

**Experiences of District-Based Support Team with regards to screening
identification assessment and support
implementation in Zululand district, KwaZulu Natal**

by

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DECLARATION

I declare that “ **Experiences of District-Based Support Team with regards to screening identification assessment and support implementation in Zululand district, KwaZulu Natal**” is my own work and that all the sources that I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by means of complete reference.

A small, square image showing a handwritten signature in black ink on a light-colored background. The signature is stylized and appears to be the name 'D. D. D.' or similar.

Signature

23 August 2019

Date

DEDICATION

This thesis is specially dedicated to:

My loving husband Ndabezitha! and my children, Nkanyiso, Mpathwenhle, Nqobile as well as my adorable twins Mongezi and Ongeziwe, for their understanding and support. May this piece of work be a motivation to all of us and know that with God everything is possible. Stay Blessed!

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ABSTRACT

District-based support teams (DBSTs) are tasked with supporting the implementation of inclusive education (IE). One of the core purposes of the Department of Education is to ensure that the whole system is organised in such a way that there is effective delivery of education and support services to all learners who experience barriers to learning and development, in both public ordinary as well as public special schools (Department of Education, 2009). This study investigated the experiences of DBSTs in their work of screening, identification, assessment and support (SIAS) implementation regarding Special Needs Education Services (SNES) in the Zululand District of the KwaZulu-Natal Department of Education. In an effort to understand their experiences, a qualitative research approach was adopted in which a case study design was employed. Six district officials were purposively identified (five females and one male). Six principals were also interviewed. The study employed interpretivism as the research paradigm. Data was generated through observations, document reviews and analysis, and semi-structured interviews. Content analysis was used to analyse the data. Theoretically, the study was framed by Deming's Plan, Do, Check, Act (PDCA) cycle (Deming, 1986). Findings reveal that there is a lack of collaboration between district stakeholders and a lack of recognition and support from management. The vastness of the district and the workload makes it difficult to provide adequate support. The study concluded that collaboration among professionals within a district and all other stakeholders contribute significantly to the effective functioning of the DSTBs. It is therefore recommended that in order to ensure effective and functional DSTBs, it is important that continued support and collaboration among stakeholders be facilitated. The study also suggested further areas of research.

Key words: District-Based Support Team, experiences, School-Based Support Team, Screening, Identification, Assessment and Support

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

BTL	Barriers to Learning
CBST	Circuit Based Support Team
CIT	Cluster Intervention Team
CM	Circuit Manager
DBE	Department of Basic Education
DBST	District Based Support Team
DCSI	District Coordinator for SIAS Implementation
DD	District Director
DoE	Department of Education
ES	Education Specialist
FSS	Full-Service School
HSRC	Human Science Research Council
IE	Inclusive Education
ISP	Individual Support Plan
KZN DoE	KwaZulu-Natal Department of Education
PBST	Provincial Based Support Team

PDCA	Plan Do Check Act
SASA	South African Schools Act
SBST	School-Based Support Team
SIAS	Screening Identification Assessment and Support
SNA	Support Needs Assessment
SNES	Special Needs Education Services
TIT	Team Involvement Tool
TQM	Total Quality Management

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY

1.1 BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

In 2001, the Department of Education (DoE) issued a framework policy document called *White Paper 6: Special Needs Education, Building an Inclusive Education and Training System*. In this paper the Department set out to implement in an incremental way the main elements of an inclusive education (IE) system of which National Strategy on Screening, Identification, Assessment and Support (SIAS) is one. The SIAS like other key strategies of the policy aims to respond to the needs of all learners in the country, particularly those who are vulnerable and most likely to be marginalized and excluded (Department of Education, 2001).

The South African education system has put in place various support structures and services in the district and circuit teams of the DBE. Their role is to provide support to teachers and schools with the ultimate goal of meeting the full range of learners' needs. It appears that in many education districts these teams are not adequately supporting the schools or the teachers. Teachers receive conflicting and confusing messages regarding a curriculum and assessment standard which frustrates their ability to manage the diversity in their classrooms. Education officials themselves have varied understandings and perspectives on IE which further exacerbates the situation. Teachers remain unfamiliar with and inexperienced in utilising the strategies that have been developed by the DoE to support the implementation of IE through SIAS. SIAS is seen as an additional administrative burden and not a useful tool. Teachers with the proper training, skills, attitude and curriculum support are needed to deliver quality education to all children (Department of Basic Education, 2010).

