australia, Tanzania and India provided education to learners with barriers to learning in special schools and classrooms (Dovigo, 2017; Singh, 2016; Xu, 2012). Specialists, including clinicians, rendered specialised services and programmes to these students (Dovigo, 2017; Smith & Tyler, 2011). It was perceived that special schools optimally benefited learners with barriers to learning (Majoko, 2017a), and they were educated in separate special schools and classrooms, as it was felt that their placement in mainstream school classrooms would interfere with the effective teaching and learning of their typically developing peers. This was a result of the perception that their behavioural, emotional and cognitive functioning deviated from the norm. Similarly, South Africa provided education to students with learning difficulties in special schools (Du Plessis, 2013).

In South Africa, apartheid institutionalised discriminatory practices in the provision of education (Singh, 2016) and extreme disparities in education reflected the divisions and inequality prevalent in the country. Various support services were overseen by racially segregated education departments (Engelbrecht, Green, Naicker & Engelbrecht, 2008), including guidance, advice and social work which fell
within the realm of psychological services, while other services such as school health services did not fall within the ambit of the education ministry (Makhalemele, 2011). Furthermore, imbalances with respect to a specialised curriculum, direction and advising arrangement were evident, which were exacerbated by further imbalances in the services provided by the Department of Health and Welfare. Administrative work regarding social welfare and learners’ health needs was burdensome and, for the Department of Education (DoE, 2001), there were no firm objectives about what they needed to accomplish with regard to learners with special needs. Specialists used by the then four provincial departments of education were required to visit schools within the first seven days of the school year (Kathard, Ramma, Pascoe & Jordaan, 2011). They screened learners for hearing problems and referred at-risk students for further testing to government health centres or audiology practices. A lack of coordination and national focus characterised the provision of education during the apartheid era in South Africa (Engelbrecht et al., 2008).

There were also glaring inequalities in provision of support services in education during the apartheid era (Engelbrecht et al., 2008), including resource allocation and funding. Special schools for white learners with barriers to learning were fully equipped in terms of financial, human and physical resources while special schools for black, Indian and coloured learners with disabilities were systemically under-resourced (Naicker, 2005; Walton, 2007). This was to safeguard white supremacy while perpetuating the subjugation of the blacks, Indians and coloureds. Because of racial segregation in the provision of education, students who experienced obstacles to learning often dropped out of the education system (Makoelle, 2012). Furthermore, black learners with special needs who were mainstreamed were excluded from receiving professional learning support (DoE, 2001). Similarly, Murungi (2015) states that special education and support in pre-democratic South Africa focused on a small percentage of students with disabilities within special schools, resulting in many learners with disabilities dropping out of school.

In 1994, the democratic government of South Africa ended the apartheid education system (Badat & Sayed, 2014), ushering in changes that included the creation of a single education system and the passage of policies and legislation to safeguard human rights and social justice (Landsberg, Kruger & Swart, 2011). Several national
and international imperatives influenced the adoption of inclusive education in South Africa (Makoelle, 2012), such as the shift from apartheid to universal suffrage in 1994, with human rights being emphasised in several internationally agreed declarations. These included the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (United Nations, 1948), The Convention on the Rights of the Child (UN, 1989), Education for All (UNESCO, 1990), Standard Rules on the Equalisation of Opportunities for Persons with Disabilities (UN, 1993) and the Salamanca Statement and Framework for Action on Special Needs Education (Murungi, 2015). The Salamanca Statement and Framework for Action on Special Needs Education (UNESCO, 1994) reaffirmed inclusion as an international guiding principle in the development of “education for all”. The statement affirms that all students ought to be accommodated in normal schools, without prejudice due to their physical, scholarly, linguistic, social or psychological needs and differences. Many researchers have stated that all children have a fundamental right to inclusive education, regardless of their differences (Srivastava, De Boer & Pijl, 2013; Waitoller & Artiles, 2013). They are entitled to access, participation, acceptance and success in ordinary school classrooms. Regardless of the internationalisation of the philosophy of inclusive education (UNESCO, 1994), for a range of historical, cultural, social and financial reasons, its implementation has been inequitable (Mitchell, 2010). International declarations, conference and conventions have attempted to give clarity to understanding IE from a global perspective. UNESCO (2009:8) defines IE “as a continuous process aimed at offering quality education for all while respecting diversity and the different needs and abilities, characteristics and learning expectations of the students and communities, eliminating all forms of discrimination”. Arnesen, Allen and Simonsen (2009) define inclusion as a process of transforming societies, communities and institutions such as schools to become diversity-sensitive. In contrast, the World Health Organisation (WHO) (2011:209) defines IE as an “understanding that the education of all children, including those with disabilities, should be the responsibility of the education ministries or their equivalent with common rules and procedures”. In this model, education may occur in a range of settings, for example, special schools and special classes, or ordinary classes in standard schools, following the model of the least restrictive environment.
The definitions reveal inconsistencies in how inclusive education is understood and interpreted globally. Some confine it to a sector where priority is placed on learners with disabilities; other definitions are consistently aligned with the Salamanca Statement as it aims at increasing participation for all and minimising exclusion. South Africa, as a signatory to the international conventions, started to develop its own definitions, based on the South African context and in line with its socio-political environment.

The South African government adopted several measures in support of IE, including different policies and legislation related to inclusive education, notably, the Constitution Act 108 of 1996, which mandates children’s rights to learn and which states that “no learner should be denied access to basic education” (Republic of South Africa [RSA], 1996a). The South African Schools Act (SASA) followed, which calls for inclusion of all learners in public schools and equal opportunities for all regardless of their individual differences (RSA, 1996b). The underpinning premise of these documents is redressing the apartheid injustice. The government then passed the Education White Paper 6 (EWP6) (DoE, 2001) which outlines how the implementation of inclusive education will be realised in the country. There are also several guidelines on inclusive education, including DBE (2010) outlining how full-service schools could support neighbouring schools in various ways; for example, sharing and trading assets and aptitudes. The Special Schools as Resource Centres Guidelines (DoE, 2005c) outline how special schools could become a hub of service delivery for the District Based Support Teams (DBST). The Guidelines for responding to Diversity in the Classroom through Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statements 2011 (DBE, 2011) outline how to support learners from different socio-economic backgrounds without discriminating against them. The Guidelines for Inclusive Teaching and Learning (DBE, 2010) outline strategies that can be used in teaching in an inclusive environment. The Conceptual and Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of Inclusive Education and the District Based Support Team (DoE, 2005a, b, c) propose support provision by different structures to ensure the success of the implementation of inclusive education. In addition, there is the Screening, Identification, Assessment and Support Policy (DBE, 2014), which outlines the importance of early identification of learners with barriers to learning and describes processes to be followed to support learners appropriately.
Globally, the successful implementation of inclusive education requires the provision of support (UNESCO, 1994). Consequently, several countries have institutionalised structures and systems to support the implementation of inclusive education. In the UK, local authorities are responsible for supporting the implementation of inclusive education (Dauncey, 2015) and, as White, Macleod, Jeffes and Atkinson (2010) note, they guarantee that the requirements of children are met by making them the focal point of basic leadership, and by including guardians and youngsters in audits. A few local authorities hold gatherings with parents and guardians, so they get the guardians’ point of view on their experience with the evaluation or the survey. Several local authorities learned that it was useful to allocate preparation and support to Special Educational Needs Coordinators (SENCO) in both special and ordinary schools to guarantee that all schools could give appropriate help, motivation and direction to guardians. The local authority contributes more where schools seem to have done all they sensibly can to give remedial help to LSEN (Long, 2018).

In Sweden, Meynert (2014) identifies that various groups work collaboratively to help teachers in district schools that work with LSEN through discussion, guidance and supervision, in-service training and organising on an ongoing basis. Similarly, in Finland, municipalities carry out early identification programmes to ensure that learners progress well in the mainstream (European Agency for Special Needs and Inclusive Education [EADSNE], 2015), and provide teaching for special needs education in small groups. However, when this intervention does not yield expected outcomes, a municipality may consider education only in a special class.

Hauerwas, Brown and Scott (2013) write that the USA has a multi-layered arrangement as an early-warning system. Furthermore, the multi-layered framework is likewise used to anchor extra help for each student, with or without diagnosed disability. A multi-tiered system promotes inclusive education and attempts to reduce the number of referrals of LSEN to special schools while reducing the rising costs of special education funding. According to Bryant Bryant, Gersten, Scammacca & Chaves (2008), Tier 1 includes guidance for all learners, while Tier 2 includes guidance on supplemental interventions and how to monitor the progress of LSEN. Tier 3 is saved for those students who require intensive interventions, which may include extra instructional time, small-group learning, adjusted
instructional content or adapted curriculum materials. The National Center on Response to Intervention (2010) suggests that schools should identify at-risk learners and monitor their advancement using the response-to-intervention (RTI) model. This provides evidence-based results and teachers then change the nature of the interventions according to individual students' responses (Hauerwas et al., 2013).

Consistent with global trends, South Africa has established several structures to support the implementation of inclusive education. These include DBSTs and School-Based Support Teams (SBST) that give indirect help to students through teachers and schools by overseeing curriculum implementation and assisting with institutional development (DoE, 2005a). DBSTs also directly support learners when the SBST is not able to respond to learning needs (DBE, 2014). Moreover, the DBSTs support all learners and educators in order to meet the full range of learning needs. The focus of my research is on professional preparation of DBST members where emphasis is placed on supporting educators and learners in ensuring that inclusive education is implemented successfully in schools.

Internationally and nationally, several studies have examined the adequacy of preparation to support the implementation of inclusive education and have yielded inconsistent findings. For instance, in the UK, White et al. (2010) held interviews with the heads of the Special Educational Support Service (SESS) in 26 local authorities and found that the teams perceived themselves to be consultants rather than direct providers. These teams are confident about the skills and knowledge they possess to enable schools to execute their role of supporting LSEN adequately and efficiently.

Similarly, in Ireland, PricewaterhouseCoopers (PWC, 2012) reported that there was a consensus that SESS gave continuous guidance to support and upgrade teachers’ knowledge, comprehension and attitudes with respect to their students’ educational needs. Most participating teachers perceived SESS seminars, conferences, and the website as effective in enhancing their knowledge and skills, as was also the case for teachers in special classes. Additionally, 70% of respondents revealed that their interaction with SESS improved their teaching practice, particularly for primary school teachers and teachers in special schools.
In Finland, Pesonen, Itkonen, Jahnukainen, Kontu, Kokko, Ojala and Pirttimaa (2015) held a nationwide survey and field observation with school staff working with students with critical inabilities. They found that the staff were generally satisfactorily prepared with regard to the new law on the implementation of a specialised curriculum. Only one respondent indicated that school managers and the municipality in general had not fully understood the changes in legislation on the implementation of special education.

In contrast, Mukhopadhyay, Nenty and Abosi (2012) found in a case study in Botswana that principals selected from six elementary schools were not adequately prepared for inclusive education. They also raised concerns about the educators’ inability to address the needs of LSEN. Similarly, one of the principals raised concerns about the absence of trained teachers.

Nel, Müller and Rheeders (2011) established in a study on public schools in the Johannesburg region that the DBSTs did not feature as the structure that supported schools as they lacked the capacity to support inclusive education. This was perceived to be unacceptable if inclusive education is to be realised and was not in line with the requirements of the EWP6 (DoE, 2001) which states that the primary function of DBSTs is to improve the functionality of the schools, as indicated above. In the Free State, Makhalemele and Nel (2015) found that 65% of the members of the DBSTs indicated that they had not received adequate training from the DBE about inclusive education. Based on the above, it is evident that there are inconsistencies in how support DBSTs support the implementation of inclusive education, and the training received to execute such responsibilities.

1.3 PROBLEM STATEMENT

As revealed in the background to the study, the global adoption of IE in keeping with international declarations, conventions, agreements and charters including the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UN, 1948) and the Salamanca Statement (UNESCO, 1994), mobilised support of schools in matters related to enhancing teacher training with regard to provision for SEN. Research indicates that, globally, the adequacy of professional preparation of support staff is a concern Swart, Engelbrecht, Eloff & Pettipher, 2002). Similarly, in South Africa, the adequacy of professional preparation of DBST members is yet to be determined. Nel (2013)
writes that there is great scepticism and ambivalence regarding the adequacy of professional preparation of DBSTs to support successful inclusion in schools. Therefore, this study seeks to explore the professional preparation of DBST members in supporting learners from diverse backgrounds with the view to proposing a strategy or model that can enhance DBST preparation in supporting the implementation of inclusive education.

Consistent with global trends, the adoption of inclusive education in South Africa demands changes to the way teachers assist in LSEN (Du Plessis, 2013; Makhalemele & Nel, 2015). Support is fundamental to successful inclusion (Nel, Tlale, Engelbrecht & Nel, 2016) as it is critical in pooling human, material, financial and technological resources for its successful and effective practice. The South African Constitution (Act 108 of 1996, section 29) (RSA, 1996a) and the SASA (RSA, 1996b; Section 5) mandate an inclusive education and training system which is grounded in support services (Pieterse, 2010). International conventions and local legislation provide a road map for the implementation of inclusive education.

One of the key strategies for the attainment of this goal is the involvement of support services to assist with the roll-out of inclusive education in the classrooms (Du Plessis, 2013). Hence, in the South African educational context, the DBE established DBSTs to collaborate with the provincial and national office to ensure teacher support provisioning, including training and classroom support to ensure that they are capacitated to address the different desires and obstacles to education in the classroom within the school (DBE, 2010; DoE, 2001). Globally, teachers and students alike report that sufficient administrative help could positively affect learners’ academic progress (Datta, 2015; O’Rourke & Houghton 2006; Segrott, Rothwell & Thomas, 2013).

Nevertheless, Nel et al. (2016) established that educators regarded DBSTs as being inadequately skilled in assisting them or in supporting students who experience barriers to learning in an inclusive environment. There is thus a need to explore professional preparation of DBST members in supporting the roll-out of inclusive education in classrooms and to propose strategies for enhancing it. The same study by Nel et al. (2015) shows that educators are dependent on the competency, expertise and input of DBSTs to ensure that they can adequately support learners.
with diverse experiences. Thus, this study aimed at exploring the professional preparation of DBST members in supporting the roll-out of inclusive education in classroom. To this end, the current study sought to answer the following main research question.

1.4 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The main research question was:

How professionally prepared are the members of the DBST in supporting the implementation of inclusive education in schools?

Sub-research questions were:

- What is the role of the DBST in supporting the implementation of inclusive education in schools?
- What strategies can be proposed to enhance the professional preparation of the DBST members in supporting the implementation of inclusive education?

1.5 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The main aim of the study was to:

- Explore the professional preparation of the members of the DBST in supporting the implementation of inclusive education in schools

The objectives of the study were to:

- Understand the role of the DBST in supporting the implementation of inclusive education in schools
- Propose strategies for enhancing the professional preparation of the DBST members in supporting the implementation of inclusive education in schools

1.6 RATIONALE

Successful and effective inclusion depends on organised support structures (Forlin, Loreman, Sharma & Earle, 2009; Sharma, Moore & Sonawane, 2009) that impact upon inclusive education, are diverse and often involve a range of different service professionals with their own attitudes, approaches and working methods (Watkins, 2009). Noting that inclusive education is a relatively recent phenomenon around the
world, teachers require support to successfully implement the idea (Pieterse, 2010; Motsise, 2014). This entails a fundamental philosophical shift for the entire education system (Du Plessis, 2013) as educational support cannot be restricted to explicit classifications of help or to explicit areas (special schools) but is, instead, a flexible system of support structures for all educators guided and managed by the DBST (DBE, 2014; Landsberg, Kruger & Nel, 2005). Consequently, there is a need to ascertain support team members’ professional preparation in supporting schools when implementing inclusive education in schools. Professional preparation of DBSTs is vital for helping to lead and guide full-service and special schools as resource centres as they are also expected to be part of the network of support. According to Pieterse (2010), network support should include special schools as resource centres, full-service schools, and mainstream schools. It is conceived that full-service schools will provide education to both ordinary students and LSEN in an inclusive context, with there being support for those with disabilities inside a standard classroom (Du Plessis, 2013).

The DBE regards DBST as a critical structure to support the implementation of inclusive education in schools (DoE, 2005). The DBE comprehends that barriers to learning and improvement can be reduced by strengthening the education support services (Du Plessis, 2013). Furthermore, the DoE (2005) states that the DBST ought to be the focal point of education support (Lazarus, Daniels & Engelbrecht, 2008) and must involve staff from provincial, district and head offices and special schools. Pieterse (2010) also contends that involvement of full-service schools and special schools as part of the team is vital for the successful implementation of inclusive education in schools.

In view of the above, the DBST has important role to play in supporting the implementation as they are expected to be an integrated group of professionals operating at the district level. It is necessary, however, to determine their professional preparedness in order to ensure that the execution of inclusive education is realised. In this study, professionalism is viewed as having adequate information, being properly prepared, developing a collegial network of associates and stakeholders, having proficient communication with parents and teachers, and establishing suitable systems of administration (DoE, 2001; DoE, 2005; Johnson & Green, 2007; Engelbrecht, 2008). Professionalism is one of the characteristics of
individuals making up the DBSTs that can have a positive impact on the implementation of inclusive education. Support and guidance on the course of action they should take motivates educators in the district in their task of curriculum and policy implementation. For an individual to develop competency, preparation is critical; hence, this study explores the professional preparation of DBST members in supporting the implementation of inclusive education in schools.

1.7 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY AND DESIGN

This section presents a brief description of the methodology and the design behind this study. Detailed description is provided in more details in Chapter 3.

1.7.1 Research Paradigm

A descriptive phenomenological paradigm was used as the lens through which to conduct the research. It sought to understand professional preparation of DBST members in supporting the roll-out of inclusive education in Gauteng Province, South Africa.

1.7.2 Research Approach

The research followed a qualitative research approach, described by Lincoln, Lynham and Guba (2011) as being embedded in exploring and understanding the meaning that individuals or groups ascribe to a social or human phenomenon. My aim was to explore and understand the participants' views about the topic, namely professional preparation of DBST members in supporting the implementation of inclusive education.

1.7.3 Research Design

Phenomenology is that basis of the research design, used as a procedure in which the specialist recognises the embodiment of human experience about a phenomenon as portrayed by members (Giorgi, 2009; Marshall & Rossman, 2010).
1.8 SITE SELECTION, POPULATION, SAMPLING AND DATA COLLECTION METHODS

1.8.1 Site Selection

There are nine provinces in South Africa. The provincial education department across the provinces is led by the Member of the Executive Council (MEC) who is appointed by the premier and is the senior administrator responsible for management of education. In each provincial Department of Education, there are districts which support schools found in the same geographical area. The number of districts depends on the number of schools that are being serviced. For this exploration, my focus was on Gauteng Province, which has 15 districts. Two sites were chosen from the 15 districts in the Gauteng Department of Education (GDE).

1.8.2 Population

Population can be defined as the collection of individuals with characteristics that the researcher is interested in studying (White, 2005). In this study, the target population was the members of DBST teams.

1.8.3 Sampling

Since this study aimed to understand professional preparation of DBST members in supporting the implementation of inclusive education, I was interested in applicable data that would assist me, leading me to use purposive sampling. This was the strategy that allowed me to select individuals and sites that purposefully informed me of the research problems and the central phenomenon (Creswell, 2007; McMillan & Schumacher, 2006). The sample thus included educational psychologists, an institutional development support officer, curriculum facilitators, staff from education support services, teachers at inclusive special schools and principals from resource centres and full-service schools who constitute the DBSTs.

1.8.4 Data Collection Methods

Focus group discussions and individual interviews were used to gather data from participants.
1.9 DATA ANALYSIS

Phenomenological analysis was used to analyse data. The steps I followed included open coding; axial coding; selective coding and critical analysis in presenting the findings by way of a narrative discussion.

1.10 ENVISAGED CONTRIBUTION OF THE STUDY

It is envisaged that the findings of this study will help ascertain whether DBSTs are professionally prepared in doing what is expected of them, and seeks to identify the gaps and challenges in their roles. The findings will explain ways in which DBST can support the implementation of inclusive education, by proposing a strategy to enhance the professional preparation of DBST members in supporting the implementing of inclusive education.

It is also envisaged that the study will benefit students, analysts, educators, politicians and administrators among other inclusive education stakeholders, such as trade unions and non-governmental organisations (NGO) involved in education in South Africa and elsewhere, by identifying criteria for evaluating professional development and assessing the DBST members’ readiness for providing support on inclusive educational practices.

1.11 CLARIFICATION OF CONCEPTS

- **The DBST** is described as an integrated group of professionals operating at the district level, comprising providers employed by the DoE with expertise drawn from education institutions and various community resources in the area (DoE, 2005).

- **Support** refers to all activities in a school which increase its capacity to respond to diversity (DBE, 2014). According to Magare, Kitching and Roos (2010) support includes emotional nurturing, building positive relationships and communicating openly in a trusting manner.

- In this study, **professionalism** is viewed as the maintenance of a standard of personal conduct by professional educators in their teaching endeavours, and includes professional development, collegiality, networking and efficient
administration (DoE, 2001; DoE, 2005; Engelbrecht, 2008; Johnson & Green, 2007).

- Research has indicated that the concept of inclusive education is defined and interpreted differently by different countries. In this study, inclusive education is used interchangeably with inclusion.

- Preparation focuses on how DBSTs are trained to execute their responsibilities adequately and successfully for successful implementation of inclusive education. The Oxford Living Dictionary (2013) defines preparation as the action or process of making something ready for use or service or of getting ready for some occasion, test, or duty.

- In this study, professional preparation refers to a wide range of specialised training, formal education, or continuous professional development intended to help support team officials, teachers, and other educators improve their professional knowledge, competence and skill in implementing IE.

1.12 OVERVIEW OF THE STUDY

The dissertation comprises the following chapters:

Chapter 1 presents the introduction, background, rational and aims of the study.

Chapter 2 presents the theoretical framework, with a brief definition of the adopted theory and a description of its historical development. The main ideas of the theory are explained in terms of their relevance to this research study. Furthermore, the researcher reviews relevant literature on theory and models on the implementation of inclusive education in schools. The literature review covers international perspectives of developed countries seeking to make inclusive education a reality. Models employed in other countries are compared with South African practices.

Chapter 3 presents a detailed description of the research methodology for the study. Procedures followed during fieldwork and in the analysis of data are outlined. The chapter also outlines ethical considerations and guidelines followed in the gathering of data.
Chapter 4 presents the findings in their themes and sub-themes, as informed by the participants' responses during two focus group interviews from different districts and follow-up individual interviews.

Chapter 5 is a discussion of the findings presented in the previous chapter, to confirm or refute findings from the literature reviewed in Chapter 4.

Chapter 6 is a summary of findings, with recommendations for strategies or a framework that will enhance the professional preparation of DBST members in supporting the implementation of inclusive education in Gauteng Province.

1.13 CHAPTER SUMMARY

This chapter has presented the background information for the research. The research problem was presented together with the aims and objectives of the study. A brief overview of the research approach was provided together with the rationale for the study and the concepts that underpin it. The next chapter reviews related literature on support teams’ professional preparation in supporting the implementation of inclusive education.
CHAPTER 2: 
LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter begins by presenting a theoretical framework that formed the baseline for this study. Thereafter, it reviews related literature on support teams’ professional preparation in supporting the implementation of inclusive education.

2.2 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Landsberg et al. (2005) define a theory as a collection of thoughts, assumptions and ideas that say something regarding the world, individuals or a part of the real world. Woollard (2010, cited in Gray & MacBlain, 2012) characterises theory as ranging from speculation that provides a tentative basis for understanding a complex issue through to a settled clarification. Henning, Van Rensburg and Smith (2004) posit that a theoretical framework underpins the investigation of the topic on which the researcher is working, enabling the researcher to chart his way through the exploration. The theoretical framework that guided the study is discussed in the next section.

2.2.1 Bronfenbrenner’s Ecological Systems Theory

Bronfenbrenner explains that the system within which children grow up has several layers which provides a basis for understanding children’s development (Gray & MacBlain, 2012). The system is an integrated one showing the interrelationships among the levels and settings within which individuals gather, create and work (Paquette & Ryan, 2001). Bronfenbrenner (1979) further states that the theory seeks to explain the influences that biological, environmental and relationship factors have on the developmental experiences of the growing person. For this study, I adopted Bronfenbrenner’s ecological systems theory (Bronfenbrenner, 1979) as a lens through which to explore the professional preparation of DBST members in supporting the implementation of inclusive education in schools.

As explained above, Bronfenbrenner’s ecological systems theory describes an individual /or family as a system that forms part of many other societal systems (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). Bronfenbrenner (1977) posits that child development takes
place within five nested systems: the microsystem, mesosystem, exosystem, the macrosystem and the chronosystem as illustrated in Figure 2.1 below.

Figure 2.1: Bronfenbrenner’s ecological systems theory

Source: (Walker, 1997:6)

These systems have a shared impact that needs to be balanced. Donald, Lazarus and Lolwana (2010) state that an individual must be understood within the context of the family, and, to comprehend families, one needs to analyse the relationships within those families. Sands, Kozleski and French (2004) extend this view to state that families have defined structures that create the environment both for immediate day-to-day interactions and for changes that facilitate adjustment to new conditions. Outside the family, the school is probably the most important system within the child’s experience.
2.2.1.1 Microsystem

A microsystem is a structure of relationships experienced by an individual in a close, personal setting with specific physical and material resources, and is made up of different people with individual personalities, identities, values and beliefs. The individual’s closest relationships, would include, for example, the family and close relatives, carers, other children and school friends (Saarinen, Ruoppila & Korkiakangas, 1994). Other examples in the microsystem are the neighbourhood of the child or religious groups (Penn, 2005). Family is at the core when studying the development of most people, irrespective of age, so the researcher takes a close look at a person’s relationships and describes them in terms of appropriate models.