De Winnaar (2013) states that the teachers and district-based support team (DBST) members believe that IE can be successful in South Africa provided that changes are made in how it is currently conceptualised and implemented. Teachers have a very different perspective on IE compared to the support team members. Teachers believe

that the success of IE can only be ensured if barriers to teaching are prevented or eradicated, while the support team members believe the success of IE depends on the identification and prevention of barriers to learning through SIAS implementation. Both groups do however believe that IE is a very good ideal to strive towards, that it has not yet been achieved, and that the inclusion and education of all learners is of great importance. Research shows that teachers are struggling to adjust to the “new way of doing things which include support for learners experiencing barriers to learning and they are suffering because of the overload they have” (Walton and Lloyd, 2012). Another challenge is that teachers have differences in their training backgrounds, levels of education and remuneration (Cook, Swain and French, 2004). Walton and Lloyd (2012) claim that lack of appropriate pre- and in-service training and preparation for diverse classrooms constrain the implementation of IE in South Africa. According to Caputo and Langher (2014), lack of support to successfully integrate learners with disabilities into the general education classroom leads to negative attitudes (Mnatwana, 2014).

Teachers have embraced the challenges of meeting the wide range of learners’ needs, but often wonder how to best go about this task. They are looking for ideas to help them simultaneously teach learners who excel, those who learn at an average pace, and those who learn differently (Kirk, Gallagher and Anastasiow, 2008). Clearly, no simple answers exist. However, it is helpful to focus on fundamental principles for creating and sustaining learning spaces in which all learners can succeed (Catholic Education Commission of Victoria, 2014:9). Different countries use different terms to refer to DBE officials, such as superintendents of education, school advisors, school managers and school inspectors. For the purposes of this thesis, they will collectively be referred to as District Based Support Teams (DBSTs). The experiences of DBSTs regarding SIAS implementation have not been as comprehensively researched as other stakeholders namely principals, teachers, learners and parents.

The SIAS policy forms the basis on which IE is built and provides guidelines regarding early identification of learners’ strengths and weaknesses, correct assessment strategies of the nature and extent of the barriers that learners may be experiencing, and effective design and implementation of individualised support plans for these

learners (DoE, 2008). Previous studies have revealed that teachers do not fully understand their roles and responsibilities regarding the SIAS policy due to the lack of effective and structured in-service training programmes, leading to negative outcomes on the implementation of IE due to non-compliance with SIAS policy (Geldenhuys and Wevers, 2013:13). In South Africa, SIAS has focused on the screening and identification of learners and development to establish a support package to address barriers (DBE, 2008). However, this policy does not make teachers' work less challenging because it consists of too much paperwork and does not provide practical guidance in some sections. For example, the policy requires teachers to use scores from classroom assessment as the main learning areas for the learners (DBE, 2008), instead of looking at the root of the difficulties. The scores can only reflect the results of the difficulties and not their nature.

According to Mukhopadhyay, Molosiwa and Moswela (2009) a favourable attitude towards learners with disabilities plays an important role in the implementation of IE policies. Unfortunately, many teachers fail to demonstrate favourable attitudes and complain about the deficits of the learners. The majority of teachers in Special Education in Botswana are not able to reflect on their experiences because they are not recognised. They lack skills required for inclusive classroom settings.

There are many challenges teachers face in implementing IE policies in primary schools in Tanzania. There is poor collaboration and interaction among teachers, learners and parents. This becomes a challenge for teachers in the implementation of IE policies. Teachers need parents' support in doing their work. In most cases teachers are unwilling to involve parents in school matters. There is a lack of proper knowledge about inclusion. Most teachers in primary schools, lack knowledge of IE practices which makes it difficult for them to implement it. Lack of adequate knowledge makes them fail to adopt inclusion. If a teacher lacks IE knowledge, he or she may face another problem of poor classroom management. There is lack of awareness among teachers, parents and the guardians about IE practices. This is because in Tanzania inclusion has not been advocated very much so it is difficult to implement. Therefore, most teachers do not discover the uniqueness of learners which could help them to assist learners based on their uniqueness (Chaula, 2014:12).

A South African and an American study discovered that DBSTs who were supervisors of special education displayed positive attitudes towards IE. In an investigation of the management of inclusion in Free State, South Africa, primary schools found that some DBSTs were very positive about inclusion. They perceived it to be the most appropriate system of bringing learners with different abilities together in the same learning environment. In a study to determine the perceptions and beliefs of regular and special school administrators and teachers regarding the provision of services to learners, including at-risk learners and learners with disabilities in Georgia, United States of America, the findings were that special education directors strongly agree with the IE concept. Mathopa (2007) reasons that because the directors are closest to policy formulation and advocacy and therefore are more attuned to the legal and policy ramifications of IE, they support the theoretical concept of IE. However, other studies contend that DBSTs have a negative attitude towards IE policies which include SIAS, which is the case in some South African studies.

IE policy is an international agenda which requires to be viewed in both local and international contexts. In South Africa and worldwide teachers and practitioners are faced with the challenge of terminology which is one area in IE that poses difficulties. There should be a clear definition of what constitutes learning difficulties before teachers identify such learners in their classroom. The main challenge revolves around IE operational meanings of the terms such as 'learning disabilities' or 'learning difficulties', 'specific learning disabilities' and 'barriers to learning'. However, these terms refer to the same conditions that prevent learners from participating fully at school. Some practitioners are of the opinion that the clarity of what constitutes a learning disability is important because it makes it possible for teachers to design support programmes that are tailor-made to address that specific difficulty (Moala, 2010).

International Journal of Educational Sciences (2015) assert that some teachers lack the identification skills of learners due to the large number of learners in their classes. They also stressed that the inability to collaborate is another challenge that prevents teachers from identifying learners in school. Teachers' inability to come together and discuss issues concerning learners having additional support needs could also be as

a result of a lack of collaboration. According to the DoE (2002:191) teachers' and parents' lack of knowledge of barriers to learning prevents learners from being identified timeously for support. The Department further states that this can compound the learner's needs over an extended period of time and later result in behavioural problems, low self-esteem, dropping out, and passiveness. Teachers need to have skills in observing the barriers in learners so that they are able to intervene in a relevant way. Lack of proper knowledge of the challenges that the learners face may deny teachers the opportunity to address the barriers to learning. Further, if the lack knowledge, teachers may sometimes regard the learners' lack of academic progress as a result of unwillingness, laziness or lack of motivation (Raj, 2015).

A study conducted by Geldenhuys and Wevers (2013) revealed that as a result of the lack of collaborative relationships between educators and parents, learners are unable to understand how the school and their parents are related in terms of their development, and they may view their teachers and parents as being two isolated entities, working independently of each other. Teachers also found it difficult to accommodate learners experiencing barriers and to adapt their pace to suit the learners' unique abilities. Others referred to teachers' willingness to complete work within a given time frame, as required by the Department. The work schedule requires teachers to be at a certain point at a certain time. Some teachers are of the opinion that, as a teacher, you are required to give thorough attention to the learners, which is not possible. In addition, Pieterse (2010) concurs that due to the challenge of large numbers of learners requiring support and the associated limitation in time constraints, the majority of learners experiencing barriers to learning simply go unsupported in schools and as a result nullify the envisaged benefits of being included in diverse mainstream classrooms.

According to the Education White Paper 6 (EWP 6) the purpose of IE and the training system introduced was so that learners experiencing barriers to learning could be identified early and be supported (DoE, 2001). Teachers were acknowledged as the primary resources in the accomplishment of the goals to establish IE and training. The Department further acknowledged that teachers' knowledge should be improved and their skills developed. However, evidence of such skills and knowledge remains

elusive. Some challenges that the teachers are facing include a lot of paperwork, shortage of time, inadequate knowledge about a wide range of learners' needs, overcrowded classes, and inadequate quality support from the DSTBs (International Journal on Educational Sciences, 2015:11)

One constant problem that teachers have to handle is how to address detrimental social behaviour and attitudes. Learners with impairments are often hidden by their families and people's attitude towards impairment is often negative (International Journal of Special Education, 2010). With such negative perception in the communities, teachers need strong support from the curriculum, the legislation and professional networks. All these supports are largely missing in most developing countries at the moment. For countries where legislation has been passed, enforcement of the legislation is yet another challenge (IJSE, 2010:13).