2.2.1.2 Meso system

The second stratum that is critical in the ecological system theory is the mesosystem, defined by Paquette and Ryan (2001) as a layer that impacts the microsystem, for instance, educators and the family. Greydanus, Greydanus-Rutger and Merrick (2016) state that the mesosystem involves the interactions between at least two settings, for instance, the relationship between home and school. Expectations or obligations are created within the mesosystem that determine different behaviours. As indicated by Bronfenbrenner, the mesosystem is complex, considering the multitude of relationships and interrelationships that occur between the child and the elements of the microsystem and the exosystem, and one needs to be aware of the impact that one has on the other.

In this context, my study explores an element of the mesosystem, namely the professional preparation of DBST members in supporting the implementation of inclusive education in schools, using this theory to ascertain how they support educators and learners at the school level.

2.2.1.3 The exosystem

Bronfenbrenner (2005) clarifies the exosystem as an expansion of the mesosystem, which incorporates other explicit social structures, both formal and informal, that do not themselves necessarily contain the individual. He proceeds to show that the exosystem encroaches on and includes the immediate settings in which that individual is found, thereby “influencing, delimiting or even determining what goes
on there” (Bronfenbrenner, 2005:515). This incorporates government agencies, like social welfare and health services, and beyond that, the world of work and the political and economic systems. A negative impact on development can result when the exosystem breaks down. The exosystem has an indirect but major impact on the microsystem (Bronfenbrenner & Vasta, 1989). The exosystem has relevance to this study as it helped me to understand DBST collaboration with other stakeholders, such as the DBE and other stakeholders like NGOs.

2.2.1.4 Macrosystem

Berk (2000) describes the macrosystem as the outermost layer of the child’s environment, where the cultural values, traditions and laws reside. The macrosystem incorporates the societal variables that affect individuals’ lives, for example, customs, values and beliefs (Barsky, 2019; Härkönen, 2007). Paquette and Ryan (2001) state that the macrosystem comprises of extended societal frameworks that affect the life of an individual. The macrosystem can be thought of as a societal blueprint for a culture, subculture, or other broader social context. Macrosystems do not allude to an explicit setting influencing the life of a specific individual, but instead comprise a general model within which the structure and activities of societies exist (Bronfenbrenner, 2005). The macrosystem contributed to the researcher taking into consideration of how the legislative framework, political factors and other related factors may influence the professional preparation of DBST members in implementing inclusive education in schools.

2.2.1.5 Chronosystem

The chronosystem is a depiction of the advancement, improvement or development of the external systems over the short or long term (Bronfenbrenner, 1989). The chronosystem is illustrated as the outer circle in Figure 2.1. The chronosystem comprises the environmental events, transitions and developments that occur throughout a child's life. In the bio-ecological model, time, quality and quantity of the proximal processes are linked. These factors were considered and were used to provide a guide to designing the aims and methodology for this study. My exploration was not intended to be stereotypical as I explored this with regard to the duration and the quality of the preparation relative to the political situation. This assisted in determining the adequacy of the training in supporting the
implementation of inclusive education. Furthermore, a study of the differences and similarities pertaining to the past and the present will culminate in a framework of strategies that can enhance professional preparation of DBST members in enabling the implementation of inclusive education in schools. It is imperative to consider other factors that influence DBST functionality and how these contribute to successful implementation. Based on this theory, every sub-system is vital to the execution of inclusive education.

2.3 PROFESSIONAL PREPARATION AND PREPAREDNESS OF SUPPORT TEAMS

A common premise of inclusive education is that pedagogical institutions will be afforded services by specialist support personnel through a special education sector (Agbenyega, 2007; Pantić & Florian, 2015). Literature, nevertheless, consistently reveals inconsistent findings on the professional preparation of staff within the special education sector to support inclusion (Florian & Linklater, 2010; Flecha & Soler, 2013). In Finland, schools “are places run by highly educated and esteemed teachers who know best how to do their job” (Hopman, 2008:432), and since teaching is considered a high-status vocation, there is a high demand for training, resulting in highly qualified teachers with the competence to meet the full range of needs of all children in their classrooms. Consequently, support teams in Finland are as effective as teachers and support is provided based on the observed needs of the learners (Jahnukainen, 2011). In the USA, the RTI model shows that professionally qualified and trained support teams are able to offer targeted interventions for at-risk students (Fuchs et al., 2008). Conversely, students and teachers in inclusive settings in Australia are not adequately supported because of poor preparation of support teams (Yates, 2013). Similarly, Kenway (2013:39) established that support teams in Australia are not well prepared to support teachers in inclusivity as the national focus is on “disadvantaged schools rather than on the systemic relationships that also contribute to disadvantage”. In the same vein, a study in Kenya by Lynch, McCall, Douglas, McLinden, Mogesa, Mwaura and Njoroge (2011) found that support personnel lacked knowledge about the learning needs of students with visual impairment whom they were supporting.
Mutepfa, Mpofu and Chakaita (2007) found that Zimbabwean children with significant disabilities had been turned away from schools because teachers perceived themselves as untrained and ill-equipped to assist them. Similarly, Majoko’s (2017b) study found that the Zimbabwe Schools Psychological Services and Special Needs Education Department staff lacked adequate professional preparation in several disability categories, including autism, to adequately support teachers in the implementation of inclusive education. It is evident that there are inconsistencies in professional preparation of support teams between developed countries and developing countries.

2.3.1 Adequacy of Support Teams’ Professional Preparation in supporting the Implementation of Inclusive Education

Deppeler (2012:132) posits that “Quality teaching within inclusive schools requires focused attention on improving the collective professional knowledge and practices of teachers”. The need to train teachers and recommend educational programmes that use appropriate instructional methods can be challenging in nations which have few people skilled in inclusive training (Donnelly & Kyriazopoulou, 2014). Effective implementation requires more than trainers simply having specialised abilities because educators need the correct conditions to demonstrate their abilities (Shaddock, Giorcelli & Smith, 2007). Only when educators are sufficiently prepared, can they use resources properly and be motivated to incorporate IE in their classrooms (Boyle, Scriven, Durning & Downes, 2011). This also requires all learners to concentrate on the lessons and to receive acknowledgement for all their accomplishments, not just scholastic. Specifically, structures enable learners to express their opinions and impact their choices both in school and in their lives (Donnelly & Kyriazopoulou, 2014). As Donnelly and Kyriazopoulou (2014) note, in Finland, colleges offer a one-year training programme on SNE for educators after completion of a degree; the focus of the programme is on identifying LSEN with mathematical, socio-linguistic and behavioural and writing difficulties, proficient planning of IEPs and collaboration with parents. Be that as it may, inclusion is not specifically addressed, but is included as an ‘add-on’ in numerous courses.
2.3.1.1 Norway

Hausstatter and Takala (2008) found that, in Norway, several university colleges and universities offered programmes on teaching learners with special needs. The Advanced Certificate in Education (ACE) level offers training on LSEN, yet these do not have a specific focus. The competence centres for students who are blind and deaf arranged training courses for teachers, parents and students with those disabilities (Flem and Keller, 2000).

2.3.1.2 Ireland

In Ireland, professional development programmes in SEN are provided by a range of suppliers offering both accredited and non-accredited alternatives (O'Gorman & Drudy, 2011). Educator training involves three stages, namely, teacher training, employment, and in-service professional development. Most of Ireland's teacher training courses include modules on SEN (Kearns & Shevlin, 2006), thus ensuring that future educators are receptive to IE. Teacher training specialising in IE is a recent development and is being made available to all educators. The lack of training in SEN has been highlighted as a concern and trainee educators are encouraged to take these courses (Killeavy & Murphy, 2006). The third stage of teacher training offers opportunities for more experienced teachers who perhaps were not exposed to IE during their initial training to upskill themselves in SEN. Currently, skills development in SEN is offered by providers ranging from public universities offering postgraduate degrees to private providers providing online certification. The courses offered by tertiary institutions are formally accredited while others may provide a range of examinations and assessment (O'Gorman & Drudy, 2011).

The Department of Education and Skills (DES) in Ireland regard a one-year, full-time postgraduate diploma from a university or training college as sufficient for teachers working in SEN (PWC, 2012). Other recognised courses in SEN are offered by NGOs. There are also post-graduate research degrees and doctoral programmes. In exceptional circumstances, accredited short courses require educator training to be given by the SESS established by the DES.
The various options benefit both individual educators and schools (O’Gorman & Drudy, 2011). Further assistance for schools in developing all their staff in SEN is accessible through DES school development activities such as workshops and on-site visits. Teacher unions also provide SEN courses for educators (O’Gorman & Drudy, 2011).

2.3.1.3 Australia

In Australia, there is a range of teacher training programmes that address teachers’ ability to work in inclusive classrooms (Forlin, Chambers, Loreman, Deppeler & Sharma, 2013). Shortcomings have been identified in the skills of older teachers who have experience in traditional teaching environments but have not often been exposed to LSEN (Forlin, 2010). These teachers need to be retrained to adapt to the changes in educational philosophies and international imperatives. Those who plan well will probably look for opportunities to enhance their training and take part in continuous professional development (CPD) and life-long learning (Scheerens, 2010). For in-service training, it is critical that provision is made for them to get these skills. A review of CPD for in-service teachers undertaken by Waitoller and Artiles (2013) highlighted the use of educational theoretical frameworks to support and develop teachers to enhance their teaching and achieve better results for all learners. However, they explain that “… most PD examined for inclusive education utilized a unitary approach toward contrast and exclusion and that teacher learning for inclusive education is undertheorized” (Waitoller & Artiles, 2013:319).

Individualised lesson plans were found by Stephenson, Carter and Arthur-Kelly (2011) to make the curriculum more accessible to learners. Shaddock (2006) found that educators needed focused training and valued the commitment of advisers; however, they also benefited from collaboration with other educators. Teacher collaboration has been recognised as a valuable means of adapting and upgrading educators’ practices (Vescio, Ross & Adams, 2008), and as a basis of skills enhancement (Deppeler, 2010).

Slee (2010) states that CPD for teachers enhances their teaching practice, particularly where new approaches to education such as IE are introduced. As IE is based on the notion of social equity, it must necessarily include many people and viewpoints in an ongoing debate about what is important, and must include LSEN
themselves. It has been proposed that university colleges coordinate their efforts in research and training on IE, providing opportunities to teachers to participate in finding solutions to the challenges that come with this new approach.

Australia requires all teachers to complete a preparatory programme, for example, a Bachelor of Education degree, followed by in-service programmes to develop expertise in SEN. They may also study towards a postgraduate qualification in learning support, SEN requirements or IE (Mitchell, 2010). Inclusive training education (ITE) programmes in Queensland address issues of inclusivity and a range of learner needs in general, but only one programme at Griffith University focuses on unique instructional methods for specific disabilities such as visual or hearing impairments. Mitchell (2010) states, however, that the Professional Standards of the Queensland Board for Teacher Registration for in-service educators require that they should develop their ability to adapt their teaching methods to address the needs of all students, including those with cognitive or behavioural challenges. Teachers are required to adapt and differentiate their teaching to accommodate all learners to provide them with opportunities to achieve the best possible learning outcomes. The Registration Board requires that teachers entering the profession must be properly trained in such approaches which would lead to the creation of a system that ensures that IE is implemented successfully.

Mitchell (2010) explains that, in Victoria, a special needs educator is required to complete a postgraduate qualification in a SEN after completing an undergraduate degree in education. The Victorian Department of Education and Training also requires custom educational modules graduates to have 45 days of sensible calm disapproved of understanding, including something like 30 days of managed instructive projects commitment and ace practice in a combination of settings. Similarly, the department runs instructor capability enhancement programmes, which are remarkably proposed for rehearsing teachers (Mitchell, 2010).

2.3.1.4 The United States

In the USA, Ackerman, Beier and Bowen (2002) explain that schools and colleges offer ITE programmes to prepare teachers to become special-needs instructors. Most states require SNE teachers to finish a multi-year school training programme, yet some require a graduate degree with a special needs licence. Different states
have various prerequisites for licensing teachers and extra coursework in SEN is promoted. All programmes are planned to ensure that educators meet the state requirements, and schools and universities are accredited by their state to provide such programmes. Associations may be accredited by the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher training (NCATE), while general ITE trainee instructors can take optional courses that train them to deal with specific disabilities. Most states have three levers for managing system quality (Coggshall, Bivona & Reschly, 2012).

- Approval. State bureaus of training set out programme endorsement prerequisites and benchmarks, requiring that training providers apply for initial endorsement and submit to intermittent surveys carried out by boards of teachers from across the state.
- Accreditation. Numerous states empower or require training providers to seek accreditation from a non-legislated accreditation body. Associations generally apply for accreditation by NCATE, while general ITE trainee instructors may have the option of undertaking optional courses relating to a specific educational module.
- Certification. All states require that graduates from educator training programmes meet minimum standards, for example, undergoing state tests on essential aptitudes, holding a degree in an explicit branch of knowledge, and finishing coursework specifically in a particular domain. Such accreditation requirements provide an means of ensuring programme quality since providers must guarantee that their applicants meet these standards so that general society will see them as acceptable.

2.3.1.5 Asian-Pacific countries

A review of research articles from 2007 and 2012 on the implementation of inclusive education in nations in the Asia-Pacific locale focused on teacher training. The International Statistical Institute (ISI, 2012) undertook a survey to determine the ways that teacher training might be adapted to include training on students who are excluded from standard schooling because of some kind of perceived disability. The survey found that teacher training did not address inclusion in any meaningful way (Sharma, Forlin, Deppeler & Yang, 2013). Several countries indicated that there were limited once-off modules that were taken by a small number of teachers. Apart
from Vietnam which has made it compulsory for in-service teachers especially in preschool classrooms to receive training in IE, there was no sign of any national teacher training programme that included IE. The absence of any focused national teacher training programme was regarded as a threat to quality education, for example, in Bangladesh, Bhutan, China and Pakistan (Sharma et al., 2013).

The surveys also found that countries like Bhutan and Papua New Guinea depended on visiting specialists to provide viable teacher training and were concerned about the absence of stakeholder participation (Sharma et al., 2013). This neglect was accompanied by an unmistakable lack of suitably qualified educators to implement new methodologies for IE (Sharma et al., 2013). While in a few nations, there is a push for inclusion at all levels of society, in most, there is no training on inclusive education in teacher training programmes (Sharma et al., 2013).

2.3.1.6 Conclusions on the adequacy of preparation

In view of the above, it is apparent that there is inconsistency between developed and developing countries in terms of the adequacy of preparation of support teams. The former appeared to be advanced as research studies reveal measures in place to prepare teachers to become support teachers or enter the field, with requirements such as passing certain board examinations. There are also councils or professional bodies that regulate qualifications that teachers or service providers must have to qualify to teach learners experiencing barriers to learning. They expect teachers who enter the profession to have passion and commitment and be well prepared to meet the learners’ needs. In contrast, developing countries still face a challenge with the training of educators and resources, as revealed by Sharma et al. (2013) and Chireshe (2013). I thus explored the adequacy of professional preparation of DBST members in supporting the implementation of inclusive education since they are expected to provide support for the realisation of inclusive education in South Africa. The next section describes inclusive education from an international perspective.
2.4 INCLUSIVE EDUCATION: INTERNATIONAL PERSPECTIVE

Globally, inclusive education developed as a movement to challenge unfair, prejudiced and exclusionary practices, with protection for all learners who should be afforded equal opportunities (Meltz, Herman & Pillay, 2014). The concept of inclusion has grown to include all children and young people, despite different cultural, social and learning backgrounds, with equal learning opportunities in all types of schools (Chimhenga, 2016). It varies from earlier held notions of ‘integration’ and ‘mainstreaming’, which suggest a concern mainly with disability and ‘SEN’ in preparing students for mainstream education (Meynert, 2014). According to Michailakis and Reich (2009), the movement is a universal phenomenon which started in advanced countries that had already established systems for special education. The idea of a differentiated curriculum and inclusion gradually took root in countries of the East (Miles, 1997).

The need to teach LSEN was first seen by missionaries, and towards the end of the 20th century, most industrialised countries had implemented educational systems that made provision for students with disabilities. Recently, there have been two critical improvements globally in the training of students with disabilities students in mainstream schools (Dyson & Forlin, 2007). Later, the transformation of this into the inclusion movement saw an attempt to accommodate students with disabilities in mainstream schools. The concept of IE needs to be included in undergraduate teacher training programmes (EADSNE, 2012). The characteristics of IR are based on the recognition of the fundamental human rights of all people including those with disabilities (Booth, 2011), and this has clear pragmatic ramifications (Ainscow, Booth & Dyson, 2006). Educators who see inclusive education as a key to recognising human rights, social justice, equitable training and social equity have exhibited an eagerness to implement IE (Lalvani, 2013). The move toward IE requires schools to reflect inclusive policies, beliefs and values in their vision and mission statements, with their accompanying policies and procedures, and to develop teachers’ skills and knowledge to address the learning needs of all students (Carrington & Robinson, 2004).

Internationally, IE is reflected in several legislative frameworks, with inclusion having been directly advocated since the adoption of the Universal Declaration of
Human Rights in 1948 and included in several key UN declarations and conventions. The Salamanca Statement made an important contribution to the effort undertaken for achieving ‘Education for All’ and helped many schools to become educationally more effective (Farrell & Ainscow, 2002). The statement urges all nations to embrace, as an issue of law or strategy, the standard of inclusive education (UNESCO, 1994). Article 24 of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities was adopted in 2006 (UN, 2006), specifically advocates that IE is central to human rights and that equal opportunities should be a priority policy objective of liberal democracies.

Utilisation of the terms ‘inclusion’ and ‘inclusive education’ and their associated meanings vary significantly among various nations and districts (Donnelly & Kyriazopoulou, 2014), with Crawford and Porter (2004) defining the latter as programmes of instruction in which teachers have guidance and support to:

- welcome and incorporate all students despite their differences in standard school classrooms and neighbourhood schools with their same-aged peers.
- foster cooperation and achieve the fullest conceivable development of all learners’ human potential.
- encourage involvement of learners in all sectors of society.

Awareness of inclusion from a global perspective has been conceptualised differently as countries have varying contexts (Nel et al., 2011) which influence how it is practised and implemented (Artiles & Dyson, 2005; Dyson, 2001; Florian & Kershner, 2009). The concept of IE challenges educators and educational systems to consider various routes to implementation (Sharma et al., 2013) but despite the international mandates (UNESCO, 1994; 2008) the evidence from social and economic surveys has shown uneven implementation around the globe, even among the signatories to the policies and statements. It has been especially problematic in developing nations, where assets are constrained and fewer than 2% of learners with disabilities get any type of education (Mitchell, 2010). One of the greatest challenges faced by developing countries is lack of preparedness of teachers to implement an inclusive approach in schools. If they are to become effective inclusive practitioners and understand and meet the needs of all learners,
they must be educated appropriately to undertake this new role (Forlin, Earle, Loreman, & Sharma, 2009; Graziano, 2008).

The next section presents inclusive education from a South African point of view.

2.5 INCLUSIVE EDUCATION: SOUTH AFRICA’S PERSPECTIVE

Inclusive education as the new reality in South African education brings with it major philosophical shifts for educators and support staff (Engelbrecht & Green, 2001; Stofile, 2008). Educators and support professionals are attempting to implement a better approach to providing education support services, especially against a backdrop of profound change (Hay, 2003; Ladbrook, 2009; Mhlongo, 2015). There is, however, a concern that service professionals who are supposed to support educators are also struggling; hence, this study aims to understand professional preparation of DBST members in supporting the implementation of IE in schools. IE in the South African context is defined as a learning environment that promotes the full personal and academic development of all learners, irrespective of race, class, gender, disability, religion, culture, sexual preference, learning styles and language (DoE, 2007). Inclusion is viewed as an ethical issue of human rights and qualities, as declared in the Salamanca Statement (UNESCO, 1994) and as an indispensable part in the foundation of an inclusive society. Inclusion is therefore concerned with equality in education and collective belonging, especially with regard to equal access to education for learners with disabilities (Ainscow & Miles, 2008; Booth 2011; Nel, 2013). This implies that learners with disabilities should be educated in supported, heterogeneous, age-appropriate, natural and learner-centred classrooms (Kauffman & Hallahan, 2005).

As the document that helps with coordinating and sketching out the execution of inclusive education in South Africa, EWP6 (DoE, 2001:16) includes the following in its definition of inclusion:

- Acknowledging that all children and youth can learn and they need support.
- Accepting and respecting that all learners are different and have different learning needs which are equal valued as an ordinary part of human experience.
- Enabling education structures, systems and learning methodologies to meet the needs of all learners.
• Acknowledging and respecting differences in learners, whether due to age, gender, ethnicity, languages, class and disability or HIV status.
• Providing broader than formal schooling and acknowledging that learning also occurs in the home and community, and within formal and informal modes of structure.
• Changing attitudes, behaviour, teaching methodologies, curricula and environment to meet the needs of all learners.
• Maximising the participation of all learners in curricula of education instructions and uncovering and behaviour to learning.
• Empowering learners by development of their individual strengths and enabling them to participate critically in the process of learning.

Howell and Lazarus (2003) point out that this policy provides a framework for systemic change in which strategies are orientated towards building the capacity of the system to respond to the full range of barriers to learning, including disabilities that exist among children in the country. Jansen (2001) also argues that educational change can best be described as a strategy for the achievement of a broad political symbolism to mark the shift from apartheid to a post-apartheid society. However, the success of IE in South Africa depends on shifts from traditional teaching practices where teachers are accountable for their results (Engelbrecht & Green, 2001) to education support specialists who are required to reinterpret the teachers’ roles and change their course of thought and action. It takes courage to move away from the safety of an entrenched behaviourist ideology based on the assumption that the experts (i.e. the teachers) know best, and towards using a methodology that embraces various types of socially constructed learning, including the specific knowledge and abilities of all learners (Engelbrecht & Green, 2001). If education support specialists are to address the challenge facing them within the South African context, they must increase support for the participation of all learners in a quality education system that embodies the ideal of service to society (Engelbrecht & Green, 2001).

Naicker (2002) contends that a new dispensation cannot be produced inside an old framework, and that inclusive education, like OBE, requires a reconsideration of the entire hypothesis of education (i.e. that interventions are required by educators to ensure that learners achieve the best possible educational outcomes) together with
teaching methods, expectations, performance, methods, models, race, class, disabilities and sexual orientation. Some of the changes should include the following shifts: (a) from pathology medical or individual explanation to understanding system deficiencies located within understanding of barriers to learning; (b) from organising services as indicated by the type of disability towards deciding the dimension of help; (c) from the Special Education Act toward the SASA; and (d) from an instructional method of exclusion to one of recognition of the abilities of every learner to achieve the educational outcomes with due regard for their needs and learning styles (Stofile, 2008).

The systemic change requires significant reform and restructuring of all school operations. According to Edelman (2001, cited in Laauwen, 2004), change is driven by people who see the need for changing the status quo, and should not just remain a declaration on paper or an intention provide for diversity in education. This means that there is need for changes to educational practice if the country is to achieve the mandate set out in the Constitution Section 29, namely that everyone including people with disabilities in South Africa has the right to a basic education. While this thesis is not specifically about disabilities, it is essential to recognise that all learners have needs to one degree or another, whether they are gifted learners or mentally or physically disabled.

As per EWP6 (DoE, 2001), inclusive education and a preparation framework ought to be established to cater for diversity and provide appropriate resources for all students and educators. Moreover, to ensure that inclusive education takes place, there is widespread acceptance of the central role that education support professionals, such as educational psychologists, school counsellors, therapists, special educators and learning support specialists can play in meeting learners’ needs and limiting their exclusion from school curricula and communities (Conway, 2017). As part of the transformation process, several support structures at different levels, namely national, provincial, district and school were introduced to play different roles in ensuring that inclusive education is implemented successfully.

As indicated by Nel (2011), support teams should be set up in schools to help teachers plan how to deal with different needs, to enable multi-level learning in classrooms, and to develop approaches to diversity in the classroom. In terms of
South Africa’s understanding of inclusive education, DBSTs have been perceived as critical structures for providing support to educators and learners and directing the implementation of inclusive education (DoE, 2001).

2.6 DBST ROLE IN SUPPORTING THE IMPLEMENTATION OF INCLUSIVE EDUCATION

The DBST was described in Chapter 1 (1.11). The team is required to be trained and work within a network of specialists in an education district established by the DBE. It is expected to play a pivotal role as a lever for change. The next paragraph describes its composition as outline in EWP6 (DoE, 2001).

2.6.1 Composition of the District Based Support Team

As indicated by EWP6 (DoE, 2001), specific consideration ought to be given to including psychologists, remedial teachers and health professionals in a pool of resources that can be drawn on by the DBST, full-service schools, special schools and resource centres in implementing IE. The DBST, together with teachers trained in special education needs, would thus include a pool of professionals with the requisite skill and experience. The DBST is responsible for the allocation of resources and staff to intervention programmes that help to integrate LSEN into the classroom environment together with mentors, a school management team (SMT), classroom managers and school governing bodies (SGBs).

As per Engelbrecht et al. (2008), the abilities required incorporate a range of aptitudes and experience possessed by people with professional knowledge on interventions that can be used to address SEN. Those abilities should be used to bring about institutional change by providing appropriate help:

- to school leaders with administration and coordination of learning programmes;
- to educators and parents with the implementation of the learning programmes;
- to students in terms of psychosocial, medical and therapeutic support for identified needs, and
- to educators with the development of institutional and educational programmes.
Engelbrecht et al. (2005) further argue that the DBSTs could play a central role in building the capacity of the team and school to understand the challenges relating to building an inclusive school.

2.6.2 Main Education Support Service Providers at District Level

DBSTs ought to be able to identify the needs of each schools and the students in order to allocate resources appropriately, but they need to have the expected capabilities to meet the jobs requirements (Landsberg, 2009). Consequently, the choices will be guided by the knowledge of the barriers that students encounter and the extent of the required skills which the educators have. Capabilities require the incorporation of a range of skills and experience; for instance, mastery of IE principles and practice that address barriers to learning (Lazarus et al., 2008).

EWP6 (2001) states that an important function of a DBST is to:

- Support all learners, educators and the structures in general so all learning needs can be met. The focus should be on both teaching and learning, and emphasis will be on the development of suitable pedagogical methodologies that will help all learners, minimising the limitations in the structure that keep learners from achieving their full potential and on modification of the status quo in the classroom.

- Help teachers in making better use of their teaching skills in the appraisal of learning. They should provide an illustrative learning programme, learning support materials and evaluation instruments. They should also evaluate the effectiveness of the teachers’ programmes and prescribe alternatives where improvement is needed. Through supporting instructing, learning and administration, they should reduce the pedagogical gaps in schools by providing suitable training to teachers on how to identify and address serious learning challenges by adapting the curriculum. They should also suggest interventions for learners in a range of settings and act as mentors to the SBSTs, classroom educators and SGBs.

- According to DoE (2005), the core purpose of the DBST is to bring educators up to speed with the latest curriculum and policy developments in order to ensure effective teaching and learning through identifying and addressing learning needs at all levels of the system. Networking with local SBSTs in other schools
and with education faculties at universities can enhance the effectiveness of teaching practice. In this regard, the key focus area of these teams is: (a) assisting schools to address barriers to learning; (b) recognising and organising interventions jointly with stakeholders from the school communities; (c) identifying the help required; and (d) providing assistance to build the capacity of the schools to implement IE. These teams should link the institutions with formal and informal support systems in the surrounding community so that the needs and barriers could be addressed in an holistic way. The team should provide assistance to students where required, when SBSTs are not able to address the learners’ needs (DoE, 2005). This suggests that individuals from the DBSTs have a key role to play in implementing IE, and therefore also need to enhance their skills.

The DBE (2010:45) contends that the DBST in collaboration with the provincial and national office must ensure “the provision of relevant staff development programmes that include training and classroom support to educators so that they can develop their ability to address diverse needs and barriers to learning in the school”. Moreover, according to the DBE (2010:45), the role of professional support specialists should include “ensuring access to appropriate additional support programmes and services within the framework of the SIAS strategy for learners who experience barriers to learning and development”. The DBST ought to facilitate continuing professional development for teachers to enable them to identify barriers to learning and improvement, meet student support needs and develop appropriate individual help plans.

Lastly, Engelbrecht and Green (2001:49) emphasise that DBSTs must also assist with the following: “(a) facilitation of inter-sectoral collaboration; (b) building capacity and awareness of governing bodies around issues of barriers to learning development; (c) assisting schools to access community support; (d) playing a consultative role in supporting educators in schools; and (e) initiating school-based educator training programmes to sensitise teachers to diversity”. The DBST is also expected to develop a holistic, community-based approach to support services.
2.6.3 Creating an Inclusive Curriculum

Making proper adjustments or changes to the educational programmes is key to inclusive education. Mitchell (2008:30, citing Jönsson, 1993) portrayed educational modules in an inclusive classroom as follows:

- “It is a single curriculum that is, as far as possible, accessible to all learners, including those with SEN.
- It includes activities that are age-appropriate but are pitched at a developmentally appropriate level.
- Since an inclusive classroom is likely to contain students who are functioning at two or three levels of the curriculum, this means that multi-level teaching will have to be employed; or, at a minimum, adaptations will have to be made to take account of the student diversity.
- To make the curriculum accessible, consideration should be given to the following alternatives in relation to content, teaching materials, and the responses expected from the learners”.

As per DoE (2001), it is essential that both the education system and the curriculum accommodate the full scope of ever-changing learner needs, with specific consideration being paid to procedures for instructional and educational programmes. In reacting to the range of student needs in classrooms, it is essential to differentiate the delivery of educational modules to facilitate access to learning for all students (DoE, 2001). All schools are required to offer a similar educational programme to students while differentiating the methods of delivery and assessment to accommodate diversity. Respecting diversity implies the belief that all students are able to learn (DBE, 2011).

2.6.4 Assessment in Inclusive Education

Inclusive assessment is defined as an approach to assessment in mainstream settings where policy and practice are designed to promote the learning of all learners to the greatest extent possible. The overall goal of inclusive assessment is that assessment policies and procedures should support and enhance the successful inclusion and participation of all learners, including those with SEN (Meijer, Soriano & Watkins, 2007). According to Nkoane (2006), inclusive education demands a flexible success-orientated approach to assessment, evaluation and
examination. The assessment of learners should be related to the aims of the curriculum, with a recognition of culture, the ability and the background experience of the learners. Assessment must therefore not limit its focus to academic performance alone but must consider other factors that could influence the achievement of outcomes, whether positive or negative. It is also important for the DBST to offer support through a multi-disciplinary approach.

Evaluation is both summative and formative and relies upon feedback that empowers students to enhance their performance (Mitchell, 2010). Formative assessment assesses learners’ progress during a course or module with the objective of providing them with opportunities to improve, and for educators to realign their delivery of the curriculum. Summative assessment “is concerned with evaluating learners’ performances at the end of a module or a course and the results count towards making a final judgement on what the learners have achieved” (Mitchell, 2008:107). Assessment is an essential component in the implementation of inclusive education in South Africa. It is also essential to note that it should be multi-dimensional or developmental in nature. Parents and learners are central to such educational processes (DBE, 2010). As indicated by the DBE (2011), differentiation in evaluation will empower students of different abilities and with a various levels of understanding to best demonstrate what they know. During differentiation, it is critical to understand how to incorporate accommodations in assessments. Accommodations and/or modifications are planned according to the individualised needs of the student and may require a modification to the “timing, formatting, setting, scheduling, response, and/or presentation” of an assessment task (Peterson-Ahamad, Stepp & Somerville, 2018:3).

According to the DoE (2011), assessment serves three purposes: (a) it informs instructional planning; (b) it informs instruction to evaluate effectiveness of teaching for all learners; and (c) it assesses learning by identifying learner needs and strengths to evaluate their achievement against predetermined criteria for the purposes of grading and reporting. The SIAS policy (DBE, 2014) provides guidelines for effective, differentiated assessment. It also highlights the process by which the number of teachers allocated (the so-called post provisioning) to each public school is determined to ensure that an adequate teacher-learner ratio exists.
in classrooms depending on the schools’ learning programmes and needs (NAPTOSA, 2018).

The shift proposed by the SIAS policy is aimed at maximising learner participation in the learning process by providing adequate resources, particularly staff, to the schools where they are needed. The job of all DBSTs ought to be to help, screen and assess the implementation of the policy. This involves setting up new systems and makes suggestions for how educators, SBSTs and principals can be adequately prepared for the change (DBE, 2014). Figure 2.1 below highlights the role that must be played by the DBST in assessment. DBE (2014) states that the SIAS process consists of the following three stages: (a) Support Needs Analysis (SNA) 1, (b) SNA 2 (c) SNA 3, as shown in Figure 2.1.

Figure 2.2 The SIAS process

In SNA1, schools and teachers gather background information of learners to understand their basic needs, talents and aspirations. At this stage, basic information is required which will provide an overall picture of who the child is, including his/her family and home circumstances, and his/her strengths, weaknesses and interests. The completion of different sections of SNAs is important to identify both gifted learners and learners with learning barriers so that they can be sustained and supported. The form ought to accompany the student in the event of a move to another school.

2.6.4.1 Screening guided by learner profile

SNA1 applies to learners who have been recognised by the teacher as experiencing difficulties in the learning process. The recognition of student needs is based on evidence from an appraisal process which incorporates perception, documentation
from the learner’s portfolios of evidence, backed up by verbal discussions with other educators, leaders or parents.

When the learner is first assessed, educators will record vital data in SNA2 in meetings with the SBST, guardians or parents and even learners, where possible. Information gathered in SNA2 will identify both negative and positive factors with regard to the learner to help with a clearer perception of the setting in which the learner may experience barriers to learning and development. It revolves around identifying obstacles to learning and progress of the individual learner within the context and background that impact the progress of learners.

2.6.4.2 Identification and addressing barriers to learning and development at school level

SNA2 enables the identification of strategies to help teachers, parents and SBSTs to deal with barriers which exist for the learner, both visible and invisible. It allows teachers, parents and SBSTs to recognise whether a learner’s needs for assistance are ongoing and require adaptations to the school or home environment. It is critical to determine the correct type and level of assistance required as this leads to the next stage.

2.6.4.3 Identifying and addressing barriers to learning and development at district level

SNA3 guides the DBST in the support that must be provided to the referred learners (DBE, 2014). Consultation by the DBST with SBSTs, teachers and parents is used for the following:

- To review impact on the school’s and teacher’s work;
- To analyse school capacity with existing resources to meet needs and achieve school improvement;
- To identify community resources;
- To make an in-depth assessment of learner support needs;
- To determine the support package that should be provided;
- To apply for additional resources;
- To determine eligibility for access to alternative specialised programmes; and
• To make adjustments to action plans.

This stage is a formal assessment and survey of the information given in SNA1 and SNA2. It is at this stage that decisions can be made about the type and combination of assistance required. This stage is directed by the DBST. The philosophy is a multi-disciplinary one, which requires that each stakeholder is involved in making the decision about the assistance package required.

2.7 COLLABORATION WITH PARENTS

Since the new democratic dispensation in 1994 in South Africa there has been a major shift in terms of the roles that parents must play at school level. Parents were given a governance role (RSA, 1996b) but as Donald et al. (2002) argue, parental involvement needs to go beyond election to the SGB and participation in parent-teacher meetings. There are many other constructive contributions to the life of the school, such as involvement in life skills education programmes and acting as teacher aids to help address diverse needs in the classroom or school as well as providing parents with skills and information so that they can assist their children. Stoll and Fink (1999) argue that it is vital for parents and teachers to have a shared understanding of learners’ educational outcomes to promote their learning development.

In addition, schools need to communicate with parents on a range of issues, not only on the educative process. Engelbrecht and Green (2007) argue that parents are the source of information for teachers in determining the exact nature of a child’s barriers to learning, should be involved in assessment processes, and should be made aware of their ability to make choices regarding additional support services and alternative placements. SIAS emphasises the role of the parent or caregiver as an equal partner in education. UNESCO (2009) also confirms that parents are crucial stakeholders in their children’s education and, without their commitment, children’s odds of obtaining entrance to higher education and training could be compromised. In addition, through collaboration, parents can become effective advocates for improved standards and provisioning. This association can likewise play a vital role in capacity-building since they can be provided with opportunities to
develop their governance, fund-raising, lobbying and administrative skills (UNESCO, 2009).

2.7.1 Collaboration with the Community

According to UNESCO (2009), local communities play a key role in ensuring that the environment is conducive to providing education for each child; drawing attention to the value of education and garnering support for the establishment of neighbourhood schools and the right of all children to education. Local communities must also lobby stakeholders to raise resources to build school administration blocks which are often absent, especially in rural schools; help to change school structures so they are available for children with disabilities; be involved in raising the status of the school; and support the fact that education is imperative and must be valued and ensured for all children.

Engelbrecht and Green (2001) argue that building a support system close to schools and their communities is a model that has great potential as an alternative to highly specialised, indirect services which, historically, have not met the needs in the country. Moreover, schools and communities should build on the strengths of existing community support systems. EWP6 (DoE, 2001) states that the pool of relationships and resources include (a) parents, grandparents and other influential care-givers, NGOs and network-based associations, specifically and indirectly connected to training; and (b) learners within the network who have problems and difficulties. According to Stromquist (2002), NGOs are social groups that lobby against the status quo and are defined as a subset of society. Dhunpath (2008) echoes that in South Africa, NGOs are able to provide a professional service to community groups such as civic and women’s organisations.

The involvement of communities could also help to address various identified needs, such as trends in unacceptable behaviour, substance abuse, teenage pregnancy, disabilities in schools and related matters. Community participation could also reduce the number of learners with disabilities who are not in school. However, it should also be taken into consideration that community-based support is likely to take various forms depending on the contextual factors within school communities (Engelbrecht & Green, 2001).
The EWP6 (DoE, 2001) also indicates that community resources that could be involved in IE include: (a) members of the school and of the government body, educators and other staff and learners, supporting one another; (b) parents, grandparents and other care-givers; (c) non-government education organisations; (d) other relevant NGOs; (e) CBOs; (f) disabled peoples’ organisations (DPOs); (g) faith-based organisations (FBOs); (h) traditional leaders; and (i) traditional/indigenous healers. Donald et al. (2002) recommend that community representation be reflected in the governance structures of the school. In addition, the DoE (1996) stresses the importance of representation and the involvement of all sectors of the community in particular within the context of support services. Engelbrecht and Green (2007) agree that effective functioning of the DBST is dependent on inter-sectoral collaboration.

2.7.2 Collaboration with Full-Service and Resource Centres

The DBE (2010) states that resource centres must provide administrative assistance and resources to full-service and special schools and must to be linked to a DBST. Naicker (2002) supports the DBE explanation, stressing that where assets can be shared and full-service schools collaborate in the sharing of learning, data and skills, this will enhance development of and delivery of IE.

Furthermore, the DBST could draw on the skills of the specialist educators for support in the identification of the specific services provided by individual special schools and could establish full-service and inclusive schools in the short and medium-term. These are the schools that the district would concentrate on in developing their ability to implement IE.

Human and material resources can be identified and complemented by a creating a profile of resources within a network. In addition, they can develop clusters of schools and other education institutions to support each other, particularly through sharing their different skills and knowledge. This is an effective strategy for providing peer support and can be cost-effective and empowering (DoE, 2005).

2.7.3 Collaboration with Special Schools as Resource Centres

The DoE (2001) explains that the future of special schools as resource centres is critical to the transformation of the education system. According to the DoE (2007),
while EWP6 suggests a shift to resource centres, it also indicates that the schools will be upgraded through staff training and a response to their needs, based on an audit. Special schools identified as resource centres should collaborate with DBSTs to support full-service schools. The DoE (2007) includes that the IE policy will focus on developing teachers to support target students. They will be integrated into DBSTs so that they can provide specialised professional support in curriculum assessment and instruction to designated full-service and other neighbouring schools.

DoE (2001) likewise calls for a change to special schools for students so that they become centres of excellence that provide proficient help to neighbouring schools with regard to addressing specific learning disabilities. As indicated by the DBE (2014), it is the duty of the DBST to facilitate and coordinate the administration of the special schools’ support network. They are also responsible for ensuring that all learners receive the support they need. The DBST must ensure that no learner is out of school because an arrangement for providing support could not be made. The DBST is also accountable for tracking all learners who have applied for admission to special schools and control the waiting lists kept by schools. The DBST is also responsible for responding to appeals to parents.

The DoE (2009) indicates that the support offered by special schools as resource centres to normal and full-service schools would be one of the key indicators of an inclusive education system. However, for special schools to deliver such services they should be clear about their roles and understand where they fit into the whole picture of the DBSTs and ensure that inclusive education is implemented successfully.

2.8 SUPPORT FROM THE PROVINCIAL OFFICE IN IMPLEMENTING INCLUSIVE EDUCATION

The provincial office has a key role to play in modelling collaboration as they are the ones expected to support the DBST. Providing training to the DBST members on different aspects as argued above is not enough. There is a need for a clear interdisciplinary team reflected by the provincial office team (Engelbrecht, 2004). Interdisciplinary collaboration allows professionals from different disciplines to perform specialised functions independent of each other but communicate more
regularly. This allows group members to share their separate plans with the aim of working and supporting each other to provide interventions for an identified gap.

2.9 SUPPORT STRATEGIES IN SUPPORTING THE IMPLEMENTATION OF INCLUSIVE EDUCATION

Providing support services is key to implementing inclusive educational policies (UNESCO, 1994). To guarantee this, at all levels, outside assistance is made accessible to LSEN, specialists should consider support for normal schools by both teacher training institutions and the staff of special schools. The latter might be accessed as resource centres for ordinary schools offering direct help to those LSEN. Both ordinary and special schools can provide access to assistive technologies and materials while preparing instructional programmes that are not provided in normal classrooms. Outside help by staff from different organisations, companies and NGOs, for example, counselling educators, educational analysts, academics and practitioners can be coordinated at local level.

Grouping schools has been valuable in pooling educational resources, and this could benefit the schools in maximising the support provided. This might include non-instructive assistance and planning while training institutions would benefit if more focused attempts were made to secure access and resources (UNESCO, 1994).

In Denmark, the National Resource Centre offers help to staff in schools, principals and district managers. In the region of Murmansk, the Resource Centre offers help to schools in curriculum and assessment adaptation and the use of assistive gadgets (Kesälahti & Väyrynen, 2013). Similarly, in Denmark and Sweden, arrangements deal comprehensively with the child and family, with close collaboration between experts and the family to make recommendations for activities and interventions for LSEN (EADSNE, 2010).

By contrast, in Sweden, Göransson, Nilholm and Karlsson (2011) found that (a) specialist curriculum educators give individualised guidance to students at a specific time each week; (b) the students receive coaching in the normal class from a specialised curriculum instructor; (c) the learners receive guidance in small group settings; (d) additional training resources are available in the classroom; or (e) a
teaching assistant is available in the classroom. Furthermore, learners were allocated to flexible groups in which they spent about half of their time (Karlsson, 2007). In Germany, small group instruction and peer teaching have been used to great effect with an emphasis on reflection, cooperation and collaboration, while teachers remain in charge of all students in the class. Training is given in learning strategies and learners are encouraged to try a range of learning approaches which have been found to benefit learning (Donelly & Kyriazopoulou, 2014).

In Estonia, pre-school teachers review children’s improvement as a team with their families and hold face-to-face meetings and, if relevant, prepare individual educational plans (IEPs) for them. An examination by the Ministry of Education and Research into such efforts demonstrated that almost 50% of parents became involved in carrying out their children’s IEPs and that 93% of parents were involved in checking their children’s progress at childcare establishments (EADSNE, 2010).

In the USA, different strategies are used to support LSEN. The strategies include co-teaching, consultation and collaboration. Each strategy is described below:

2.9.1 Co-teaching

The terms ‘co-teaching’ and ‘team teaching’ refer to a model in which a specialised curriculum adviser periodically prepares a lesson together with the classroom educator yet does not share similar classroom duties (Richardson-Gibbs & Klein, 2014). Co-teaching happens in inclusive education settings when a subject teacher and a curriculum specialist combine their expertise to address the problems of all learners in the class (Mitchell, 2010). However to make it work, there should be support from the SMT; appropriate timetabling; recognition of the method as a way of addressing students' problematic behaviours or distractions; agreement on the purpose and structure of the lessons, including various pedagogical approaches and assessment techniques; and clear correspondence with parents about the co-teaching (Dieker & Burnett, 1996; Walter-Thomas, Bryant & Land, 1996).

2.9.2 Consultation

Consultation models might be regarded to intermittent support, where learners may be pulled out of lessons for specialised support in such things as reading skills or consultation with healthcare specialists like the school psychologist. In this model,
the consultant is itinerant; i.e. he or she is not in the classroom full-time but rather visits it when needed, for example to demonstrate methodologies or to help the teachers to reflect on their practice. The teacher directs the teaching and learning the child, while the consultant’s guidance and skills may impact learners indirectly through teacher’s application of the methodologies discussed or self-reflection guided by the consultant (Richardson-Gibbs & Klein, 2014). However, consultation only works when the partners in the initiative are regarded as equals with both parties making contributions (Heron & Harris, 2001). While the consultant may have knowledge and skill that the teacher does not, for instance, how to address special needs identified by means of formative assessment, an educator has information not immediately accessible to the consultant and knows about the classroom schedules, the learners’ attitudes towards and performance on various learning exercises, classroom rules and curricular objectives. They thus have complementary information that can be used in teaching the child. They should share this data on a collegial basis and express concerns and feelings honestly, learning from each other and cooperating to tackle the child's learning difficulties.

2.9.3 Collaboration

Collaboration in education is portrayed as triadic (Dettmer, Knackendoffel & Thurston, 2012); that is, two individuals (e.g. the teacher and the parent) work together in the interest of the third, namely, the child, who is the beneficiary of the coordinated effort. The two adults bring critical skills, information and perceptions to the education process, usually supporting the child indirectly, via the teacher, whose help is immediate. This concept is critical to this study because DBSTs are expected to work as a team if they are to achieve their set objectives. It is essential to set up collaborative arrangements where every participant works together to meet a mutual goal; in this instance, teaching and learning in inclusive settings. Similarly, establishing a collaborative system can help alleviate potential conflict (Richardson-Gibbs & Klein, 2014).

2.9.3.1 Russia

In Russia, the Federal Centre of Distance Education for Learners with Disabilities gives learning opportunities to LSEN in specific education districts (Kesälähti &
A few learners study at home, as indicated on their IEPs; however, they still have a place within a district school.

2.9.3.2 Germany

In Germany, differentiation is often teacher-centred rather than learner-centred, and still attempts to fit learners into an existing system rather than contributing to the transformation of settings and routines (Donelly & Kyriazopoulou, 2014). The Archangelsk Resource Centre conducts assessments to determine therapeutic and academic needs, and in light of the evaluation, different interventions might be arranged. The specialists at the Centre work in close collaboration with parents, generally directing and giving information about addressing the learners’ needs. In schools with special classes, some lessons are shared by learners from both special and normal classes (Kesälähti & Väyrynen, 2013).

Furthermore, in Germany, specialist teachers work in standard schools, undertaking consultancy work with class teachers or explicitly supporting learners (Donelly & Kyriazopoulou, 2014). An unmistakable improvement has been observed when support is given by specialist teachers (Network of Experts in Social Sciences of Education and Training [NESSE], 2012). Interestingly, Italy has tended to use extra learning assistant teachers as opposed to peer teaching (NESSE, 2012), as it is believed that assistant teachers can enhance the development of LSEN; for instance, moderately dyslexic learners are instructed in normal classrooms by non-specialist educators but are assisted by teaching assistants (Győrfi & Smythe, 2010).

2.9.3.3 Norway

Networking groups in Norway comprise experts, families and other stakeholders to help advance children’s development in various fields (EADSNE, 2006). A psychological counselling session is arranged when required, particularly with regard to problems with subjects such as reading and mathematics, hearing and visual impairment, academic difficulties and behavioural problems. Focused social or academic help is also provided by the Child Agency or Psychological Health System (Stensen, 2013). Amid the time spent on instructive help, a discussion with gatekeepers is crucial as they meet with the instructor and extraordinary educator.
two times per year. It was additionally discovered that help was given by a pro
instructor functioning as a school staff part, collaborating with the class educator on
low upkeep or full time, and support could similarly be given as help with classroom
(Mitchell, 2010) and most learners with special needs received their instruction,
including custom curriculum administrations, in conventional classes. The
neighbourhood instructive administrations exhort schools and guardians on the
substance and association of the training required for the learner, being for the most
part in charge of prompting instructors on their everyday work (Mitchell, 2010).

2.9.3.4 Finland

Unlike the above, Finland has strategies for general support, intensive support and
special support (European Agency for Special Needs Education, 2017) and a
National Core Curriculum (Finnish National Agency for Education, 2014). Firstly,
general support includes a range of pedagogical approaches that aim at supporting
learners, including curriculum differentiation through different kinds of groupings,
co-teaching approaches and modifications, as well as remedial teaching. Secondly,
intensified support is offered to learners who do not respond to general support,
characterised as more systematic and intensive than general support. At times an
Individualised Learning Plan (ILP) is prepared for those not responding to intensive
support, and this simultaneously results in the third approach, special support. This
is determined by the outcome of the first two support strategies, the effect of the ILP
being regularly evaluated. If there is still a need to provide further support, special
support comes into play, requiring an administrative decision for special education
services. It is based on the evaluation of the earlier support, usually accompanies
by a medical and/or psychological assessment. At this stage, more substantial
support is needed, in terms of pedagogy, curriculum adaptation and therapies. In
Finland, the curriculum is drawn up by the local municipality based on the needs of
local children and families (Halinen, 2006; 2007). A few Finnish regions appoint
specialist teachers and outsource them for different services; for example, in the
small districts in Lapland (Kesälahti & Väyrynen 2013). Districts offer these serves
free of charge, guaranteeing that the arrangements stipulated in the Education Act
are implemented. Likewise, in larger towns of Finland, numerous special schools
have become resource centres while they have also retained special schools for
LSEN (Kesälahti & Väyrynen, 2013). Learner Welfare Teams consist of the
superintendent, a special needs educator, a class teacher, a special class teacher, a school nurse and a school psychologist. The group meets regularly and between meetings researches problems identified with individual students or the enhancement of the welfare of all learners. When they address issues of individual learners, those who are directly involved with the student are available in the meeting and teaching assistants are regularly delegated to classes where there are students who require help with their learning. While the teacher oversees the delivery of the academic content, the teaching assistant plays an essential role in helping the student with assignments or in managing groups (Kesälahti & Väyrynen, 2013).

2.9.3.5 England

In England, there is a considerable variation in status between learning support teachers in different schools and those in local authorities (Rouse, 2008). A study by Mitchell (2010) of examples of teaching LSEN found that schools had a staff member who was assigned the job of motivating learners, articulated in the SEN Code of Practice, including direction plans, monitoring learner progress and liaising with parents, workplaces and stakeholders. Support was likewise given by a healthcare specialist, and networking with other schools and the local education authority (LEA). Itinerant staff worked on a rotational basis with educators so as to devise methodologies and techniques for addressing special needs (Mitchell, 2010).

2.9.3.6 Pakistan

Pakistan has been using a three-pronged approach to LSEN by providing teachers’ workshops, on-site support and cluster meetings, to achieve positive changes in teachers (Caceres, Awan, Majeed, Mindes & Nabeel, 2010). As educators become increasingly aware of how to make classrooms inclusive and progressively sensitive to LSEN, they develop their skills in addressing their needs. Forlin, Chambers, Loreman, Deppeler and Sharma (2013) recommended that such structures should work with teacher training institutions to include IE in their curricula.

Sharma et al. (2013) found that the positive collaboration among educators, school leadership and parents, and collegial support from special curriculum teachers, was the most appropriate approach to supporting educators. The development of
teaching and learning materials to help teachers with inclusive educational programmes was vital as resources were limited (Forlin et al., 2013). To overcome social exclusion, telling community stories outlining moral lessons was regarded as a method for freeing children with disabilities from being shamed in classes, schools, or the community (Sharma et al., 2013).

Research revealed inconsistencies in the way support teams in different countries support the implementation of inclusive education. The current study seeks to ascertain ways in which DBSTs in South Africa support the implementation of inclusive education in Gauteng schools.

In view of the above, it is evident there is inconsistency on how support teams provide support to ensure that inclusive education is implemented successfully in schools.

2.10 CHAPTER SUMMARY

Part of the educational system is the DBST which has an impact on the child’s educational experience. Noting that the DBST is the key structure expected to ensure that inclusive education is achieved in schools, Bronfenbrenner’s ecological systems is relevant in this context because it helped me understand the role of the DBST within the educational system and how they support the implementation of inclusive education in schools. The next chapter deals with methodology and design applied in this study.
CHAPTER 3:
RESEARCH METHODOLOGY AND DESIGN

3.1 INTRODUCTION

The present study explored the professional preparation of DBST members for the implementation of inclusive education in Gauteng schools, South Africa. Having reviewed current literature on the topic structured around the sub-research questions and presented the theoretical framework in the previous chapter, this chapter presents the research design and methodology, including the research paradigm, approach, population and sampling, data collection methods and process, measures to ensure trustworthiness, the limitations of the study and ethical considerations.

3.2 RESEARCH PARADIGM

The different paradigms that inform any study are basic principles that guide the actions undertaken during the research (Guba & Lincoln, 2005; Denzin & Lincoln, 2008; Lincoln et al., 2011; Mertens, 2010). They provide the general philosophical underpinnings of the research (Creswell, 2014; Guba & Lincoln, 2005). A research paradigm informs the researcher as to what questions are significant for the investigation and what processes to follow to ensure that answers to the questions asked are suitable (Du Plooy-Cilliers, Davis & Bezuidenhout, 2014). Thus, a research paradigm is a lens that the researcher uses to identify, interpret or describe the reality of the inquiry, which, in the current context, is the professional preparation of DBST members in supporting the implementation of inclusive education. It embodies a philosophical stance that informs the methodology of the research and guides the research process (Maree, 2010). According to Wagner, Kawulich and Garner (2012), a research paradigm is the viewpoint from which a scholar conducts the enquiry. It includes the ontological foundation which embraces the idea of socially constructed knowledge (Kelly, 2011). Epistemology refers to the theory of knowledge and a study of how researchers come to accept that the research findings are valid. Axiological suppositions present the things that are valuable to the researcher and how to reveal them in a meaningful way, while the
methodological dimension sets out the procedures used in the research to arrive at the results (Carnaghan, 2013).

There are many designs available in research. In the current study, I used a descriptive paradigm, the aim being to understand human nature (Wagner et al., 2012) focusing on professional preparation of DBST members in supporting the implementation of inclusive education in Gauteng Province, South Africa. The axiological assumption of constructivism is that there are multiple subjective realities (Mertens, 2009), including the perspectives of educational psychologists, institutional development officers, the principals from special schools and full-service schools, curriculum facilitators and specialists who constitute the DBST. Its ontological assumption is that there are multiple socially constructed realities (Creswell, 2013; Mertens, 2009) and the experience and understanding of the participants who are members of the DBST helped me to construct the meaning of the phenomenon being studied. Constructivism posits that there are as many intangible realities as there are people constructing them (Wagner et al., 2012), while the epistemological assumption of this paradigm is that knowledge is subjective because it is socially constructed. The researcher relies on participants’ understanding, opinions and experience to describe the phenomenon, embedded in phenomenology, ethnography, symbolic interaction and naturalistic methodology (Chilisa, 2011). The methodological assumption of this paradigm is dependent on the choice of design, the behaviour of participants and the research problem (Wagner et al., 2012). The present study used individual interviews and a focus group as data collection instruments.

3.3 RESEARCH APPROACH

This study was entrenched in the qualitative research approach, described by as Lincoln, Lynham and Guba (2011) embedded in investigating and understanding the importance that people or groups attribute to a social or human phenomenon. Similarly, McMillan and Schumacher (2006) posit that the qualitative research approach seeks to understand social phenomena from the view of participants. Qualitative research uses a multi-method approach (Denzin & Lincoln, 2008), with individual and group interviews to ascertain the preparation of DBST in supporting the implementation of inclusive education. Qualitative researchers study
phenomena in their natural environment (Gay, Mills & Airasian, 2006), in this case, interviewing DBST members in their everyday work environment about their preparation for the implementation of IE. I sought opinions, experiences and feelings of individuals and thereby produced subjective data (Hancock, 2002), notably behaviour, action and comments or views of participants with regard to their professional preparation in supporting the implementation of inclusive education in Gauteng Province, South Africa.

Furthermore, qualitative researchers use emergent designs (Guba & Lincoln, 2005) but phases may shift after the researcher enters the field. The first interview, for instance, informed the next while not manipulating the variables under investigation (Wagner et al., 2012). The participants expressed their views and opinions without influence. According to Hancock, Ockleford and Windridge (2009), qualitative research focuses on how individuals or groups of people can have diverse ways of looking at reality, usually social or psychological. Data collection is time-consuming (Hancock, 2002), necessitating the use of small samples, hence only 20 participants were selected from two districts.

3.4 RESEARCH DESIGN

A research design is a plan of action as to how to answer the research questions. (Terre Blanche & Durrheim, 2006). For this study I used a phenomenological design to describe the lived experiences as perceived by the participants (Giorgi, 2009). Individual participants’ experiences, understanding and opinions helped to describe and make sense of the phenomenon (Padilla-Díaz, 2015).

3.4.1 Background of the Design

The term ‘phenomenology’ derives from the Greek, relating to ‘appearance’ or ‘manifestation’ (Padilla-Díaz, 2015). Phenomenology was pioneered by Edmund Husserl (cited in Parodi, 2008:473), as a way of understanding reality from the perspectives of those who experienced it.

3.4.2 Definitions of Phenomenology

Phenomenological is a strategy of inquiry in which the researcher identifies the essence of human experience about a phenomenon as described by the
participants (Giorgi, 2009; Marshall & Rossman, 2010), exploring the nature of a phenomenon, providing not only an explanation but also a description of it as it appears in human consciousness. However, because the research involved studying the shared experiences of a group of people as well, the research is also phenomenographical (Christensen, Johnson & Turner, 2011) denoting a research approach aimed at describing the different ways in which a group of people understand a phenomenon. This design was used to investigate the professional preparation of DBST members in the implementation of inclusive education, endeavouring to understand individuals' observations, points of view and experience of a situation (Greef, 2005).

The data-gathering methods included individual and focus group interviews to highlight the experiences of individuals from their own perspectives (Padilla-Díaz, 2015). Individual participants were asked to relate their experiences, feelings, beliefs and convictions about professional preparedness in supporting the implementation of IE.

When using the approach, the researcher set aside personal experiences and engaged in bracketing, a procedure of holding presumptions and presuppositions in suspension to enhance the trustworthiness of the research (Padilla-Díaz, 2015). During this process, I avoided manipulation of data, only interpreting the diverse understandings and experiences as shared by the participants with regard to their professional preparation for the implementation of IE.

### 3.4.3 Dimensions of Phenomenology

For this study, I used descriptive or hermeneutical phenomenology because my interest was in understanding human experiences (Padilla-Díaz, 2015). Therefore, my role within this design was to construct meaning informed by participants’ lived experiences and understanding about their professional preparation as DBST members. Descriptive phenomenology involves several strategies, including intuiting which is a process of thinking through the data so that an accurate interpretation of the descriptions is achieved (Anderson & Spencer, 2002). Data collected from participants who were members of DBSTs were used to interpret the phenomenon, with as I immersed myself in the data, reviewing the information repeatedly, without layering it with my own opinions (Padilla-Díaz, 2015). I also
ensured that I described what the participants revealed without adding my own point of view, to ensure that I gained a thorough understanding of the phenomenon under scrutiny (Streubert & Carpenter, 1999). Through intuiting, I was able to interpret data from participants’ experiences and understanding about their professional preparation in supporting the implementation of IE in schools.

Descriptive phenomenology further involves analysis that begins with the life of a single individual who is uniquely situated in a phenomenon (Padilla-Díaz, 2015). Individual participants’ experiences and understanding were presented verbatim, elicited during individual interviews and focus groups to allow for understanding of similarities and differences in their perceptions of a shared, lived experience (Wagner et al., 2012).

The aim was to impart and portray, in a narrative exposition, the identifiable aspects of the phenomenon, subsequently conveying to others what the researcher found (Padilla-Díaz, 2015). I transcribed and analysed how participants described their experiences about their professional preparation in the implementation of IE, and the strategies used in doing so. I also described the participants’ views, understanding and opinions about the adequacy of the preparation. Only participants who were members of DBSTs were involved.

3.4.4 Advantages of Phenomenology and Phenomenography

Phenomenological research allows the researcher to obtain first-hand information from participants about the topic under study, in this study through conducting individual with the participants. Phenomenographical research allows the researcher to explore the perceptions of a group of individuals who share an experience – this was done by means of focus group interviews. I therefore used a combination of approaches which I have chosen to refer to as a phenomenological-phenomenographical design. For Himmetoğlu, Ayduğ and Bayrak (2017), the phenomenological design is beneficial because it helps in understating people’s meanings, and the gathering of data is natural rather than artificial. Participants were interviewed in the relaxed environment of their everyday lives in their workplaces, outside working hours. Christensen et al (2011) see that the key question to be answered is: “What is the importance, structure and substance of the lived experiences of the participants?” Terre Blanche and Durrheim (2006) argue that in
a phenomenological study there is a need to ‘read through’ the words to get to that aspect of the person’s experience. I read the transcriptions of the interviews line by line to grasp the understanding and experiences of the participants. In view of the above, phenomenology helped me to delve deeply into the world of the participants to understand the professional preparation of DBST members in the implementation of inclusive education, while phenomenography allowed me to explore the perceptions of a group as opposed to separate individuals. This also allowed for methodological triangulation of the results.

3.4.5 Researcher’s Role

Qualitative researchers gain access to research sites by seeking the approval of gatekeepers, with a brief outline of the intended research developed and submitted for their review (Marshall & Rossman, 2011). A letter with details of the research proposal was written to the GDE requesting permission to conduct research at selected sites. The granting of permission was made in writing which enabled me to access the sites easily, and the document was attached as a reference when choosing participants.

When researchers conduct research, there is a need to establish a positive relationship and empathy with the participants to gain in-depth information, particularly when investigating issues in which the participant has a strong personal stake (Wagner et al., 2012). I visited the participants before the process of interviewing began and explained to them the purpose of research, clarifying ethical issues and developing rapport with the participants. I was candid with all participants from the beginning. Savin-Baden and Major’s (2013) contends that participants should not feel that they are just one of several who are going to be exposed to interrogation but rather that the interviewer is interested in each one as a person in his or her own right. Henning et al (2004) caution that the participants should feel completely free to express their true feelings and opinions without fear. I listened to the views and inputs without judging to ensure that they were always comfortable in expressing the understanding they had about the professional preparation of the DBST members in the implementation of inclusive education. My role was to collect in-depth data through interviews, following Savin-Baden and Major’s (2013) advice that, in addition to pausing after the question and keeping the conversation flowing,
one should manage several responsibilities, each at various times and simultaneously. I minimised interjections when participants were giving responses, thus allowing them to express themselves freely.

### 3.5 POPULATION AND SAMPLING

Population can be characterised as the group of people with qualities that the specialist is keen on examining (White, 2005). In the current study, the population comprised educational psychologists, institutional development support officers, curriculum facilitators, education support services, inclusive special schools and principals from resource centres from full-service schools who constitute the DBSTs from two different districts in the GDE. A DBST comprises professionals situated in every district, appointed by the district director to support the implementation of inclusive education in Gauteng schools. A thorough description of the team and its role is given in Chapter 2 (2.6). The details of individual members are described later in this chapter, but it was not viable to reach the total population in Gauteng Province so a small sample was selected in line with the qualitative approach of the research design (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2011). As a procedure, sampling involves the researcher choosing participants who can provide rich data about a certain phenomenon (Patton, 2002). Creswell (2014) posits that in qualitative research there are several sampling strategies that can be used, including convenience, snowball, purposive and quota sampling. In this study, I made use of purposive sampling as the strategy to assist me in selecting individuals and sites that were able to provide input on the research problem (Creswell, 2007; McMillan & Schumacher, 2006).

Purposive sampling is characterised by the inclusion of people that meet specific criteria (Padilla-Díaz, 2015). The inclusion criteria were that participants had to be serving in the DBST, had background in psychology of education and or; be a speech or occupational therapist and or; be in remedial or special education and or; guidance or counselling. They had to have five years’ experience as DBST members, during which, typically, they would have acquired the necessary skills to support the schools with regard to IE and they would have been involved in curriculum support. It was expected that individuals were well-qualified in IE and
curriculum and were knowledgeable about adaptation of support for learners during the implementation of IE.

3.5.1 Research Sites

The GDE had 15 districts, comprising five regions or clusters, of which I sampled two: one from Johannesburg region, serving approximately 130 schools from township and suburban schools of Gauteng Province; the other from Tshwaga region, in Pretoria, Gauteng Province, supporting approximately 251 township, rural and suburban schools.

3.5.2 Description of the Participants

The table below presents a demographic description of the participants involved in the study. Pseudonyms were used to protect privacy and ensure that ethical issues of anonymity were observed.

Table 3.1: Participants’ details

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participants</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Qualifications</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Experience</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mr Musi</td>
<td>Principal: Special school</td>
<td>Bachelor’s degree with special needs education</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>18 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr Lephoko</td>
<td>Principal Full-service school</td>
<td>B.Ed. (Hons) management</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>16 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ms Maake</td>
<td>Institutional Development Support Officer</td>
<td>B.Ed. (Hons) in learning support</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>18 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ms Leboa</td>
<td>Educational psychologist</td>
<td>M.Ed. in educational psychology</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>17 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr Radebe</td>
<td>Assessment facilitator</td>
<td>B.Ed.</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>14 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ms Potgieter</td>
<td>Inclusion and specialist facilitator</td>
<td>B.Ed. (Hons) learners with special needs</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>16 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ms Louis</td>
<td>Curriculum facilitator</td>
<td>BA Education</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>12 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ms Pillay</td>
<td>Institutional development support officer</td>
<td>B.Ed.</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>14 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ms Heydon</td>
<td>Education support service</td>
<td>Higher Education Diploma, ACE (IE) B.Ed. Hons</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>15 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ms Sekoelela</td>
<td>Foundation Phase curriculum</td>
<td>B.Ed.</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>10 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ms Hugh</td>
<td>Educational psychologist</td>
<td>Magister in educational psychologist</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>17 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ms Mogosi</td>
<td>Intermediate Phase coordinator</td>
<td>B. Ed.</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>16 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participants</td>
<td>Description</td>
<td>Qualifications</td>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>Age</td>
<td>Experience</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------------</td>
<td>--------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-----------------------------------------</td>
<td>--------</td>
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<td>------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ms Lotus</td>
<td>DCES for inclusion and support</td>
<td>Bachelor degree (hons) in management</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>11 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr Moonsamy</td>
<td>Education Support programmes</td>
<td>Honours degree in education</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>18 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ms Botha</td>
<td>FP and SP coordinator</td>
<td>M. Ed in remedial education</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>16 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ms Monde</td>
<td>Inclusion and special school facilitator</td>
<td>University qualified with LSEN</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>15 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr Makau</td>
<td>Principal of full-service school</td>
<td>Bachelor degree (leadership)</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>18 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ms Chabani</td>
<td>HIV/AIDS facilitator in the ESS</td>
<td>Hons degree</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>17 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ms Ledwaba</td>
<td>LTSM facilitator</td>
<td>B. Ed</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>13 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ms Khanyi</td>
<td>Curriculum facilitator</td>
<td>Qualified with remedial</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>14 years</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### 3.6 DATA COLLECTION METHODS AND PROCESS

The nature of the study required me to collect data from individual participants in their natural settings, using individual and focus group interviews to gather data. Hannan (2007) asserts that any one-to-one interaction between two or more individuals with a specific purpose in mind constitutes an interview. These were used for the purpose of data triangulation, namely, from different collection instruments to check the similarities and differences.

#### 3.6.1 Individual Interviews

The most appropriate data collection strategy for qualitative research is the interview (Padilla-Díaz, 2015). An individual interview is defined as more than a conversation because it is systemic, objective and involves the gathering of data (Denscombe, 2007). Interviews provide in-depth data and explore beliefs that are complex, and they reveal the knowledge or experiences of individual participants about the phenomenon (Lodico, Spaulding & Voegtle, 2010). For Atkins and Wallace (2012), interviews allow the researcher to engage with research participants individually. Individual interviews were conducted with individual participating DBST members, as listed above.

Semi-structured interviews were chosen as a data-gathering instrument as another rich source for determining the professional preparation of the DBST in the
implementation of inclusive education in Gauteng Province. I adhered to Schulze’s (2002) advice to tactfully steer the participants back to the topic when they deviated from it. Semi-structured interviewing is appropriate when one is particularly interested in pursuing a specific issue (Greeff, 2005).

Furthermore, Creswell (2014) cautions that the participants should feel completely free to express their true feelings and opinions without fear of disapproval, condemnation or being judged by the researcher. They should be assured that the interviews are modelled on a relaxed conversation between equals rather on a formal question and answer exchange. In most of my interviews, respondents were able to express their thoughts, feelings, opinions and their perspectives on the topic freely because I established a rapport with them and made sure they were comfortable in giving in-depth responses to questions (Wagner et al., 2012; Creswell, 2014). I also ensured that interviews were conducted in the participants’ workplaces at a time convenient to them. This sometimes meant that participants had to remain after hours, although they might have had other priorities and the request was not always honoured. I practised my interviewing skills before I embarked on the actual interviews which thus were semi-structured, enabling me to probe and explore participants’ experiences, views and understanding related to the phenomenon (Wagner et al., 2012; Padilla-Díaz, 2015).

Following Maree (2010) suggestions on individual interviews that one must listen and record answers with an audio-recording to allow for transcription, I recorded participants’ views on tape, also making rough interview notes, which were useful when making transcriptions. Maree (2010) posits that interviews provide leeway in terms of follow-up responses given by participants. I probed participants further, ensuring that data obtained would assist in providing answers to the research questions. One advantage was that I could secure an interview session while waiting for the whole group to meet; however, others might be rushing for another meeting. The interviews lasted between 60 and 90 minutes, while for focus-group interviews there were two sessions, excluding follow-ups.

Although there are advantages of in-depth interviews, there are also disadvantages. Boyce and Neale (2006) attribute these to the effort required to collect data, create instruments and conduct interviews with minimal bias. I transcribed the data
verbatim as posed by the individual participants and ensured that I carried out member checks with them to ensure that what was captured was what they had said. In every interview, I ensured that I used a voice recorder and later used the services of a professional transcriber to ensure that I captured everything that participants had articulated. Boyce and Neale (2006) argue that the researcher must be sure how to use real interview techniques, avoiding yes/no and leading questions, using appropriate body language, and keeping personal opinions in check. I practised my interviewing skills accordingly, also allowing participants to express themselves without any intimidation. For Joubish, Khurram and Ahmed (2011), if similar stories, subjects, issues, and themes arise out of the interviewees, these instruments would have proven to be effective in providing answers to the research questions. During my interviews, I interacted with participants until no new information emerged, that being the point of data saturation.

3.6.2 Focus Group Interviews

A focus group interview is an adaptable, unstructured exchange between the individuals from a gathering with an accomplished facilitator or mediator that takes place in a convenient place (Brockman, Nunez & Basu, 2010; Jayawardana & O'Donnell, 2009; Packer-Muti, 2010). Wilkinson (1998) states that it is an informal discussion among a group of selected individuals about a topic, while Nepomuceno and Porto (2010) contend it is an approach to raise different points of view on a given subject. In this study, I used a focus group to understand different perspectives of participants regarding their professional preparation in supporting the implementation of IE. A group is focused because “it involves some kind of collective activity” (Kitzinger, 2005:56); in my case, the members of the DBSTs. Similarly, Cohen et al (2011) state that focus groups yield a collective rather than individual view of the phenomenon under investigation. They “encourage a range of responses which provide a greater understanding of the attitudes, behavior, opinions or perceptions of participants on the research issues” (Hennink, 2007:6). The focus groups explored participants’ opinions, perceptions, attitudes and understanding regarding their professional preparation in supporting the implementation of IE.
Focus group discussions include gathering various points of view about a phenomenon. Additionally, they may uncover aspects which often remain hidden in the more conventional in-depth interviewing method (Nastasia & Rakow, 2010). They can be used to elicit information from any topic, from diverse groups of people and in diverse settings (Stewart, DeCusatis, Kidder, Massi & Anne, 2009). In this study, the focus groups included educational psychologists, the institutional development support officer, curriculum facilitators, education support services, inclusion special schools and principals from resource centres and full-service schools.

There is a need for focus groups to comprise somewhere in the range of 5 and 12 members, with the goal that the meeting allows all individuals to talk and share their reflections, but sufficiently large to make the discussion meaningful (Lasch, Marquis, Vigneux, Abetz, Arnould & Bayliss, 2010; Onwuegbuzie, Leech & Collins, 2010). My focus groups comprised one from each district varying between five to eight participants. Furthermore a focus group discussion elicits valuable data subject to the abilities of the organiser and his ability to detect subdivisions with the group. I practised and improved my interviewing skills from the pilot study. The discourse between participants furnishes the researcher with a chance to detect themes which the researcher may not have thought of in his planning (Onwuegbuzie et al., 2010). Participants tend to feel more relaxed and less inhibited in the presence of friends and colleagues and empowered and supported by the cooperation and presence of those in similarly situations to them (Bloor, Frankland, Thomas & Robson, 2012).

Focus groups can be cost-effective and time-saving in terms of arranging and conducting them, and analysis of the information provided is often easier compared to case studies and individual interviews (Onwuegbuzie, Dickinson, Leech & Zoran, 2009). In the current study, each focus group interview lasted ninety minutes and analysis of the data was reasonably straightforward. Disadvantages, as Paloma and Banta (1999) note, include ‘group-think’ and the potential for one or two participants to dominate the discussion. I exercised controlled in the meetings by allowing each of them to state their understanding or opinions without feeling intimidated. At the point when an individual responded to a question, I opened the discussion up for
contributions from different members aiming at giving every member a chance to speak.

3.7 DATA ANALYSIS

Phenomenological analysis was used to analyse collected data (Giorgi, 2009), the primary procedure of which was open coding which reduces the vast amount of information gathered into a smaller segments that seem to portray the phenomenon under scrutiny. Collected data were separated into segments then scrutinised for consistencies that could reflect themes and sub-themes. I listened to audio-recorded interviews several times to detect new insights into lived participants’ experiences and understanding about the phenomenon and also to engage myself in the data and to remember the atmosphere of each interview and the situation in which it was conducted (Pietkiewicz & Smith, 2014).

A second process was axial coding, which involves putting data back together in new ways, making connections between categories. For this purpose, transcriptions were used. I read all the transcripts, sentence-by-sentence (Smith & Osborn, 2008) and jotted down some ideas that were raised by participants during the interviews with the aim of familiarising myself with the content and gaining an understanding of the themes and relevant details of the text. Open coding and axial coding continually refine the categories and their interconnections, and I moved back and forth over the data collected to integrate those sections or units identified as having a similar focus or content, or differences and contradictions. I wrote a textual description and included verbatim quotations, which helped me to avoid imposing my own views. I also ensured that during my interaction with the participants their experiences and views reflected what had happened in the setting (Creswell, 2014). These excerpts and themes were used to develop an exhaustive description of the participants’ experiences of the phenomenon. I grouped the relevant topics into units of meaning.

Thirdly, I conducted selective coding, to find the central (or fundamental) themes, and relate them to possible alternatives. This process allows for triangulation of the themes and fills in any gaps that need to be refined and developed. I revisited the raw data descriptions again to justify my interpretations of both the essential meanings and the general structure, then relooked at the available data to check
the accuracy of my capturing to ensure that interpretations were accurate. Finally, I critically analysed my work and presented the findings, a narrative discussion of which is presented in Chapter 4.

3.8 MEASURES TO ENSURE TRUSTWORTHINESS OF THE STUDY

Shenton (2004:63) states that the “trustworthiness of qualitative research generally is often questioned by positivists, perhaps because their concepts of validity and reliability cannot be addressed in the same naturalistic work”. The following aspects ensure trustworthiness of this study: credibility, transferability dependability and conformability. Each is briefly explained below:

3.8.1 Credibility

Credibility is defined as the certainty that can the results of the study are believable (Guba & Lincoln, 1994; Holloway & Wheeler, 2002; Macnee & McCabe, 2008). It is concerned with building up the results of the exploration. It is a typical example of ‘quality not quantity’ and depends more on the relevance of the information amassed than the amount of data collected. There are numerous strategies to gauge the accuracy of the disclosures, for instance, data triangulation, which "includes the utilization of various and distinctive strategies, examiners, sources and hypotheses to acquire supporting proof" (Onwuegbuzie & Leech, 2007:239). Triangulation can therefore be used to promote the credibility, dependability and conformability of research (Merriam, 2009). I employed individual interviews and focus groups for triangulation, which increased the credibility of the study. Additionally, participants and other researchers are the main people who could reasonably question the legitimacy of the results. Guba and Lincoln (cited in Shenton, 2004:68) consider member checks as the single most important technique for strengthening a study’s credibility. Similarly, Lincoln and Guba (1985) and Onwuegbuzie and Leech (2007) view member checking as a crucial procedure that any qualitative explorer ought to attempt since it goes to the core of credibility.

Checks identifying with the correctness of the information might be done while gathering the information, or after the transcriptions have been compiled. Here the emphasis ought to be on whether witnesses think that the transcriptions tally with what they ought to be or what they truly intended to state. After transcription, I visited
the participants to confirm whether my capturing was a true reflection of what they had said. I also sought clarity on issues raised by participants during interviews as a way of capturing their true reflections.

3.8.2 Transferability

Transferability refers to the degree to which the outcomes of qualitative research can be transferred to other settings respondents, it being the qualitative equivalent of generalisability (Bitsch, 2005; Guba & Lincoln, 1994; Tobin & Begley, 2004). Shenton (2004) contends that without thick description it is difficult for the reader of the research to decide on the degree to which the general discoveries are valid.

Li (2004:305) posits that thick description “enables judgments about how well the research context fits other contexts, thick descriptive data, for example, a rich and extensive set of details concerning methodology and context, should be included in the research report”.

It is essential that the researcher supplies a detailed description of the situation and methods used in the research (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). Transferability is accomplished when the researcher provides adequate information about the data collection instruments, the research setting, procedures, the population and sample of participants, and the way the data analysis was done to allow other potential researchers to use the same research design (Gasson, 2004; Guba & Lincoln, 1994). Given the typically small sample sizes used in qualitative research, subjective information cannot be generalised to other situations, and it is critical not that the researcher is honest about this. As Babbie and Mouton (2006) point out, in qualitative research, all findings arise out of a defined context. Thus, it is not necessary for a researcher to generalise them. For me to achieve transferability in the study, I provided a detailed description of the tools and methods used and provided a thick description of participants’ views and experiences of the problem.

3.8.3 Dependability

According to Bitsch (2005:86), dependability refers to “the stability of findings over time,” and is estimated by the standard by which the investigation is directed, broken down and displayed. Dependability includes members assessing the findings and recommendations of the researcher to ensure that they agree with the information
provided during the investigation (Cohen et al., 2011). Each procedure used in the study ought to be accounted for in detail to allow other researchers to understand and use or adapt the procedures in their own studies (Lincoln, Lynham & Guba, 2011), and to enable the readers of the report to develop a thorough understanding of the methods and their effectiveness. The explanation ought to include the research design, depicting what was arranged and how it was carried out to answer the research questions; how the information was gathered in the field; how the data were analysed, and should include the researcher’s self-evaluation of the adequacy of the procedures used (Shenton, 2004). Dependability is exhibited by using a survey trail, a code-recode strategy, stepwise replication, triangulation and member checking or repetitive studies (Ary et al., 2010; Chilisa & Preece, 2005; Krefting, 1991). I explained my role as the researcher and explained how I limited researcher bias (Bitsch, 2005; Krefting, 1991). I discussed my approach and findings with unbiased colleagues, including doctoral learners who attended in a meeting arranged by the UNISA College of Education, specifically the inclusive education department, and fellow students who had done qualitative research. This was to establish gaps that I could have missed or omitted subconsciously and to enable me to close any that were identified.

3.8.4 Conformability

Conformability is concerned with establishing that data and interpretations of the findings are not figments of the inquirer’s imagination but are clearly derived from the data (Lincoln, Lynham & Guba 2011; Tobin & Begley, 2004). An external expert can determine whether this is the situation by reviewing the data accumulated during empirical study (Lincoln et al., 2011). To enhance the conformability of the conclusions drawn from the data, an audit trail can be provided throughout the study to show how every decision was made. The methodology used in this study sought to elicit the experiences, ideas, perceptions, and attitudes about professional preparation of DBST members in supporting the implementation of IE in Gauteng schools. To reduce bias, I refrained as much as possible from using abstract academic language, preferring verbatim quotations, which were verified through member checks from the data collected through interviews.
3.9 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Several ethical considerations were observed in this study.

3.9.1 Permission to Conduct the Research

Before conducting the research, the researcher must negotiate access from the gatekeepers (Allan, 2008). I first obtained clearance from the UNISA Ethics Committee in which I stated clearly that the research would investigate the professional preparation of DBST members in supporting the implementation of IE and that I wished to interact with participants who were members of the DBST. The GDE gave me the consent to direct the exploration at the chosen district (Appendix B). I gave the letter to the supervisors in the chosen districts and advised them of the purpose of the investigation before the research was done (Appendix D). The district director consented to my request in writing.

3.9.2 Informed Consent

Informed consent is accomplished by giving members satisfactory information on the reason for the request, the techniques to be followed in doing the research, possible focal points and any potential harm to the participants. Information to build up the credibility of the researcher must be given also (Allan, 2008). All the information was included in the letter of consent (Appendix D). If they were interested in participating, they were asked to sign the form attached giving their consent. These forms were securely kept as evidence that the members had consented to take part, should there be any questions later. The researcher did no data gathering in the field until all the participants had agreed to the conditions. Although research participants were identified and approached through a process of purposive sampling, their participation was voluntary.

3.9.3 Violation of Privacy

Privacy refers to element of personal privacy, while confidentiality points to the retention of data (De Vos, 2000). Furthermore, De Vos (2000), posits that violation of privacy impinges on the right to independence and confidentiality, which can be viewed as synonymous. Leedy and Omrod (2005) state that the privilege to protection is the person’s entitlement to choose when, where, to whom and to what
degree his or her dispositions, convictions and conduct will be uncovered. Hence, I sought permission from the participants to use an audio-recorder and ensured that I had a password to open the computer to prevent anyone having unauthorised access to the information stored. I avoided revealing information about individuals which might be recognisable to other people and assured participants of confidentiality and anonymity. Pseudonyms were used in the study findings and even in interviews, and participants were assured beforehand that they would be able to review the findings before publication. White (2005) states that confidentiality is upheld when the reader cannot relate a given reaction to a given respondent. The data accumulated was kept private, to be used only for research with findings not related to the names of individuals. No information given by individuals was revealed or made available to other people.

3.9.4 Protection from Harm

Allan (2008) contends that research ought not to result in physical or mental distress, harm or damage to the participants, encouraging the researcher who needs to anticipate potential problems and do what is expected to limit them. In this study, I abstained from requesting members to answer individual questions that could make them feel awkward. I attempted to deal with the data provided sensitively and the dissemination thereof (Cohen, Manion & Morrison 2007). Information from interviews was kept anonymous to guarantee future privacy. Schools, education officials and focus group members were assigned numbers for use when the researcher required further explanation of any information provided. I ensured that there was a sense of caring and fairness when interacting with participants and they were not subjected to any type of pressure, shame or loss of confidence (Nyembezi, 2010). I clearly informed them about the possible impact of the study, and that confidentiality would be ensured, for example, through pseudonyms, respecting their confidentiality and at no time coercing them to participate. They were informed of their right to withdraw at any time without hindrance or repercussions. Preventing harm and risks is essential and, during the informed consent stage, participants were told about any risks that might be anticipated from being involved in the study.
3.10 PILOT STUDY

As indicated by De Vos, Strydom, Fouche and Delport (2006), a pilot study is important in refining the wording and relevance of the questions and the format of the questionnaire or interview timetable to a reasonable length. A pilot study was conducted at one district in Pretoria in Gauteng Province before the research was done in order to check the interview schedule. The district supported approximately 130 schools, including township, farm and suburban schools. Five participants participated in the focus group interviews of the pilot study, and consisted of one member from the Institutional Development Support office; Senior Education Specialist: curriculum (SES); and two members from inclusive and special Schools (ISS). Members who came from inclusive and special schools dominated the discussion. Two of the participants recused themselves from the study citing other appointments. I did not find this a problem, and as Guba et al. (2011) advise, potential individuals have a choice of whether to participate or not.

Before the pilot study began, I considered Allan’s (2008) advice to request permission stating clearly what the research was about and with whom the researcher wished to interact and sent it to the Head of the GDE. The letter written was intended to allay fears and build rapport as they knew my position and role in the GDE, minimising possible erroneous perceptions among the participants that the research was for anything other than study purposes, and confirming that no real names were to be used. Harm and discomfort would be minimised, with regard to De Vos’s (2005) articulation that research must not cause physical or mental distress or damage to the participants. This incorporates revealing information that may result in shame or danger to their families, jobs or friendships and that there were no anticipated negative outcomes.

The pilot study helped me to establish whether the participants understood the questions, to ascertain how much time it would take to interview each participant and to obtain the experience and practice necessary for conducting interviews. I then realised that my interviewing strategy did not work as certain individuals were dominating the sessions and I noted that I was a novice in interviewing. The strategy of interviewing was thus changed to allow them to contribute to the group without being coerced or intimidated. I allowed them to voice their views without fear and
respected their opinions. At times, I asked a question, allowed for random responses, and ensured that I managed the session to allow maximum participation. I found that some participants seldom spoke, even when they were granted an opportunity to do so. The pilot study helped me to learn how to engage and probe all participants without manipulating others. I also learned that some were not comfortable talking in a group, hence the use of both individual interviews and focus group interviews. The pilot study also helped to determine schedules, initially planned for 30 minutes. I realised that the DBST's level of preparedness was broad so adjusted this to an hour to allow for follow-up and probing questions.

3.11 LIMITATIONS

I faced some challenges when approaching individuals to participate in the research study, not least because of my position at the GDE. I reassured every participant that the research study had nothing to do with their performance at work for their district and told them it was within their rights to recuse themselves at any time if they no longer felt inclined to participate in the study. This was in keeping with the ethical considerations as stated above.

My role and responsibility at work is coordinating DBSTs and SBSTs to ensure they are functional. Participants knew my role at work and perceived that my position as senior to them had an influence on how they might respond to certain questions, because they thought that as a person directly involved with the programme, I could be attaching their responses to their actual responsibility as members of the teams.

Wagner et al. (2012) caution that when researchers assemble data at their own workplace or when they hold a superior post to the participants, the information may be hard to accumulate or may not be correct. My experience in working with DBST members could thus bring a certain bias to this study. In addition, participants who were selected were from two chosen districts, hence the findings could not be generalised to DBSTs in all 15 districts in Gauteng. This could also be perceived as one of the limitations to the validity of the study. In this study member checks were conducted to allow the DBST to check whether the information obtained from them had been done so accurately. I also transcribed the data verbatim from their responses to minimise being biased and to allow participants to voice their understanding.
The time of the interviews was also a challenge, because most participants came from different places, far away from their workplace, causing reluctance amongst some who did not wish to wait for interviews after hours. Some indicated that they had programmes and workshops to conduct after school, which compromised the quality of interviews and limited follow-up sessions.

### 3.12 CHAPTER SUMMARY

In this chapter, the research design, methodologies including research paradigm, research approach, population and sampling, data collection methods and process, measures to ensure trustworthiness, limitations of the study and all issues involved in conducting this empirical study were discussed. The next chapter presents the findings of the study.
CHAPTER 4:
RESEARCH FINDINGS

4.1 INTRODUCTION

Having covered research methodology and design, this chapter presents the analysis and findings emanating from the data collected by means of individual interviews and focus group discussions conducted in the two selected districts offices of the GDE. Phenomenological analysis was used to analyse the data. The purpose of the study was to interrogate the professional preparation of DBST members in supporting the implementation of inclusive education.

Since the study was qualitative in nature, I have included direct quotes as evidence to support my claims. The names of institutions and individuals are pseudonyms. The findings are presented in the following themes and sub-themes:

4.2 PROFESSIONAL PREPARATION IN SUPPORTING THE IMPLEMENTATION OF INCLUSIVE EDUCATION

In this study, professional preparation refers to a wide range of specialised training, formal education, or continuous professional development intended to help support team officials, teachers, and other educators improve their professional knowledge, competence and skill in implementing IE. Jahnukainen (2011) posits that professional preparation in supporting the implementation of IE is critical for the team’s success in the implementation of IE. It is a widely held view that a support team member who is well prepared is likely to contribute positively both as an individual and as part of the team. This translates into the improvement of educators’ and learners’ performance. The way individual members of the support team are prepared influences how team members carry out their responsibilities for the success of IE. Across all the scheduled interviews, which included six participants from the focus group discussion in District 1 (FDG1), six participants from the focus group discussion in District 2 (FDG2) and eight participants from follow-up individual interviews, the study revealed inconsistency in terms of the way in which participants were trained or prepared to support the implementation of inclusive education. Participants’ views regarding their own professional preparation are presented in the following sub-themes:
4.2.1 Subject Specialists

A subject specialist refers to a person who possesses skill or is knowledgeable about a subject or learning area. When participants were responding to their professional preparedness in terms of implementation of inclusive education, two participants in FGD1 indicated that their training prepared them to be subject specialists. Mr Makau stated:

*I qualified as high school teacher and specialised in Biology and English. I had to prepare thoroughly to make sure that we achieved the target. My focus was to make sure that no one failed my subject as it would have a negative effect on the overall results of learners. I also ensured that no learner was left behind. The issue of paying attention to slow learners was minimal. Instead those learners struggling were referred to special schools for support. About training in inclusive education such opportunity was not there.*

It is evident from the above excerpt that Mr Makau was not trained in IE; his focus was on ensuring that all learners passed the subjects he was offering. It was evident that his training made him results-driven to ensure that learners passed his subjects and the fact that he had limited understanding of IE was apparent from his saying that he had not studied it. However, he ensured that no learner was left behind, which suggests that he gave individual attention to all of those who seemed to be struggling. At the same time, he contradicted his own view when he said that he did not give support to learners identified as slow. This also suggests that he did not accommodate learners who were not doing well in the class, which is against inclusive principles.

A related view was shared by Ms Pillay:

*During my training, I specialised to teach accounting and economics. I'll like to concur with colleagues who raised concern about training on inclusive education. I was also not trained in inclusive education. The issue raised by my colleagues earlier about teaching different learning areas within the inclusive context is a real challenge.*
It was also evident from the above excerpt that the participant perceived herself as an accounting and economics specialist. She also confirmed that in her training she was not taught how to teach different subjects in an inclusive context.

Ms Pillay added that thorough preparation was essential for student teachers who were interested in this profession:

*I feel that something must be done to ensure that new student teachers or professionals when coming to the teaching profession possess necessary skills of inclusion. Thorough preparation on inclusive education, which I did not have, is important for supporting learners in inclusive schools. One thing that I want to bring to your attention is that, with matric, results is the language of the day, if learners fail your subjects you go for an accounting session to senior officials.*

It is evident that she was facing a challenge to teach in an inclusive environment due to lack of necessary skills and training on IE. An additional factor that affected her was a fear of having to account to senior education authorities for poor learner performance; hence, her emphasis on results that appear not to have been prioritising learners who struggled in their academic work.

During FGD2, three participants also indicated they had been trained as subject specialists. Mr Radebe stated:

*One factor that I want to indicate is that everyone who was trained in our time for teaching profession, if they are honest with you, they will tell you that our training was more on content subjects. Hence, in my case, I specialised in mathematics and geography. The inclusivity of learners in the class I am learning now from other members of the team.*

It is evident from the above excerpt that Mr Radebe trained before IE was formally introduced as policy and endorsed for implementation in schools. This suggests that it was a recent concept for Mr Radebe and he was familiarising himself with how to include learners in his class by interacting with his team members.
A similar view was shared by Ms Chabani:

You know what technical drawing is the field of my speciality, where I was among the few professionals who can teach technical drawing in high school. As many learners viewed technical drawing to be challenging by many students. During my training, there was no time where I was prepared how to include learners with disabilities in my lesson because of its demand – only a minority were interested in doing it.

It is evident from the above excerpt that Ms Chabani was trained during the time when those with interest in teaching learners with disabilities taught strictly in a separate environment.

A similar statement was made by Ms Maake:

I would like to indicate that my initial degree is on different field, example mathematics and geography are the subjects which I specialised in during my training. When I was appointed at the district and later asked to be part of the support team of the district, I realised a huge demand of my role within the team and I therefore realised a need to enrol further for capacity-building because inclusion was not part of my training.

From the above excerpts, it is evident that Ms Maake’s involvement in the support team changed her perception about IE. The demands of her role within the team required her to improve her skills and knowledge as she saw the need for further training to be able to carry out her responsibilities successfully within the team.

During individual interviews two participants also indicated that they were prepared to be subject specialists. Ms Louis indicated that her training enabled her to be an English and History specialist where she was now curriculum facilitator and she indicated that she supported the implementation of IE. However, she felt a need to be capacitated with the skills to enable her to support the implementation of IE. She said the following:

My training enabled me to become an English and History specialist. I did other subjects didactics but outside the inclusive education practice. I accept teaching disabled learners within the same classroom with the normal
learners. But I feel it is necessary to support implementers with necessary skills to understand inclusion and how to operate within the expected direction.

It is evident from the above excerpt that though Ms Louis had been trained as a subject specialist, she seemed to have a positive attitude in the implementation of IE, concurring with Ms Maake from the FGD2 on capacity-building to provide members with necessary skills to enable them to support the school.

A related statement was shared by Ms Mogosi:

*I am language specialist (Zulu and Isixhosa). I want to remind you something about curriculum. There is a new expectation on educators of a pace setter as per the dictate of CAPS which outlines what is supposed to be completed in a specific period. So, this compromises the smooth implementation of inclusive education. Educators end up focusing on what syllabus dictate than support. learners with learning difficulties end up being neglected or their learning pace being ignored because of rushing to complete up what the work schedule expects us to fulfil in a particular duration. Lack of alignment between pace setting and support should be clearly clarified as this could compromise success in inclusive education*

From the above excerpts Ms Mogosi indicated that she was a language specialist; however, she raised certain concerns on pacesetting as opposed to learning support. She also highlighted some serious concerns or gaps caused by the contradiction of the two concepts of focussing completing the curriculum within a specified time and giving support related to diverse abilities. Ms Mogosi also suggested alignment of the two concepts if inclusive education was to yield the expected outcomes. She suggested a need for proper guidance and intensive training on how to apply the two strategies without compromising either one:

*Merging of inclusive education to be in line with pacesetter strategy could compromise smooth implementation of inclusive education if proper guidance and intensive training is not provided among responsible officials.*

It is evident from the above excerpt that, in Ms Mogosi’s initial training, there was no emphasis on teaching learners with different abilities in the same class. It was
also revealed that IE was introduced long after she had qualified. Though some of the participants seemed to embrace IE, they raised a few concerns that could compromise implementation. These concerns included implementation of the pacesetting strategy which forced educators to cover certain topics and tasks at times as determined by the policy developers, but did not consider contextual factors that affected children with learning barriers. Another factor that makes educators not to cater for learners with barriers to learning is the fear of accounting to the senior management if the learners perform poorly on the subjects they are facilitating. This implies a great need to discuss how to apply the two strategies of ‘pacesetting’ and ‘support’ without compromising expectations of either. Lack of training on IE could impact negatively on the success of inclusive education in schools.

4.2.2 Ordinary School Training

Ordinary school training is the training that enables educators to be able to support learners in normal schools. Across all the scheduled interviews – FGD1, FGD2 and individual interviews – most participants concurred that they had received ordinary school training. In supporting the above assertion, Ms Moonsamy indicated that her training prepared her to teach ordinary school learners. In supporting the above assertion, during FGD1, she stated:

*Just to indicate the truth, as a professional teacher I am well trained to teach children in an ordinary school. For inclusion, it is no. It becomes something else, my training was not effective because opportunities that I had in my initial training when I was professionally trained as the teacher, no module or course that we did that touched on inclusive education in schools.*

From the above, it is evident that exposure to inclusive modules during their formal preparation was not available. Instead, their professional preparation or training helped them cope in supporting ordinary school learners and catering for mainstream schools.
A related sentiment was shared by Mr Pillay:

*I went straight to mainstream, from a college of education. At the college, I was only taught how to mediate content to ordinary learners; there was no opportunity granted to us as student teachers to learn about handicapped learners or disabled learners even in our practical session when we were evaluated to check our competency in terms of our professional preparation.*

From the above it is evident that participants’ training did not prepare them for learner inclusivity in schools. They related IE to LSEN as per the reference by Mr Pillay to learners as ‘handicapped’.

A similar statement was made by Mr Radebe during FGD2, in which he regarded training as having prepared him to be able to support learners in ordinary schools and also indicated that he still needed support himself:

*The way I was trained is far different from my colleagues’ training because it was distance learning. Even my teaching practice was conducted in ordinary schools. Since I am part of the team I am learning more with regard to learner support from my colleagues within the team during information sharing, but I still need more support myself on this aspect of inclusivity.*

It is evident from the above excerpt that the practical part of formal training only prepared him to become a mainstream teacher. Learner support was learned through collaborating with colleagues. This was not adequate and not all members of the DBST were not adequately trained to support the implementation of IE.

### 4.2.3 Specialised Training

Specialised training in this study refers to formal training that participants received from the institution of higher learning with a specific focus on learning support and remedial or IE. Across all the scheduled interviews, six participants indicated they had specialised school training which enabled them to teach learners in special schools. In supporting the assertion during FGD1, Ms Potgieter averred:

*My training in special education as it used to be called during apartheid time allowed me to teach in special school. I acquired my qualification through the assistance of the missionaries that were local based where they wanted me...*
to go and study for special education in order to help vulnerable learners in our community more especially those who are hard-of-hearing. I did a diploma in deaf education. I had to teach in Makaton to these kids as part of sign language.

Ms Potgieter’s training apparently prepared her to be able to support learners in special schools, especially those with hearing impairments. Her training also capacitated her to support vulnerable learners, as motivated by the missionaries who wanted her to support learners in the community. In terms of the current policies, special schools were relevant as they served as resource centres. Her knowledge in Makaton showed some understanding in teaching deaf learners.

A related view was shared by Ms Heydon who indicated that enrolling for these courses had benefited her as she learned new concepts necessary for inclusive education:

Just after EWP6 was gazetted I saw that the new challenges were already on the way, I then decided to enrol [for a] Diploma in LSEN Education and Hons in learning support. During that training, I familiarised myself to understand this new monster called inclusion. Even though I cannot master everything, but at least I know the importance of inclusive education. I also know the importance of early identification and how to develop IEP [Individualised Educational Plan] programmes. I also know how referral must be done with the aim of enhancing support to identified learners as it was covered in some of the modules which made me to view this cause beneficial.

From the above, it is evident that enrolling for the ACE in Inclusive Education benefited her because she seemed to have learned the importance of early identification, development of IEPs and understanding the referral process for learners identified with barriers to learning. This suggests that enrolling for an advanced certificate was beneficial to the participant because it equipped her with new relevant concepts in inclusive education.

During FGD2, Mr Musi indicated that the training received prepared him to teach learners with different disabilities and all learners in special schools:
You must remember that student teachers who were interested in teaching disabled learners had to do a particular specialised course. I possess a Bachelor's degree in LSEN. I can say that my training enabled me to understand barriers to learning and how these barriers affect children learning. During my training I gained new strategies that helped me to reach all learners in special schools and public schools with confidence. Among the strategies learned it included how to develop individualised educational plan to ensure all learners benefit.

From the above, it is evident that Mr Musi's training equipped him with new strategies to support learners with disability, especially those placed in special schools. Among other strategies were the development of individualised plans which she felt were key elements in reaching out to all learners with barriers to learning. This suggests that a qualification in LSEN is beneficial to teachers who support learners with barriers to learning. This corroborates Ms Heydon’s assertion on the benefits of further enrolment with institutions of high learning.

A related view was echoed by Ms Botha:

After receiving my teacher qualification and taught for ten years, later on I was, appointed at the district in ISS, I then realised that schools were relying on me for support on implementation of inclusion. At the same time, team members expected help from me because I represented ISS in the team. All these gave me pressure because I could not help. Hence I decided to study further for self-development and ensure that I know what I am doing. Indeed, during my Masters in Education, my training was an intensive programme which gave me skills to deal with assessment and support of learners referred to the DBST.

From the above, it is evident that registering for further specialised training such as a master's degree in remedial work assisted in conducting early identification and assessing learners. This was confirmed by Ms Leboa. Participants also mentioned that they were able to develop an IEP, suggesting that the specialised training which they did on their own initiative helped them to learn key aspects that enabled them to support the implementation of inclusive education. This suggests that the training was adequate, a view corroborated by Ms Maake:
My passion and interest in SEN encouraged me to register for B. Ed (Hons for Learners with Special Needs), as I wanted to cope with new expectations on my job deliverables of supporting educators to implement inclusive education successfully. The module called Learning Support was more critical to me because it demonstrated how support should be provided to all learners disabled in the same classroom, which is what inclusive education is advocating.

Similarly, during an individual interview, Ms Monde shared a related view when she indicated that she felt her training capacitated her to support learners in schools:

*The experience gained over time working in the sector and my qualification broaden my understanding on aspects related to learners with disabilities or learning barriers. I got introduced to new concepts such as individual education support plan, and curriculum adaptation and differentiated assessment which assisted educators support learners of different abilities in the same group.*

Ms Monde’s training enhanced her understanding of aspects to consider for the effective development of an individual education plan. This implies that understanding individual education support plans and curriculum adaptation with differentiated assessment is key to the implementation of IE.

In contrast, although participants who registered for further courses claimed to have been well prepared to support the implementation of inclusive education, during FGD1 and FGD2, two participants differed in that they possessed a formal qualification in remedial work. However, they felt that their qualification did not capacitate them sufficiently to deal with all key aspects of IE, for example, teaching deaf learners. Ms Hugh said:

*I can support educators on different aspects, early identification, adapting of curriculum, IEP development and other related inclusive education issues. But my challenges are, I cannot support educators from deaf school and school for the blind. I rope in special school principal or educators with relevant experience to assist me in deaf schools and school for the blind to enable (me) to support educators on inclusive practices*
It is thus evident that not all participants who had received specialised training were able to support all the aspects of IE. This participant asked the principal from a special school when she had to provide support to the deaf or blind.

The issue was reiterated by Ms Khanyi:

*It is not always true that training we receive makes us effective. I am qualified remedial specialist but I cannot support learners with visual impairment because I cannot read braille, and it affect my supporting role to those learners and educators. Remember these learners do the same curriculum like any learner in our school. We are expected by law to support them. Now at the district no one is able to read braille from the whole team so we depend to the principal from special school for assistance. The principals go with us to these schools and mediate what we are supposed to do on our behalf.*

It is evident from the above excerpts that Ms Khanyi and Ms Hugh experienced similar challenges in supporting learners with visual and hearing impairments. This implies that during participants' training, there are skills and knowledge gaps left in some team members with regard to executing certain responsibilities; for example, DBST members are expected to support all educators and learners in school, but it became evident that most DBST members were unable to support learners with hearing and visual challenges as mentioned above. In this context, participants were expected to support educators in implementing IE successfully in schools but, conversely, they became the ones in need of support. This poses a serious challenge to successful implementation of inclusive education in schools and suggests that not all team members who possess specialised training can support it.

Some of the reasons for the failure to support the implementation of IE is the period in which they were trained, as reflected in the following quote. Mr Makau said:

*Now you are going to know, a lot of our teachers of my age or a little bit younger when we studied in the seventies and the eighties and the nineties, there wasn't inclusive education, so we completed our studies during those years, but we didn't know about that, that thing because in the previous TED or the white education side, whatever you call it, that children were in special*
schools or in special classes, we weren’t trained to deal with them. I want you, I dare you to go and look at the average age of your teachers, and when were they trained, and then you will see where is one of our big gaps in inclusion.

It is evident from the above assertion that Mr Makau was trained during the apartheid era when inclusivity was not catered for in schools. It is also revealed that DBST members who received the training before 2001 when the EWP6 was introduced, were not trained in IE.

4.2.4 In-Service Training

In this study, in-service training refers to continuous professional development programmes or workshops initiated by the employer to develop their own employees for them to provide quality service delivery. In this study, the employer is GDE. Across all the scheduled interviews, participants differed in their views on the adequacy of the in-service training they had undergone and its importance in advancing the implementation of inclusive education in schools, reflected in the following sub-themes.

4.2.4.1 Bursary scheme – Inclusive education

During FGD2, two participants indicated that they had received a bursary issued by the GDE as part of their in-service training to prepare them to cope with the inclusive education demand, reflected in the following statement by Mr Lephoko:

……as I explained earlier that I was not trained in inclusive education. After my school was chosen to be full-service school, the Department of Education registered us at the University of Stone as part of in-service training, where we were doing inclusive education. At least there I learned role of full-service schools within this new dispensation, its importance in the during the implementation of inclusive education. I also learned how to teach in an inclusive classroom. Well the training was more fruitful as it was a detail year course attending on weekly basis.

It is evident here that in-service training provided through the bursary was adequate and beneficial to the participant because it seemed to have capacitated him to learn
IE concepts in detail. It is also evident that participants seemed to have learned about the role of full-service schools in the implementation of IE.

A related statement was shared by Mr Musi:

*My school was identified as the resource centre, I was given opportunity to go study where I was also given a bursary to study at the University of Stone for a year. This course was on inclusive education where we learned different aspects of inclusion, for example, curriculum adaptation and also the roles of different stakeholders and how they can contribute towards the realisation of inclusive education in schools. What I like the most it was when we were learn our role as resource in ensuring that inclusive education is realised. It was only in that year where I learned how to teach in inclusive classroom.*

From the above excerpts, it can be understood that a short course participants attended seemed to have benefited them to a certain extent. As Mr Musi indicated, he was introduced to new concepts such as curriculum adaptation, roles of different stakeholders and how they could contribute towards the realisation of inclusive education in schools. This suggests that the training raised awareness on key aspects related to inclusive education. The training ensured that key aspects such as curriculum adaptation, roles of stakeholders’ collaboration and how to teach inclusively were covered.

A similar view was held by Ms Chabani during FGD2:

*I am also the beneficiary of the officials who receive bursary and registered at the university, part of the modules we did included curriculum adaptation, assessment and IEP for identified learners. This changed my attitudes in terms of teaching in inclusive environment which was a challenge before that opportunity.*

From the above, it is evident that an in-service training programme seemed to have benefited Ms Chabani greatly and changed her perception with regard to IE in schools. She also indicated that the training covered modules related to IE and assisted her in understanding how to teach in an inclusive environment. These included curriculum adaptation, IEPs and assessment modules which assisted in supporting the implementation of IE. Those aspects that were covered in the course
evidently benefited participants to advance IE and increase their confidence in supporting it.

Additionally, the short course offered through the bursary scheme was perceived as a need since many participants were trained long before inclusive education was adopted as a policy for schools. The short course was helpful as it enabled some participants to reflect on what they had learned during their training. This is reflected in the following assertion by Ms Leboa:

*Although I am not hundred percent perfect, I feel there is a need for an intensive refresher course which is more on application not theory to ensure that support is provided to all without any blockages. I appreciated the bursary awarded to us specifically as it became a refresher course. Although I had background on inclusion, I did not have opportunity to practise what I learned during my training. I mean really practical in class so to me it was a thumbs-up.*

During individual interviews, three participants also confirmed the bursary that led them to enrol for a year’s programme at the University of Stone enabled them to recall what they had learned in their time to ensure that IE was realised. These participants also asserted what was echoed by other participants from FGD1 and FGD2. This is reflected in Ms Louis’s assertion that:

*The bursary scheme given to us by the Department of Education for an inclusive education became a revision to what I have learn during my first formal qualification and in-service training. I was taught how to develop IEP but I was unable to apply it practically. That year course capacitated me to be able to develop support programme for identified learners. In other words, the short course enhanced my skill to deal with some aspects that must be place when supporting the implementation of inclusive education.*

Ms Lotus corroborated the view of Ms Chabani on the importance of modules that enabled participants to work on issues related to IE:

*I must say congratulation to the department for thinking that way to ensure that they register us with university for intensive training. Before the course, ISS and psychologist served us as resource to most of us who had limited*
knowledge about inclusive education and how to support the implementation. The modules that we did were eye opening about the implementation to inclusive education because we were taken from basics on inclusive education.

Based on the above excerpts, one can conclude that the in-service training programme that was provided through universities addressed some perceptions on supporting the implementation of inclusive education. Before that, participants perceive support for inclusive education as the responsibility of the Inclusion and Special School’s Directorate and psychologists. It became evident that modules prepared for the training were critical in addressing ignorance about IE.

During FGD1, Ms Hugh concurred with Ms Moonsamy and Ms Heydon on the adequacy of the in-service training provided by the DoE through the University of Stone. This is reflected in the following assertion of Ms Lotus:

Only those who were registered by Gauteng Department Education with University of Stone and attended every Saturday are more confident in dealing with inclusive education. I am more on governance where I support SGB and parents and other stakeholders. I feel that parents and SGB members were supposed to have been included in the programme as they critical for the success of inclusive education. Clarity on the importance of stakeholders’ collaboration for the success of inclusive education was also given.

From the above, it is evident that clarification about the importance of partnership between parents and other stakeholders when supporting the implementation of inclusive education is crucial.

Based on the above excerpts, a partnership between the GDE and the university had an impact in terms of capacitating educators in supporting the implementation of IE. In-service training provided by the GDE capacitated teachers on how to develop IEPs, curriculum adaptation, assessment and teaching in an inclusive environment. Some participants also appreciated modules provided by the university as enabling them to advance IE more easily.
4.2.4.2 Train-the-trainer workshop (cascading model)

Although the bursary scheme awarded to participants by the GDE for in-service training received overwhelming support among participants, there was other training it provided directly to capacitate DBSTs to support the implementation of IE by using a cascading or train-the-trainer model. The latter was criticised by all the participants.

The study revealed that all participants across all scheduled interviews were aware of the workshop organised by the GDE provincial office to support the implementation of IE. In this workshop, the Department of Basic Education team trained the DBST. During FGD1, Ms Pillay said:

*Let me say not all trainings were effective, some training were adequate and some were not more especially the one that was provided by the Department expecting us to train SBST educators and expect them to train ordinary educators in schools.*

Although the training was a national mandate, participants raised many concerns about the adequacy of this type of training. In supporting the above assertion during FGD1, Ms Hugh said:

*Ja, the five-day training that we attended from GDE had good intentions but I cannot say it achieved the purpose as it lacked practical reflections and it had more information to digest in the short space of time. I feel it became a matter of compliance rather than capacity-building, I feel some of the trainers were not well prepared and looked uninformed about what they are doing, they just read the manual without showing the link of what happens on the ground.*

Based on the above excerpt, Ms Hugh identified issues that were of concern to her; for example, duration of the training and preparedness of facilitators to train DBST members. She also cited a situation when they seemed to be reading the manual for them and had a perception that training was organised simply to comply with the provincial mandate.

A similar view was shared by Mr Makau:
Gauteng Department of Education provincial officials were trained by basic of education at the national level for five days to train us on different aspects which included learning barriers, curriculum differentiation and using alternative assessment other key things lower structures to know. I think the training was just to be part of stats for province to be able to report to national for funding purposes. Each of the aspects that I mentioned above need more (than) five days each, in that workshop we were training all.

From the above excerpts, it is evident that participants were frustrated about a number of factors, including too much information that was supposed to be learned in a short time. They also felt that the time allocated for training sessions was too short which compromised the quality of training. These concerns eroded the confidence of the participants because some felt that they learned nothing that would enable them to implement IE. They were expected to train others, as highlighted by Mr Makau, while Ms Hugh also raised concerns about trainers who seemed unprepared and uninformed because they merely read manuals to participants instead of clarifying some key concepts in them. Hence, participants felt that the training was inadequate for the implementation of IE.

During FGD2, Ms Maake also raised concerns about the train the trainer or cascading workshop:

*I was part of the trained participants who were expected to train other DBST members. Expectation in that training it was for us to go and cascade the information learned to schools through the SBST. My only concern that I observed is that there was a lot of content coverage that warranted enough time than the one that was allocated. The new concepts that we learned like IEP warranted more time demonstration by facilitators which time was not in our side.*

It is evident from the above excerpt that Ms Maake also identified challenges about the cascading model, including too little time allocated for content coverage and demonstration of application of new concepts at classroom level which she believed warranted more time.

A related view was shared by Mr Lephoko:
I definitely concur with my colleague that train the trainer workshop for inclusive education in schools had lot of challenges than advantages. Some of the challenges that I observed include quality of the workshop was not acceptable. At the training venue we were more than hundred, presenters or facilitators of the workshop looked unprepared of the style of presentation. Let me tell you. I am a professional, I don’t expect anyone to read for me. I expect the facilitator to guide participants towards the expected outcome.

Similarly, Mr Lephoko identified concerns about the training, including too many participants at the venue. The excerpts also confirm what was indicated by Ms Hugh from FGD1, when both complained about too much information and limited time for training. Mr Lephoko concurred with them on the facilitators’ unpreparedness when facilitating the training as one of the factors that compromised the adequacy of the training.

During the individual interviews, Ms Ledwaba said:

I must say national department has expectation to bring the programme down to schools. But you find that information that needed to be grasped in six-month period to mediate them we are expected to use only two days as it happened already to train educators on them. Later on, educators complained about inadequate training workshops which could not make them to be, because two days, may be a week becomes inadequate to cascade the information instead it becomes compliance issue.

From the above, it is evident that participants proposed a review of how the GDE plans its workshops if it expects them to yield good results. This suggests that there are gaps in how the GDE supports the implementation of inclusion. Some of the factors identified as challenges included duration allocated for the training, and its quantity and quality.

In contrast, two participants, one from individual interviews and one from FGD1, both raised a worrying factor when they were asked to be trainers without having participated in any training before. In supporting the above assertions, Mr Moonsamy from FGD1 said:
The week when the team attended the workshop I was not there, um I was sick if I can remember, when my colleague returned and give report, to my surprise, I was given manual to read and go and train which, according to me, is not fair where we expect quality to prevail not fulfilment. I was not trained on initial organised five-day training course was compromised.

The view was shared by Ms Louis during her individual interview when she pointed out that her inclusion in the training team lacked preparation:

... I found it strange to see my name among trainers. When I asked, I was told – it is not difficult. I can just read the manual that would be availed to me and just train. The time for training I was writing examination.

From the above quote, it is evident that some of the participants who were part of the training team were not prepared as they were also surprised about their inclusion in the team. The success of IE will thus be compromised.

The excerpts confirm the training was inadequate to prepare participants to support the implementation of IE and it was evident that the inclusion of trainers who did not receive the training initially but who were expected to train others is a serious mistake that coordinators of the support teams made. It is also evident that participants were surprised at their involvement, suggesting the train-the-trainer workshop was met with many challenges, inter alia, time allocated for training session (duration), capacity of trainers, and overcrowded training venues. This suggests that before any training takes place, planning is necessary so that the training can yield desired outcomes. It can be concluded that the train-the-trainer strategy was inadequate to support the implementation of IE because it became evident that it had lot of limitations which did not yield the expected outcome of empowering educators to be able to implement IE in schools.

4.3 DBST ROLE IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF INCLUSIVE EDUCATION

It was evident across all the scheduled interviews that participants used different approaches to support the implementation of IE in schools. The approaches used by DBST members are reflected in the following sub-themes.
4.3.1 Circuit Meetings

A circuit meeting refers to a gathering organised by district officials for schools situated in the same geographical area. The intention of the circuit meetings is aimed at maximising support to and information-sharing with schools at the same time. Across the scheduled interviews, participants indicated that they used circuit meetings to support educators in the implementation of IE in schools. During FGD1, Ms Heydon said:

Okay, our activities depend on what we’ve planned for the week. Our planning is based on our line function or job description. I am in circuit two and three, so we identified common challenges from school and we organise a meeting in our circuit where we support educators. In my line I support educators how to use SIAS for effective learner support and any matter related to referral process.

A related view was shared by Ms Potgieter:

In our circuit meeting we support educators on how to conduct screening for early identification. In this process that’s where educators are taught how to identify any factor that might be barrier to learning or factors that might impede learning in the long run during academic years and provide early intervention.

Here, Ms Potgieter noted she also used circuit meetings to capacitate educators to understand factors that affected children’s learning and advised them on intervention strategies.

Similarly, during her individual interview, Ms Mogosi also stated that:

There are lots of changes in terms of curriculum implementation, so it becomes my responsibility as an intermediate coordinator to mediate new content with regard to curriculum delivery. I make sure in those circuits meeting we have partnership with ISS where we assist to present demonstrate to educators how to adapt the curriculum adaptation without comprising the quality and the standard of education.
4.3.2 Cluster Workshops

In this study, a cluster refers to a limited number of neighbouring schools that are grouped together for providing support with ease. Workshops are conducted within and for the cluster. Four participants indicated that they used cluster workshops to support educators in the implementation of IE. In supporting the above assertion, during FGD1, Ms Hugh said:

> Our visits to schools guides us to educators’ common challenges. Then we arrange cluster workshop(s) to guide educators how to deal with the identified challenges, for example, we support the educators to understand how to provide an accommodation to learners identified with barriers to learning. In cluster workshop(s) educators from neighbouring schools have the opportunity to share challenges that affect their learners in the same cluster.

Ms Hugh guided educators on how to conduct reading and writing with learners who were identified with learning barriers.

A related view was expressed by Mr Makau:

> We support educators on how to conduct screening for early identification. In this process, that’s where educators are taught how to identify any factor that might be barrier to learning or factors that might impede learning in the long run during academic years and provide early intervention. We also use resource centres to train educators how to support learners with barriers to learning. Resource centres have specialised professional personnel, including therapists and psychologists that are assistants in this regard.

From the above excerpt, it is evident that Mr Makau facilitated cluster workshops when he used specialised professional personnel located at the resource centres to support other educators in conducting screening for at-risk learners with the aim of providing early intervention.

Similarly, from FGD2, Ms Chabani confirmed that they used cluster workshops to deal with different matters, including substance abuse:
In our cluster workshop, it becomes an opportune way of reaching out to many more especially when discussing issues like gangsterism which turn to affect everyone within the community and all issues related to substance abuse.

During her individual interview, Ms Ledwaba indicated that she organised a cluster workshop in which she discussed with educators ways of using a catalogue that had devices to assist learners with barriers to learning and advised educators on how they could source other devices for independent learning:

Many schools cannot differentiate between a device and teaching materials. In the cluster workshop I demonstrate to educators how to use devices for curriculum benefit and how it differs to LTSM. So, at the cluster workshops I am able to show them differences and also give the catalogues where they can procure. I do this to ensure that their work is not compromised because of resources.

Circuit meetings/workshops thus became vital for information-sharing. In the circuit meeting, it was advantageous because large groups of educators were being targeted and received the same information simultaneously, thus minimising any cascading which might have distorted certain information and compromised implementation of IE.

4.3.3 On-Site Support

In this study, on-site support refers to direct support that is provided by DBST members directly to educators, including learners, depending on the identified challenges. Across all the scheduled interviews, participants indicated that they gave on-site support to different stakeholders at the school, including SBSTs, learner support educators, classroom educators, learners and parents at the school level. In supporting the above assertion, during FGD1, Ms. Heydon said:

Normally as inclusion and special schools official I go to support schools on-site where we advise school-based support teams how to conduct early identification process for learners who seem to be struggling. I also advise educators with strategies to use when supporting identified learners.
She provided on-site support when she advised SBST on the strategies to be used to support struggling learners.

A related sentiment was shared by Ms Pillay:

*During my visit to school site, I guide the school principals and SGB on how to review policies with the aim of ensuring that school policies are (not) discriminating to other learners and ensure that policies are align(ed) to inclusivity in schools.*

The participant used on-site support to guide the school principal and SGB on how to ensure that school policies did not discriminate against LSEN.

A similar view was expressed during FGD2 by Mrs Maake:

*I schedule visit to school where I support educators on site to understand processes to follow when applying for learners’ accommodations. While on-site I also practical demonstrate to learning support educators (LSE) how to develop individual plan for identified learners during screening process.*

From the above extract, it is evident that the participant provided on-site support when the participant supported the LSE in developing an individual educational plan for the identified learners.

A related view was presented by Mr Musi:

*I concur with my colleagues there are different strategies that we do to support the implementation of inclusive education in schools. You must remember that the LSE placed in full-service schools need regular support because other teachers use their classes as dumping area, so I visit schools to conduct on-site support to educators on how to conduct curriculum adaptation for the learners that are not coping.*

During on-site support, LSEs and educators were supported on how to use curriculum adaptation for learners who were not coping.

As Ms Leboa confirmed:
SBST report substance abuse cases to us more especially from secondary schools. Noting that drugs and other related substance could affect their mind which could result in them failing. As the team we quickly go on-site to provide counselling directly to the learners. When situation dictate we also call parents to give the counselling too as the learners behaviour can be affected by the children’s behaviour.

During the on-site support, she provided counselling to learners who were suspected of engaging in substance abuse.

Similarly, during her individual interview, Ms Khanyi said:

> During on-site visits, I assist to also conduct learner assessment. Well these are the learners that are referred to us. They are referred to us because they are not coping with the curriculum, they are struggling. So, what we do is we do a scholastic assessment.

When she provided on-site support, she conducted a scholastic assessment for learners displaying learning problems.

Conversely, during FGD2, Mr Radebe shared concern about the challenges of on-site support:

> I understand my colleagues indicated the advantage of on-site support, but there are serious implication on-site support because it is time-consuming and members end up camping in one institution for a longer period which might be compromising service delivery because there (are) few or limited DBST members from districts. I feel what is vital is supporting educators in clusters and circuits because many educators are reached simultaneously. There is good evidence of output on-site support but only few schools can be supported through this strategy.

He noted the disadvantages of on-site support when he raised time as a challenge and the limited school benefits.
4.4 SUGGESTED STRATEGIES FOR ENHANCING DBST PROFESSIONAL PREPARATION

Strategy in this study refers to a plan to attain one or more goals under circumstances of uncertainty. In this study, the focus is on strategies that can enhance the professional preparation of DBST members. The study revealed that most of the participants were not trained at all, and those who were trained were inadequately trained. The study also revealed strategies that participants proposed could enhance their own preparation. Their proposed strategies are reflected in the following sub-themes:

4.4.1 Linking the Theory to Practice during Training

The study found gaps in terms of modules offered by universities versus what happened at the school level in terms of supporting the implementation of inclusive education; hence, the participants proposed that universities should facilitate the process of linking the theory with practice in their training programmes. In supporting the above assertion during FGD1, Mr Moonsamy asserted:

*To address the concern of theory and practical the universities need to ensure that in every module it should be accompanied by practical session. Where possible live videos can be used during training period to demonstrate the practical way of reaching all learners in an inclusive context.*

Participants advocated use of videos as a way of demonstrating to students how to support learners within the inclusive environment.

A similar view was shared by Mr Musi during FGD1:

*There is too much theory which is not linked to reality at classroom level, we get trained on curriculum adaptation and developing IEPs [but] when we go to class, we still struggle how to develop the IEP programme though theoretically we understand. Mostly officials have some challenges when they have to support educators at the school level. I feel that the way we were trained to become teachers was good because every school term we had opportunity to go to school to observe other educators in action and*
learned from them in real situation. Such approach could also be beneficial if inclusive education is to be achieved.

He felt that site visits when participants observed other members supporting identified learners on a termly basis could help them improve understanding of their practice of advancing inclusive education. Mr Musi seemed to appreciate the training methods used to prepare participants to be teachers because they had the opportunity to observe and learn in a real classroom context. This suggests that granting the opportunity to officials to observe other officials on site can enhance participant preparation because it will provide an opportunity to link practice and theory.

During FGD2, Mr Lephoko also indicated that the use of audio-visual aids can be used during the training period:

There is a need for audio-visual gadgets that would demonstrate what must happen practically for identified aspects. When one sees something continuously, a person develops interest and ends up mastering [what] he/she watches always. I see that such approach could help officials to be best in rendering their service.

Similarly, during her individual interview, Ms Ledwaba indicated that for supporting the implementation of inclusive education there should be weeks when officials would visit other schools to observe DBST members in action and identify areas that required improvement:

Inclusive education concepts could be abstract at times. I feel that there must be a way of ensuring team members to work towards the same direction. Site observation can allow officials to critique to good and the bad from the observation and such can allow officials to reflect in their practice.

Visits for observation can thus assist officials to critique each other with the aim of closing gaps in support provision.

During FGD2, Mr Radebe corroborated the need for ensuring that officials and members were able to use the skills acquired:
……everyone can be in possession of a qualification but is futile if one cannot practice what one has been trained for so practical sessions will be a measure to determine how well officials or support teams can implement theory learned.

He believed that practical sessions could help to determine what support teams knew before they could be considered as qualified.

4.4.2 Collaboration between Schools, Universities and Department of Basic Education

The study found that collaboration between the DBE, universities and the schools was critical. Participants felt that strengthening such relationships could assist universities to develop modules that could be responsive to officials and educators’ challenges experienced on the ground. In supporting the above assertions, during her individual interview, Ms Louis made the following proposal:

\[ \text{Gauteng Department of Education sit with universities to decide on the programme or modules needed so that university can offer relevant modules that will be beneficial to those enrolling with them.} \]

During FGD1, Ms Hugh shared her own view in terms of the strategies to enhance preparation:

\[ \text{Universities should directly work with schools, where they take certain number of education, to go train directly across the district as this will be increasing number of specialised personnel to assist the implementation of inclusive education. At the same time, it will be opportunity of opening dialogue of discussing on inclusive challenges in schools and decide on developing modules to address that.} \]

During FGD2, Ms Botha averred:

\[ \text{You know what building few inclusive schools that will serve as the model by the Department of Education and ensure that it is well-resourced can assist a lot because universities can take students teachers and support teams members who are in need of training and reskilling there for practical and on supporting the implementation of inclusive education in schools.} \]
During FGD2, a related statement was shared by Mr Musi who reiterated the importance of partnership among different stakeholders. He proposed that universities could visit schools to evaluate the situation and devise development modules that would benefit educators in supporting the implementation of IE. This was reflected in the following assertion:

I concur with my colleague, that partnership between schools and universities can assist a lot as this might warrant universities to come down to schools and research on the main challenges and decide on the appropriate modules that will assist to address such.

Based on the above, a partnership between schools, universities and the DBE can help to develop modules that respond to school contexts and ensure that students, together with DBST members, require reskilling to be prepared to support the implementation of IE. Noting that universities are institutions that provide training to everyone who wants to work in the field, collaboration between universities and the department is critical to ensure that the training that universities provide in IE responds directly to the gaps identified in schools.

4.4.3 Competency Assessment before Employment

Three participants felt that assessing any person who wanted to support educators in the implementation of IE was critical as this would help in evaluating the competence and readiness of support team members before they were elected to the DBST. During FGD1, Ms Potgieter said:

I wish to indicate that DBST members must embark on competency assessment before they embark on their supporting role of inclusive education as this will force them to display a certain level of competence so that when they filter through to come to the district office and support schools, they already know what to do to the educator instead of being incompetent.

This reveals the need for putting support teams officials through a test to determine their skills and knowledge around supporting the implementation of IE.

A related view was shared by Ms Maake during FGD2:
As it is currently, some of the support team never received formal training. They got exposed to inclusive education through in-service training like the one the department conducts. Personal I believe that there should a certain way of determining the skills acquired by support teams with regard to support inclusive education.

The sentiment was echoed by Ms Khanyi during her individual interview:

The main challenge that I observe now, becoming a member of the DBST is not taken as the serious responsibility. At times some members can abandoned DBST meeting claiming to have other competing priorities. Well, that to me is a big question mark around understanding the important inclusive education. Therefore, I feel that anyone who is chosen or willing to be a DBST member must write certain examination board or certain assessment tests that department and university may agree upon with the aim of finding out what they offer being a member of the DBST.

The view was also corroborated by Ms Louis during an individual interview:

I feel that there must be a board that regulates preparedness of DBST members before they can execute their responsibilities. I feel if DBST members’ preparation can be regulated like Health Professional Council of South Africa, it can help to ascertain how well they are prepared to support inclusive education.

From the above, it is evident that competency assessment could assist in gauging DBST members’ skills and knowledge level before engaging them as members of the DBSTs for district employment.

4.4.4 Online Support

During FGD1, Mr Makau proposed an online course in which the support team could easily access certain information to assist them with support strategies, without delay:

Noting that we are technologically inclined, GDE and universities may introduce inclusive education programmes online with basic questions and answers for easy access and reference. This can increase support teams
knowledge and capacity with regard to support provisioning as members of the District Based Support Team.

A related view was supported by Mr Lephoko from the FGD2:

_I do feel that the use of gadgets now is critical to advance inclusive education. The department just needs to be strategically… We are in the fourth industrial revolution, there the use of online programmes could help a lot for those who are novices._

This was corroborated by Ms Lotus during an individual interview:

_Today, the use of technological is leading in the country because even most schools in Gauteng has an ICT. So similarly uploading online inclusive education programmes can assist to increase confidence among DBST members and they can use that as a point of reference where needs be._

The above excerpts indicate that participants felt that online programmes on IE would benefit support team members as a resource to use when experiencing challenges in supporting education in the implementation of IE.

4.5 CHAPTER SUMMARY

The findings from this chapter revealed inconsistencies in terms of professional preparation. The study found that the initial training in which most participants were trained did not prepare them to support the implementation of inclusive education. The study found that participants were trained in different fields in education, for example, to become ordinary school teachers or subject specialists. Additionally, it was revealed that participants who underwent specialised training in which participants enrolled with an institution of higher education seemed to have been capacitated in dealing with some IE aspects, although not all. The study also found that the attitude of the DBST members was positive with regard to supporting the implementation of IE. However, it was evident that participants’ understanding or the interpretation of IE varied in terms of how they defined or interpreted the concept.

Furthermore, it was found that participants also used different strategies to support the implementation of IE in schools, including circuit meetings, cluster workshops.
and on-site training. Inconsistencies were found in the adequacy of in-service training, and it was revealed that bursary-funded short courses seemed to have helped participants to be effective when supporting the implementation of IE. Most DBST members could support educators with multi-level teaching, individual educational plans, curriculum adaptation, and identifying learners with barriers to learning.

The next chapter presents a discussion of findings against the literature reviewed.
CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

5.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents the findings and discussions on professional preparation of DBST members which were guided by the purpose of the study and research question. The purpose of this study was to explore DBST professional preparation in support of the implementation of inclusive education in schools. This research chapter presents the findings and discussion on the following themes emanating from sub-research question,

5.2 PROFESSIONAL PREPARATION IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF INCLUSIVE EDUCATION

The term professionalism and preparation were explained in Chapter 1. (see 1.11). Professionalism is one of the qualities of DBST members that can contribute to the success or failure during the implementation of their role (Makhalemele 2011). However, participants in this study experienced inconsistency in terms of their professional preparation to support the execution of inclusive education in schools. Most DBST members were concerned with their professional preparation where they revealed that their teacher training programmes had not empowered them with knowledge of IE (see 4.1.1). By contrast, in Ireland, educator training courses contain modules on SEN (Kearns & Shevlin 2006), thus guaranteeing that future educators are receptive to the need for teaching learners with a wide range of needs (see 2.3.1). This suggests that the absence of inclusive models during professional preparation hindered most DBST members from executing their responsibilities successfully.

Furthermore, the study revealed that some of the DBST members felt that they were only prepared to become learning area specialist (4.1.1.1). By contrast, in the UK, support teams are confident about the skills and knowledge they possess to enable schools to execute their role of supporting learners with SEN adequately and efficiently (White et al., 2010). Similarly, in Finland, support teams are successful and support is given based on the observed needs of the learner (Jahnukainen, 2011). This implies that in countries that are doing well in the implementation of IE,
professional preparation of support teams on IE is a focus of the educational policies of these countries.

Based on the above, it became evident that those trained to support ordinary schools and as learning area specialists were unable to support the implementation of IE because their training did not include modules that assisted them to have a good understanding of IE. Lack of training of DBSTs compromises their ability to upskill teachers who then could not help LSEN.

Furthermore, this study also revealed that participants who received specialised training felt that they were adequately prepared to implement IE (4.1.1.3). However, there were some limitations identified by participants who had undergone specialised training. It was found that when DBST members support the schools for the deaf and the blind, they invited professional staff from resource centres to go help them when supporting learners in these schools, especially for sign language interpretation and the reading of braille (4.1.1.3). This ties up with the findings of Lynch, McCall, Douglas, McLinden, Mogesa, Mwaura, Muga, & Njoroge, (2011) in Kenya where teachers needed information about adapting the curriculum for learners with visual disabilities that they were supporting. This suggests that acquiring formal or relevant qualifications becomes futile if individuals cannot apply the theory learned to support learners from background in practice. Mitchell (2010) posits that qualifications in SEN are not sufficient on their own, and that application of the theoretical knowledge or expertise in practice should be a priority before a teacher enters the profession.

Moreover, this study revealed gaps in terms of teachers’ preparation to address the needs of all learners, irrespective of being in possession of relevant qualification. In Australia, special teacher training includes the completion of an in-service educator readiness programme; for example, a Bachelor of Education degree, as well as a course in SEN (2.3.1). In a similar vein, the Victorian Department of Education and Training requires special education graduates to have finished no under 45 days practical experience, including 30 days of supervised practice in a range of settings (Mitchell 2010). In the United States of America, teachers involved in working with LSEN must meet basic requirements which include earning a degree and being certified by the state. Furthermore, Ackerman et al. (2002) state that schools and
universities that train teachers for SEN programmes are accredited by the NCATE to ensure that the training is adequate.

In light of the above discussion, it is clear that different nations have diverse ways of ensuring that staff are properly trained to help LSEN. This suggests that not everyone can support LSEN unless they meet a set standard which includes certification including a period of practical training.

Additionally, it was revealed by this study that after the GDE identified a knowledge gap in terms of supporting the implementation of IE, the department it introduced a training programme where a bursary was offered to DBST members and educators to study inclusive education at a university (4.1.1.4). Furthermore, the study found that the participants appreciated the in-service programme because it helped them to understand key aspects of IE including the aspects of developing IEPs for at-risk learners, differentiation of the curriculum for LSEN, and the importance of parents’ involvement. The content covered is explained in Chapter 2 (2.6.2).

The study also revealed the DBE provided training by means of a cascading model and established the National Training Team which trained provincial training teams which then trained District Training Teams followed by the District Training Teams training SBSTs and educators at school level. This training drew a lot of criticism from participants because the national training programme took place over five days, but when it comes to district training, the programme was shortened to three days due to budgetary constraints. Similarly, the short-term training approach has been generally criticised as deficient for preparing teachers satisfactorily. Scaffolded training also meant that the key concepts were not always properly conveyed to teachers (Fiske & Ladd, 2004) who were receiving the information fourth-hand, so to speak. The scaffolding methodology did not take into account the complexity of the execution of the implementation of the EWP6. This implies that national expectations were compromised because the duration of the training was too short. This also meant that important topics or aspects that should have been addressed during the training were ignored or omitted because of time constraints. The study thus found that preparation at training workshops delivered via a cascaded approach was deficient since the trainers lacked the essential knowledge and skills to convey the principles of IE in any really meaningful way; rather, it was
simply done with the objective of compliance with the national mandate. The short duration of the training programme was also highlighted as an aspect that compromised the implementation of IE.

The lack of professional preparation of support teams thus creates gaps in terms of the support that team members must provide to teachers in schools. That clearly compromises the implementation of IE at school level. Teachers depending on DBST for support may not be properly prepared to carry out their responsibilities because of the incapacity of the support team which itself has been inadequately prepared or trained in IE. Therefore, the professional preparation for DBST members is critical to closing the gap between the expectations of the EWP6 and the implementation of IE. In most developing countries, there are no support structures which impacts negatively on LSEN (Mutepfa et al. 2007).

By contrast, literature revealed that most developed countries are well advanced in the implementation of IE. In Finland, the USA, Ireland and the UK, the state is committed to ensuring that professionals meet the required standards before they serve in the field (2.3.1). This refutes the findings revealed by DBST members who indicated that in their initial training which mostly took place before the promulgation of EWP6, IE was not included. In addition, the study found that SEN educators would usually be teaching children with physical or intellectual disabilities, as opposed to addressing the needs of all learners. Furthermore, in Finland, teaching is considered a high-status occupation (Jahnnukainen, 2011), and is committed to producing highly qualified teachers with the ability to meet the full scope of needs of all children in their classrooms. The academic performance of learners in nations such as Finland bears testimony to the success of IE. As discussed in Chapter 2, this suggests that professional preparation is vital to increase the capacity of support teams and all those responsible for the implementation of IE (2.3.1).

In view of the above, it is apparent that there is a gap between developed and developing countries in terms of the adequacy of educational support teams’ preparation. Developed countries require teachers to have both academic qualifications and to pass board exams which certify them to teach. There are also councils or professional bodies that regulate qualifications that teachers or service providers must have to qualify to teach learners experiencing barriers to learning.
Moreover, courses that are offered through universities and colleges are accredited. Teachers who enter the profession are expected to have passion and commitment and be well prepared to meet all learners’ needs. By contrast, developing countries still face a challenge in the training of educators because of a lack of resources, as revealed by Sharma et al. (2013) and Chireshe (2013).

It is not surprising that there are inconsistencies in implementing IE; e.g. Donelly (2010) states that the field of IE is replete with weaknesses, questionable practices and inconsistencies. Global initiatives for educational transformation are driving national and local imperatives and attempts are being made to give increasing emphasis to the implementation of IE in general education settings in line with the Salamanca Statement. However, the implementation of any new policy always brings with it uncertainties among those charged with implementing it.

Slee (2001) affirms that the definition and importance of IE is still the subject of much discussion (even after some 25 years since the Salamanca statement was signed in 1993 and almost 20 years since the EWP6 was promulgated in 2001), and that characterising best practice is not a simple exercise. Variation in definitions and explanations show that the concept of inclusion depends on context (Florian, 2005) and that there is no single paradigm for implementation. Nevertheless, a common understanding or interpreting of inclusion/inclusive concepts in the South African context would encourage a common approach to providing support in schools, as decided upon by the DBE (2011). There is thus a need for a common approach amongst DBSTs to ensure alignment with policy in the delivery of support programmes, and to ensure that the policy is implemented as planned in all schools in South Africa.

5.3 DBST’S ROLE IN SUPPORTING THE IMPLEMENTATION OF INCLUSIVE EDUCATION

Providing support services is of primary importance for the achievement of implementing inclusive educational policies (UNESCO, 1994). However, this study found that DBSTs use different strategies to support educators in the implementation of inclusive education. These procedures include circuit gatherings, cluster workshop and on-site support. The aligns with the findings of a study by Caceres et al. (2010) in Pakistan where support teams utilise a three-pronged way
cluster meetings, workshops and on-site support to prepare and support educators to implement inclusive education. It became evident that such support provides an opportunity for educators to embrace IE. It also assists them with strategies for making education inclusive and sensitive to the needs of all learners and they develop greater confidence in teaching LSEN (Caceres et al., 2010).

Chapter 2 (2.7–2.9) addressed the use of co-teaching, consultation and collaboration as mechanisms that assist with the implementation of IE. Consultation is a strategy used by DBST members during support visits. LSEs placed in full-service schools use an itinerant system to support learners referred to them by educators. During the interaction between LSE and DBST members, LSEs are capacitated on how to adapt curriculum for learners who are not coping and also demonstrate to educators how to develop IEPs for learners to ensure that they are able to address learning needs using inclusive principles. Winter and O’Raw (2010) posit that IEPs are best derived through collaboration, between parents, schools and other professionals. However, it was found in this study that collaboration is minimal which ends up compromising the successful implementation of IE.

As discussed earlier in Chapter 2 (2.9.3), this concept is critical to this study because DBSTs are expected to work as a team if they are to achieve their set objectives. It is essential to set up communication networks that enable reflection and deliberations on teaching and learning practices in inclusive settings. It is vital to develop a collaborative atmosphere as this can alleviate potential conflict between the different structures in the education system on what needs to be done and who needs to do it (Richardson-Gibbs & Klein, 2014).

Engelbrecht and Green (2007) posit that collaboration is one of the essential features of inclusive school communities and should be cultivated consciously in schools. The IE system can be compromised if people do not work together in a collaborative fashion because collaboration acts as an adhesive mechanism by countering isolation through community, a sense of belonging and participation among the role players within an inclusive school community.

In the same vein, the Strategy of Special Needs Education (DoE, 2007) and the CAPS (DBE, 2010) include similar strategies that can be used by DBSTs to ensure that the implementation of inclusive education is realised. These include didactic
approaches that aim at supporting learners with barriers to learning, such as curriculum differentiation through small group arrangements, co-teaching approaches, accommodations as well as remedial teaching. As discussed in Chapter 2, curriculum differentiation is vital to ensuring that IE is implemented successfully (2.6.3).

Failure to accommodate all learners through the curriculum means that the implementation of IE could be compromised because teachers need to understand that the most significant way to respond to diversity in the classroom is by means of curriculum differentiation and different levels of support depending on learners’ needs (DoE, 2001). For example, intensified support can be offered to learners who do need more help than other learners. At times, an ILP is prepared for those not responding to intensive support (DoE, 2007), and that simultaneously results in special support. Its success is not the sole responsibility of the teachers but also the parents, who play a pivotal role in ensuring that there is continuity with regard to what the learners are doing at school. Special support requires an administrative decision to refer learners to special schools. It is based on an evaluation of the earlier support given, and usually a medical and/or psychological assessment is involved.

Donelly and Kyriazopoulou (2014) found that team-teaching and partner classes can be used to good effect with an emphasis on reflection, teamwork and communication and staff teams accept that they are responsible for all learners in the class. Coaching is provided in study methods and learners are supported to engage in more active learning. Such approaches, along with peer support, have been found to benefit all learners (Donelly & Kyriazopoulou, 2014). The use of teaching assistants to provide extra learning support is another potential strategy (NESSE, 2012), although it is contended that teaching assistants should be reasonably qualified if they are to enhance the learning of LSEN. However, children with moderate special needs, for instance dyslexic learners, can be educated in standard classrooms by non-specialised educators (Győrfi & Smythe, 2010).

This study also found that during workshops, the DBSTs use special schools as resource centres to support educators on how to select appropriate assistive devices that can be used for curriculum delivery and independent living. Resource
centres can offer help to schools with modifications and train educators on how to utilise assistive gadgets for particular disabilities (Kesälahti & Väyrynen 2013). Therapeutic and mental assessment and interventions can be done at the centre. The health care specialist at the centre works with parents in close partnership, generally directing and giving information. In those schools, where there are special classes, some lessons can be combined with learners in standard classes (Kesälahti & Väyrynen, 2013). One strategy involves a network of stakeholders with close cooperation between experts and the family (EADSNE 2010). It is clear that collaboration between various stakeholders should be prioritised to ensure that the support provided yields the expected outcomes. Thus, resource centres are critical to ensuring that inclusive education is achieve in schools. This suggests that circuit workshops and cluster meetings are vital for information-sharing with the aim of advancing inclusive education. This affirms the findings in this study where participants indicated that professionals from special schools as resource centres conduct on-site support visits to conduct educational assessment of at-risk learners with the aim of determining appropriate learning programmes that can assist these learners to cope in class.

Furthermore, the study found that during on-site support, DBSTs support the SMT and SGB on how to develop policies to ensure that they are not exclusive in nature. The SMTs and SGBs have a critical role to play to ensure that schools are inclusive in nature. The SASA (DoE, 1996) requires the establishment of SGBs with the power to determine school budgets, the language of teaching and learning, discipline, and the appointment or promotion of teaching and administrative staff. However, the study revealed that these structures are not equipped to develop policies that are inclusive in nature (which are developed at the national level), and school policies tend not to be responsive to inclusive practices. The DBST support would thus be expected to close the gaps in these structures regarding development that reflects diversity.

The DoE (2007) states that a “policy includes plans of movement intended to affect and choose decision, exercises and distinctive issues.” Schools’ plans should give direction to operations of a school by principals, learners and parents, while achieving the school vision and mission (Van Wyk & Marumuloa, 2012). The strategies drafted by the schools reflect the comprehension and preparedness of
the SMTs and SGBs regarding IE (Brooks, 1998). The DoE (2007) emphasises that
the SGB and SMT must be involved in drafting the strategies together with all
relevant stakeholders.

Readiness and attitudinal change among SMT and SGB members will be evident if
the developed policies are not discriminatory in nature on admittance and support
of learners experiencing barriers to learning. School policies must reflect inclusive
practices and culture to guarantee that they accommodate diversity, and develop
the self-esteem and critical thinking of all learners. Naicker (2002) found evidence
that isolated pockets of success do not seem to have a significant impact on the
transformation process unless they are incorporated into the institution’s policies
and practices. Many innovations tend to be established by the leadership of a
visionary principal or an innovative educator; thus school policies become central to
the transformation of school culture and responsiveness to learners’ needs. All the
strategies discussed above are related to the ecological systems theory that
demonstrates the interrelationships between systems and contextual settings within
which people and groups develop and function (Paquette & Ryan, 2001). These
systems have a mutual influence on one another as each system strives to maintain
equilibrium in the greater scheme of things (2.2.1.1–2.2.1.5).

Mukhopadhyay (2013) found that efficient administrative systems, effective support
terms, parental involvement and commitment by school principals are basic
elements in the successful implementation of IE. Educator contend that LSENs
require efficient administrative support systems and rely upon authorities. A lack of
resources including human resources is a concern (Cotay, 2000) as support is
compromised by a shortage of specialist staff and deficient or outdated technology.
This suggests that lack of human, physical and financial resources compromises
the implementation of IE in schools.

In this study, the learner ratio was identified as one of the aspects that compromise
the implementation of inclusive education. Overcrowding in classes was identified
as one of concern that compromise the implementation of inclusive education
(Cotay, 2000). Studies have found major discrepancies between developed and
developing nations regarding how support teams bolster the execution of IE. Based
on the above discussion it can be concluded that there are inconsistencies in
developed and developing countries in terms of support provisioning to ensure that IE is realised in schools.

5.4 PROPOSED STRATEGIES TO IMPROVE DBST PROFESSIONAL PREPARATION

DBST members proposed various strategies that can improve their own professional preparation. Participants on this study suggested that the university must ensure that there is a linkage of theory into practice (4.1.6.1). In developed countries, all those who want to work in an SEN environment are expected to meet the set standards or have certain level of understanding before working with LSEN. For example, Chapter 2 (2.3.1) covers what is needed before any one enters this field. This implies that qualification on paper are only a foundation for those who want to work in inclusive environment and there is a great need for practical experience to be successful in this sector.

Similarly, participants proposed a competency test for those who want to work in an IE environment before entering the profession (4.1.6.3). The participants felt that competency tests would determine the knowledge gained during the training. Coggshall et al. (2012) highlight what is needed before someone should be allowed to work in the educational environment (2.3.1).

Furthermore, competency tests would determine skills and knowledge that professionals should possess for adequate support. In this study, some participants qualified with master’s degrees were unable to support educators and learners with visual and hearing impairments. Support team members themselves need support, which makes one question how support should take place or who must be supported and by whom, if the education system is to succeed in supporting the implementation of IE in schools. Thus, possession of an academic qualification alone may not guarantee that individuals can support the implementation of IE, and competency assessment may help to ascertain what officials are capable of doing and what can be done to close any gaps in their skills and abilities.

Additionally, the participants also proposed collaboration between schools, universities and DBE if inclusive education is to be realised (4.1.6.2). According to Engelbrecht (2004), interdisciplinary collaboration means that professionals from
different disciplines also need to communicate more regularly. This allows group members to share their expertise with the aim of working and supporting each other to provide interventions for an identified gap. This implies that the DBE should outline its plans and share them with universities and schools. Universities could conduct on-site visits to the schools to conduct research to identify the gaps and factors that may be a constraint in achieving the implementation of IE. Thereafter, the universities could develop inclusive education modules that are responsive to the identified needs (4.1.6.2). Collaboration, in this context, may give all stakeholders the opportunity to have input on what they think could assist in achieving IE in schools.

Furthermore, the participants proposed online training programmes on IE as a way of enhancing their preparation (4.1.6.4). The investigation likewise shows that those trained by using a mix of online learning and direct guidance learnt more than those who used only a single method. These positive online learning outcomes have been verified with undergraduates, graduate students and practitioners (Means, Toyama, Murphy, Bakia & Jones, 2009). A conceivable reason for positive outcomes from the use of online instructional materials rests with the inclination of people to use technology in learning (Bullock, Gable & Mohr, 2008). A benefit for support team officials and teachers is that the content of such courses is stable and consistent, guaranteeing that all students receive the same level of training.

The strategies discussed indicate agreement among participants in this study that everyone who wants to work in the special education sector must meet certain standards, and have certain skills and knowledge of how to support learners with diverse needs. It should also be easy for them to access information that they can use as a reference when carrying out their roles in implementing IE.

5.5 CHAPTER SUMMARY

This chapter highlighted the level of professional preparation of DBST members, their role in supporting the implementation of IE and strategies that could enhance be used in their preparation. The next chapter presents a summary of the study the limitations of the study, the conclusions and recommendations that can be used to enhance preparation of DBST members in supporting the implementation of IE. Recommendations for future research are also made.
CHAPTER 6:
IMPLICATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE STUDY

6.1 INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this study has been to explore the Professional preparation of DBST members in support of the execution of inclusive education in schools from two districts in the Province of Gauteng in South Africa. In this chapter, I present the implications of the study and recommend strategies based on the key findings. It makes the recommendations for future study in support of the execution of inclusive education in similar contexts, a brief description of the limitations and the drawing of a conclusion.

6.2 UNIQUE CONTRIBUTIONS OF THIS RESEARCH

This study on DBST professional preparation in supporting the execution of inclusive education is the first study of its kind in Gauteng Province. The contribution of this research relates to theory and practice in terms of applying Bronfenbrenner’s theory framework. Contributions in these areas are discussed in the following section.

6.2.1 Contribution to Policy, Theory and Practice

This study provides insight into how DBST members has been professionally prepared to support the implementation of IE in schools. The findings could be used for future planning and development of an appropriate programme that can be used to prepare DBST members for their role as well as trainee teachers before they enter the profession.

Additionally, this research provides significant evidence of how DBST members were professionally prepared to support the implementation of IE in schools (4.1.1). The study revealed inconsistencies on how DBST members were prepared (4.1.1). Some DBST members were trained to be subject specialists (4.1.1.1) while most DBST members were trained as ordinary school teachers only (4.1.1.2). Unique to the study is that only a few DBST members with specialised training could support learners with hard-of-hearing and visual impairment (4.1.1.3) but were not trained in interventions for other learning needs. This suggests that specialist training
assisted some DBST members to be able to support learners with diverse learning needs. The study also revealed that the bursary scheme that was provided through the in-service training programme assisted DBST members to understand key principles of IE that are vital when supporting members in schools (4.1.1.4). The study also revealed that the train the trainer workshop (cascading model) used by the Gauteng department to support educators was not adequate to capacitate DBST members and educators to be able to support the execution of inclusive education in schools (4.1.1.4). The study confirmed that DBST members use different strategies to support the execution of inclusive education in schools (4.1.4.1–4.1.4.3). The study highlighted some strategies proposed by the DBST to enhance their own preparation (4.1.6.1–4.1.6.4). I learned that, though there were inconsistencies on how DBST members were prepared, their attitude was positive towards supporting the implementation of IE (see 4.1.3).

The study contributes to all levels of the schooling system and recommends strategies that can enhance professional preparation of DBST members to ensure that IE is implemented successfully in schools. It highlights the factors that impede DBST members in executing their responsibilities. Thus, on the practical level, study highlights the DBST experience in supporting the implementation of IE in schools, and the role and strategies that they used in doing so. The study approaches the implementation of IE as a process and elaborates on what it means to be involved in this process. The study looked at all systems that impact on professional preparation and educator support and what is entailed in providing support to educators and learners by considering both the theory and practice. Participants benefited by being able to express their opinions on their professional preparation. The field of IE is riddled with inconsistencies and is defined differently in contexts. Therefore, professional preparation might assist to close gaps in implementation by applying relevant strategies that can benefit learners and educators at school level without focusing on the definition of the concept itself (2.4).

6.2.2 Contribution in terms of applying Bronfenbrenner Ecological Systems Theory

The strategy takes note of Bronfenbrenner’s ecological systems theory in that it acknowledges the importance of the influence of sub-systems within the main
system of DBST support in the execution of inclusive education in schools. The study highlights the importance of interactions at the different levels of the system within a social context and how they influence relations which are important in the process of child development. The study supports the importance of interactions and relationships of all systems which are connected and which influence the learner.

6.3 CONCLUSIONS

It is evident that DBSTs are central and critical for the success of inclusive education. However, their professional preparation is critical to the provision of adequate support to schools. It was also revealed in the literature that the DBST needs to advise and train members of the SBST and educators at large on some of the factors, including adaptation of curriculum, assessment, content and environment.

Research also revealed that there are variations in how support teams support the implementation of inclusive education in different countries in different contexts, hence this study will have to establish support strategies utilised by the DBST in South Africa Gauteng Province to support the implementation of inclusive education. The DBST as a multi-disciplinary team is expected to assess learners and provide an IESP. The success of such a task depends on the adequacy of their professional preparation in supporting the implementation. This study thus explored the adequacy of the professional preparation of DBST members in supporting the implementation of inclusive education.

It became evident that professional preparation of DBST members is vital for the success of IE in Gauteng Province. Different stakeholders, such as educators, parents and NGOs, depend on DBSTs for advice and support so that they can support learners who experience barriers to learning. However, all these stakeholders must collaborate to ensure that learners are supported effectively at school and at home. Collaboration of all stakeholders on inclusive practices or ways in which they are prepared to advance IE is critical. However, an audit of the skills of support teams is critical to ensure that intensive training closes identified gaps. It is critical for all officials appointed at all levels of DBE to reflect on whether their preparation has enabled them to contribute to the success of inclusive education.
The DBST members do not have all the solutions to the challenges experienced by learners, teachers and other stakeholders, as they are part of a wider system that goes beyond the DBST’s realm of authority. The participation and capacity-building for inclusive practices across all levels of the education system could help ensure that inclusive education is implemented successfully in Gauteng Province, South Africa.

6.4 RECOMMENDATIONS

As described in Chapter 2, the DBST is expected to support all learners, educators to meet the full range of learning needs and ensure the team possess certain skills and knowledge regarding support in the execution of inclusive education (See 2.6.1 to 2.7.3). For this reason, I now discuss implications for practice at all levels of the Gauteng Province including the DBE and stakeholders, taking into consideration the main research question as highlighted in Chapter 1 (see 1.4). The implications for professional preparation are also informed by the findings from this research (See 4.1.1.1 - 4.1.1.4), having learned that there are inconsistencies on how DBST members are prepared to support the execution of inclusive education. This study acknowledges that execution of inclusive education is dependent on DBST competency, as a product of professional preparation and collaboration between the DBST and other stakeholders, notably parents, non-government departments and institutions of higher learning. The implications also take cognisance of Bronfenbrenner’s ecological systems theory which was used as a lens to explore this study in that it recognises the importance of interdisciplinary structures which are relevant for supporting inclusive education (See 2.2.1). Based on the findings, the following strategies are recommended:

In my own view, there must be compulsory training in inclusive education for all professionals who want to enter the profession before employment. The importance of training has been well explained in Chapter 2 (see 2.3.1). It is noted that learners with barriers to learning are found across different types of schools, including mainstream schools, full-service schools and resource centres. Therefore, everyone who is directly or indirectly involved in supporting educators and learners in these schools must be prepared to understand what inclusive education for all is about and they must have practical experience of working in an inclusive
environment. The implications for professional preparation in the DBE include the following:

6.4.1 Recommendations for the DBE

Having learned that most of the DBST members did not learn about inclusive education during their training, it is evident they are unable to support the implementation of inclusive education. I, therefore, recommend that the DBE should collaborate with learning institutions to ensure that they develop inclusive modules that are responsive to the challenges presented in the implementation of IE at school level. This will also enable DBSTs to execute their responsibilities successfully as they would have been capacitated to understand diverse learning needs (2.6.2–2.7.3).

In my view, the DBE should introduce councils/boards to regulate the teaching profession. The council or the board could assist in setting the standards that all teachers entering the profession must meet. The board or council should then subject everyone to a test which can be used for certification of teachers (2.3.1).

The study also revealed concerns around size of classes and the availability of resources, including human and financial resources (4.1.5). I recommend that the DBE reviews the current norms and standards for funding and post establishment to allow for more qualified professionals to ensure that IE is implemented successfully (2.6.1–2.8). Noting that successful implementation of IE is dependent on having more professionally trained staff, the review of current norms and standards will assist to close the gap in execution.

6.4.2 Recommendations for the Provincial Departments of Basic Education

It is envisaged that the Provincial Departments of Basic Education develops guidelines and policies to be mediated with district offices, departments and schools where the success and/or failure of the policies is evident (see 2.8). My opinion on policy mediation is that the GDE must avoid the train the trainer model (cascading model), as this model did not yield expected results for execution of inclusive education as revealed by this study (see 4.1.1.4).
Noting that inclusive education is a recent phenomenon, the provincial department should assist in conducting a skills audit of professionals and officials who are already in the education system to determine the gaps that they have in supporting the implementation of IE in schools. This may give department the opportunity to develop reskilling programmes or in-service training (4.1.1.4).

As revealed by the study, most DBST members trained or qualified before the introduction of inclusive education, and this means that many of the support team members are unqualified due to new expectations in terms of their role. This requires the reskilling of DBST members. Online support programmes can be an effective strategy in learning the new expectations of their demanding role. Online support programmes can be of great help because they are accessible to all professionals and officials because of the advances in technology.

6.4.3 Recommendations for the District Officials

As revealed by this study, most of the DBST members are not able to support the execution of IE. I, therefore, recommend that all members of the DBST undergo assessment to ascertain the skills and knowledge they possess in regard to IE because they are perceived as a hub of support and are assumed to have the relevant skills and knowledge to ensure that inclusive education is implemented successfully (2.6.2). In addition, DBST members should also be obliged to attend CPD training. This could enhance their own practice.

6.4.4 Recommendations at the School Level

Having acknowledged that implementation of IE is not dependent on the DBST only, collaboration between the DBST and other stakeholders, notably parents and the community is also essential. The district in collaboration with the special schools as resource centres and full-service schools must run workshops to capacitate parents and community to understand their roles in the execution of inclusive education. Parents are key to the success of IE in schools (2.7.1–2.7.3).

6.4.5 Recommendations for All Stakeholders

Finally, I recommend collaboration and consultancy for teams to work together with the interaction of other departments, community structures and NGOs to enhance
their own professional preparation in supporting the execution of inclusive education.

6.5 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

This research was conducted to study DBST members’ professional preparation in support of the execution of inclusive education in schools focusing Gauteng Province. I recommend that further research be conducted in other districts of other provinces outside Gauteng Province. Noting the topic, it would be useful to extend it to SBSTs as they are also expected to support educators in schools. Educators’ views were included in the study and they indicated lack of capacity to support inclusive education in schools. The information was not obtained directly from educators, but from DBST members. Further investigation should directly include the educators to explore and ascertain their own preparation in execution of inclusive education.
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APPENDIX A: GDE RESEARCH REQUEST LETTER- HEAD OFFICE

2704 Chapman Street
Naturena
2095
18 October 2017

The Head of Department
Gauteng Department of Education

RE: Permission to undertake research

I am hereby applying for permission to conduct research at the districts within your department. My name is Rhulani Mabaso. I am currently enrolled for doctoral studies in inclusive education at the University of South Africa. The topic of my research study is: **District Based Support Teams Professional Preparation in supporting the Implementation of Inclusive Education in Gauteng Province**.

The study aims to explore the DBST professional preparedness in supporting the implementation of inclusive education in Gauteng schools.

I wish to do this research at the following districts: Johannesburg South district and Tshwane South district located within Gauteng Province. My data collection will include individual and focus group interviews. I wish to interview the District Based Support Teams members located at the above-mentioned district. Participants will be individually interviewed face to face through semi-structured open-ended questions and focus group interview. This will enable me to explore their preparation in ensuring the success of inclusive education. All ethical issues will be observed throughout the research study. Details of the study which includes ethical issues will be communicated to participants verbally and in writing. I will assure that participants remain anonymous unless the consent is given. Only pseudo names will be used.

The duration of the interview session is aimed between hour thirty minutes and two hours in the participants convenient time. The purpose of the research will be shared with your office and a copy of the proposal will be forwarded to your office. If you
wish a published copy will be made available to you on its publication. Participants’ participation will be voluntary without any payment. All the participants will be informed about their rights to withdraw at any time during the research if they wish, and no penalty for participants’ withdrawal. There will also be an opportunity for participants to ask questions about any matter related to the research. All the transcripts and tapes used will be kept in a safe, until the completion of the study and later it will be destroyed.

I hope my application will be accepted

Yours faithfully,

Rhulani Mabaso

Deputy Chief Education Specialist

Signature____________________
# APPENDIX B: GDE APPROVAL LETTER

## GDE AMENDED RESEARCH APPROVAL LETTER

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date:</th>
<th>15 February 2018</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Validity of Research Approval:</td>
<td>05 February 2018 – 28 September 2018 2018/335A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Name of Researcher:</td>
<td>Mabaso R.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Address of Researcher:</td>
<td>2704 Chapman Street Naturena 2095</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Telephone Number:</td>
<td>011 355 0706</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Email address:</td>
<td><a href="mailto:Gilbert.Mabaso@gauteng.gov.za">Gilbert.Mabaso@gauteng.gov.za</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research Topic:</td>
<td>DBST Professional Preparation in Supporting the Implementation of Inclusive Education in Schools: The case of Gauteng</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Type of Degree:</td>
<td>PhD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number and type of schools:</td>
<td>Districts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>District/s/HO:</td>
<td>Tshwane South, Johannesburg South</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**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:

---

Office of the Director: Education Research and Knowledge Management

7th Floor, 17 Simonsweg Street, Johannesburg, 2001
Tel: (011) 355 0499
Email: Faith.Tshabalala@gauteng.gov.za
Website: www.education.gpg.gov.za

[Signature] 31/10/2013

Making education a societal priority
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 has/have been granted permission from the Gauteng Department of Education to conduct the research study.

4. A letter/document that outline 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, photocopiers, transport, fax machines 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 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

-----------------------------
Mr. Gwamani Mabatani
Acting CES: Education Research and Knowledge Management

DATE: 31.01.2018

Making education a societal priority

Office of the Director: Education Research and Knowledge Management
7th Floor, 17 Simonds Street, Johannesburg, 2001
Tel: (011) 355 0488
Email: Faith.Tshabazela@gauteng.gov.za
Website: www.education.gpg.gov.za
APPENDIX C: GDE RESEARCH REQUEST LETTER- DISTRICT

2704 Chapman Street

Naturena

2095

19 March 2018

The District Director

RE: Permission to undertake research

I am hereby applying for permission to conduct action research at your district. Currently I am enrolled for Doctoral Degree in Education at University of Johannesburg. I am conducting a piece of action research into studying **District Based Support Specialists’ Professional preparation in supporting the implementing Inclusive Education**. I will like to interact with District Based Support Team within your institution.

My data collection will include interviews and observations. Ethical consideration as stated by University of Johannesburg will be observed throughout the research. The names of the participants will remain anonymous unless consent is given to use them. My research report will be made available to you for scrutiny before it is published, if you wish copy will be made available for your files on its publication.

I attached the approval letter from Gauteng Department of Education that approved my research topic and entry to your institution

Yours Faithful

__________________________________________

Mr. R.G. Mabaso

Deputy Chief Education Specialist (Inclusion and Special Schools)

Head Office
APPENDIX D: LETTER TO THE PARTICIPANTS WITH CONSENT

2704 Chapman Street
Naturena
2095
18 October 2017

To: DBST member
Gauteng Department of Education/district

RE: Permission to undertake research

I am hereby invite you to participate in my research study. My name is Rhulani Mabaso. I am currently enrolled for doctoral studies in inclusive education at the University of South Africa. The topic of my research study is: District Based Support Teams professional preparation in supporting the implementation of inclusive education in Gauteng Province. The study aims explore the DBST professional preparedness in supporting the implementation of inclusive education in Gauteng schools.

I wish to interview the District Based Support Teams members located at the above mentioned district. Participants will be individually interviewed face to face through semi-structured open ended questions and focus group interview. This will enable me to explore their preparation in ensuring the success of inclusive education. All ethical issues will be observed throughout the research study. Details of the study which includes ethical issues will be communicated to participants verbally and in writing. I will assure that participants remain anonymous unless the consent is given. Only pseudo names will be used.

The duration of the interview session is aimed between hour thirty minutes and two hours in the participants convenient time. The purpose of the research will be shared with your office and a copy of the proposal will be forwarded to your office. If you wish a published copy will be made available to you on its publication. Participants’ participation will be voluntary without any payment. All the participants will be informed about their rights to withdraw at any time during the research if they wish,
and no penalty for participants’ withdrawal. There will also be an opportunity for participants to ask questions about any matter related to the research. All the transcripts and tapes used will be kept in a safe, until the completion of the study and later it will be destroyed.

I hope my application will be accepted

Yours faithfully,

Rhulani Mabaso

Signature_____________________

****************************************************************************

CONSENT FORM

I have read the information presented in the information letter about the study: District Based Support Teams professional preparation in supporting the implementation of inclusive education in Gauteng Province. I have had the opportunity to ask any questions related to this study, to receive satisfactory answers to my questions, and add any additional details I wanted. I am aware that I have the option of allowing my interview to be audio-recorded to ensure an accurate recording of my responses. I am also aware that excerpts from the interview may be included in publications to come from this research, with the understanding that the quotations will be anonymous. I was informed that I may withdraw my consent at any time without penalty by advising the researcher. With full knowledge of all foregoing, I agree, of my own free will, to participate in this study.

Participant’s Name (Please print):_____________________

Participant Signature: _________________________

Researcher Full Name: (Please print)_____________________

Researcher Signature: ________________________________

Date:___________________________________
APPENDIX E: INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

DISTRICT BASED OFFICIALS INTERVIEW GUIDE ON PROFESSIONAL PREPARATION IN SUPPORTING I.E.

1. The government requires all learners to learn together in inclusive settings. What are your feelings about such a position?

2. How is your professional preparation in supporting the implementation of inclusive education in schools?

3. According to EWP6, DBST is at the Centre stage of ensuring that inclusive education is achieved in schools.
   - What is your role in supporting the implementation of inclusive education?
   - What is your understanding of inclusive education?

4. Considering your role in supporting the implementation of inclusive education, how adequate was your professional preparation in executing your responsibility?

5. What can be done to enhance the DBST professional preparation?
APPENDIX F: EXTRACT FROM FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSIONS

DISTRICT BASED OFFICIALS INTERVIEW GUIDE ON PROFESSIONAL PREPARATION IN SUPPORTING I.E.

SAMPLE OF FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSIONS

1. The government requires all learners to learn together in inclusive settings. What are your feelings about such a position?

   Participants 1

   The good part of inclusive education is accessibility of schools locally by siblings; parent will access such schools where they reside without travelling and that will result in many schools being available for all learners. Those learners who are need of high need or moderate support they must choose schools where their needs will be addressed.

   Participants 2

   I can say that inclusive education is a good concept because everyone has an opportunity to participate equally in education and society.

2. How is your professional preparation in supporting the implementation of inclusive education in schools?

   Participant 1

   .......as I explained earlier that I was not trained in inclusive education. After my school was chosen to be full-service school, the Department of Education registered us at the University of Stone as part of in-service training, where we were doing inclusive education. At least there I learned role of full-service schools within this new dispensation, its importance in the during the implementation of inclusive education. I also learned how to teach in an inclusive classroom. Well the training was more fruitful as it was a detail year course attending on weekly basis.

   Participant 2

   Now you are going to know, a lot of our teachers of my age or a little bit younger
when we studied in the seventies and the eighties and the nineties, there wasn’t inclusive education, so we completed our studies during those years, but we didn’t know about that, that thing because in the previous TED or the white education side, whatever you call it, that children were in special schools or in special classes, we weren’t trained to deal with them. I want you, I dare you to go and look at the average age of your teachers, and when were they trained, and then you will see where is one of our big gaps in inclusion.

**Participant 3**

After receiving my teacher qualification and taught for ten years, later on I was, appointed at the district in ISS, I then realised that schools were relying on me for support on implementation of inclusion. At the same time, team members expected help from me because I represented ISS in the team. All these gave me pressure because I could not help. Hence I decided to study further for self-development and ensure that I know what I am doing. In deed during my Masters in education, my training was an intensive programme which gave me skills to deal with assessment and support of learners referred to the DBST.

**Participant 4**

Just after EWP6 was gazetted I saw that the new challenges were already on the way, I then decided to enrol Diploma in LSEN Education and Hons in learning support. During that training I familiarised myself to understand this new monster called inclusion. Even though I cannot master everything, but at least I know the importance of inclusive education. I also know the importance of early identification and how to develop IEP programmes. I also know how referral must be done with the aim of enhancing support to identified learners as it was covered in some of the modules which made me to view this cause beneficial.

3. According to EWP6, DBST is the at the Centre stage of ensuring that inclusive education is achieved in schools.

3.1 What is your role in supporting the implementation of inclusive education?
Participant 1

We as the matter of priority, we ensure that we train our educators and we also ensure that among the educators that are being trained the school-Based Support Teams co-coordinators is always there. We support educators …… on how to conduct screening. In screening that’s where educators are taught how to identify any factor that might be problem or barrier to learning or factors that might impede learning in the long run during academic years. Again before I forget let me tell you that we call or invite educators in a circuit for support.

Participant 2

We also use resource centres to train educators on how to support learners with barriers to learning. Resource centre have specialised professional personnel including therapist and psychologist that can be assistance in this regard. During the circuit meeting educators, can raise challenges that they think it impede them in supporting the implementation of inclusive education. Then we request these professional to make presentation for support strategies. I manage all the referral from school and make further assessment for appropriate support.

Participant 3

Okay, our activities depend on what we’ve planned for the week. Our planning is based on our line function or job description. I am in circuit two and three, so we identified common challenges from school and we organise a meeting in our circuit where we support educators. In my line, I support educators how to use SIAS for effective learner support and any matter related to referral process.

Participant 4

In our circuit meeting we support educators on how to conduct screening for early identification. In this process that’s where educators are taught how to identify any factor that might be barrier to learning or factors that might impede learning in the long run during academic years and provide early intervention.

Participant 5

Our visits to schools guides us to educators’ common challenges. Then we arrange
cluster workshop(s) to guide educators how to deal with the identified challenges, for example, we support the educators to understand how to provide an accommodation to learners identified with barriers to learning. In cluster workshop(s) educators from neighbouring schools can share challenges that affecting their learners in the same cluster.

3.2 What is your understanding of inclusive education?

**Participant 1**

*I understand inclusive education as supporting learners to benefit at school without discriminating them based on gender, sex, ability or language, I also understand that my interpretation of this concepts could not be the same interpretation by other team members, and that would be influence on political agenda that people affiliate on and the historical factors and background of members. Though there could be different interpretation of this concept.*

**Participant 2**

*... Inclusive education is a global issue; it advances tolerance among learners with disabilities and society at large. It also encourages learners of different race to accept each other beyond racial lines.*

**Participants 3**

*I concur with my colleagues that Inclusive education is a way of embracing all irrespective of the disabilities, because during apartheid some leaners were excluded based on their abilities.*

3.4 Considering your role in supporting the implementation of inclusive education, how adequate was your professional preparation in executing your responsibility?

**Participants 1**

*The one course that I attended from the university made to understand inclusive education. Above that course I am a professional educator who did Bed (hons) in educational management. I think though I feel prepared but the ISS unit are most people who supports us and the LSE, they are good at that what I am good at is to*
provide leadership to the school of the knowledge that I receive during my studies.

Participants 2

My training in special education as it used to be called during apartheid time allowed me to teach in special school. I acquired my qualification through the assistance of the missionaries that were local based where they wanted me to go and study for special education to help vulnerable learners in our community more especially those who are hard-of-hearing. I did diploma in deaf education. I had to teach in Makaton to this kids as part of sign language.

3.5 What can be done to enhance the DBST professional preparation?

Participants 1

There is too much theory which is not linked to reality at classroom level, we get trained on curriculum adaptation and developing IEP’s when we go to class, we still struggle how to develop the IEP programme though theoretical we understand. Mostly officials have some challenges when they have to support educators at the school level. I feel that the way we were trained to become teachers was good because every school term we had opportunity to go to school to observe other educators in action and learned from them in real situation. Such approach could also be beneficial if inclusive education is to be achieved.

Participants 2

Universities should directly work with schools, where they take certain number of education, to go train directly across the district as this will be increasing number of specialised personnel to assist the implementation of inclusive education. At the same time it will be opportunity of opening dialogue of discussing on inclusive challenges in schools and decide on developing modules to address that.

Participant 3

I wish to indicate that DBST members must embark on competency assessment before they embark on their supporting role of inclusive education as this will force them to display a certain level of competence so that when they filter through to come to the district office and support schools, they already know what to do to the educator instead of being incompetent.
APPENDIX G: EXTRACT FROM INDIVIDUAL INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPT

The government requires us to support the implementation of I.E. What is your take on that? What is your feeling?

Response

The implementation of IE in South Africa is quite challenging because it’s suffering the system that is not on par. If you look at the maths results, so sometimes is not only about the inclusion of learners with barriers to learning but is all about the system that is not that strong to this on top of it. One of the big things on the implementation of inclusive education is around class sizes that schools have. We sit with the school that is 45, 50 up to 57 in a class. If you really want to do justice to inclusion that makes it to become really hard. Other thing is that years and years the cascading model that was used over and over again was said by lot of people that is not the best model to use in training people to be prepared for inclusion, so to me this issues that I mentioned above are very serious. Look during cascading model the quality of the initial expectation tend to be compromised because it may happen that other information that is critical is left not mediated.

Q Any follow-up?

I am the coordinator of the senior phase curriculum, from my own view, the biggest challenge is that educators are not fully equipped in terms of identifying learners with barriers to learning, for example intrinsic barriers for that matter. So you find that teachers applied one size fits all which does not yield expected results. As my colleague said in terms of the results that are not coming forth from the school particularly in mathematics. So as much as we are doing our best in terms of rolling out the policy like SIAS as example, still we are still relying on train trainer and workshops, which we are not fully guaranteed that educator will end up the same impact that personnel training received, well this my own additions from my colleagues input.

Any follow-up what is your take on the support of the implementation of inclusive education?
I would say from the professional point of view we trained at the university level we have theory, but if we link practice and theory that’s where the problem is. Because of resource we are unable link the two theory to practice. I think my colleague my colleagues have allude to earlier for example numbers of learners in classes that where we have problem. The theory from the universities is not giving us enough information to be practice what we need to do. So my take is that we need more resource, I believe in implementing inclusive we need to have a lot specialist like needed LSE that are lacking now to support the implementation of inclusive education. My take is that we need resources to be able to implement inclusive education successfully. Because we need a lot of specialists.

Response

I am sharing the same sentiment with my colleagues in paper and policy it looks very practical and possible, but then in implementation it becomes difficult because the system is design for average learners and it is not designed for above average and other learners. The teacher training programme also trains the educators to support learners for average learners. Even when we give them strategies on how to adapt curriculum adaptation, it becomes difficult from them to do that because they are not trained on that. Their planning is on average learners and this affect learners who need enrichment and support.

Q. What can be done to enhance the DBST professional preparation?

Response

The most important thing is that all units represented in the team must know what other team members are doing and that is not happening because units operate parallel, for example curriculum facilitators invite SBST workshop, on the other hand inclusion and special schools also invite SBST workshop targeting the same people. I feel that must stop if the implementation of inclusive education. Officials must communicate about their programmes before going to implement them in schools to avoid duplication. Communication will instil respect and trust among officials by educators.

Q. How is your professional preparation in supporting the implementation of inclusive education in schools?
R. I am language specialist (Zulu and Isixhosa) I want to remind you something about curriculum, there is a new expectation on educators of a pace setter as per the dictate of CAPS which outlines what is supposed to be completed in a specific period. So, this compromise the smooth implementation of inclusive education. Educators end up focusing on what syllabus dictate than support. learners with learning difficulties end up being neglected or their learning pace being ignored because of rushing to complete up what the work schedule expect us to fulfil in a particular duration. Lack of alignment between pace setter and support should be clearly clarified as this could compromise success in inclusive education
APPENDIX H: LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

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DISTRICT BASED SUPPORT TEAM PROFESSIONAL PREPARATION IN SUPPORTING THE IMPLEMENTATION OF INCLUSIVE EDUCATION IN SCHOOLS: THE CASE OF GAUTENG

by

RHULANI GILBERT MABASO

I declare that I have edited and proofread this thesis. My involvement was restricted to language usage and spelling, completeness and consistency, referencing style and formatting of headings, captions and Tables of Contents. I did no structural re-writing of the content.

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162