The Draft SIAS Policy (DoE, 2005) set forth an additional implementation plan for 2005-2009 that required, among other things, that protocols for SIAS were to be piloted by 2005 and "revised, approved and ready for system-wide implementation" by 2006, with consolidations and reviews planned for 2008 and 2009. The draft SIAS Policy 2005 detailed sub-goals such as "develop funding norms for [IE] based on findings of the field test of the Strategy" by March 2007 and "roll-out training on strategy throughout all districts in the system" by March 2008. The process "to move from the current situation to the one that is envisioned by [WP 6] . . . was to be concluded in 2009 for system-wide implementation. The DBE then introduced immediate measures to rule out discriminatory practices which prevent vulnerable children from exercising their constitutional right to basic education and services (DBE, 2015).

From 2008 the national Department of Basic Education (DBE), in collaboration with provincial Departments of Education (PDEs), was engaged in preparing the system for the implementation of the draft policy on SIAS (DBE, 2013). The engagement entailed expanding the budget to create and fill IE posts at provincial, district and circuit levels. It also entailed the appointment of learning support teachers, and the establishment of transversal district and circuit teams to support schools and the establishment of school-based support teams. The Department anticipated that the

policy was to be promulgated before the end of 2014 for implementation in 2015. Therefore, everyone in the DoE needed to understand that support to schools is multi-faceted and entails management, governance, curriculum, psycho-social and human resources planning, and that development support such as DBSTs needed to be in place (DBE, 2015).

The guidelines for DBSTs outline their roles and responsibilities not only in terms of the SIAS process but also verification, decision-making, provisioning, monitoring and tracking of support. The success of support of SIAS lies in evidence of the skill development of educators and their ability to manage diversity in their classes, as this is assumed by the SIAS policy. The policy also announced that more attention should focus on educator training and must be a priority. The Human Sciences Research Council (HSRC, 2015) reveals that the strategies in which teachers are being trained are not benefiting them. The policy requires the allocation of additional resources to capacitate schools, circuits and districts to provide support. It was noted that without resources, SIAS would remain effective in principle but not in practice. The success of SIAS implementation thus rests upon the effectiveness of the DBSTs and that their effectiveness is also intrinsically linked to services provided to schools (DBE, 2015).

The support provided by districts is described as a central part of the overall strengthening of education support services in South Africa (DoE, 2001). While SIAS is a processing tool to identify individual school, learner and teacher needs, it is also a planning tool; as a planning tool SIAS assists schools to work out and make provision for all additional support needs and assist the DBSTs to determine support requirements for the schools, circuits and district as a whole and to plan and budget for their most effective delivery (DBE, 2015).

Baboo (2011) states that DBSTs are significant agents of change in the South African education landscape. DBSTs play a critical role in ensuring that educational policies (including IE) conceived at both national and provincial level are brought to fruition at school level. Teachers who have included learners with disabilities reported that the experience has forced them to consider different ways of teaching a concept and to enhance their teaching skills. Recent studies conducted by local researchers indicate

commonality of the challenges that classroom teachers face with regard to the assimilation of inclusive practices in their classroom and the identification of learners who experience barriers to learning in particular.

The role of the SBST as envisaged by the EWP 6 (DoE, 2001) is to liaise with the DBST and other relevant support providers. The team should identify the learners', teachers' and schools' needs with regard to barriers to learning and establish an inter-sectoral committee which consists of relevant stakeholders such as health, social services, community, safety and security, child protection unit and therapists and organise in-service training for teachers in order to support them (DoE, 2005).

The study conducted by Maguvhe (2014) revealed that some teachers had received in-service training after the inception of EWP 6. The training was on SIAS. It also emerged that if there is proper training for teachers on multi-stage teaching, if there is good time management in schools and appropriate mechanisms for multi-disciplinary cooperation, then inclusion is an attainable reality. The study also revealed that since support structures such as institution-based and DBSTs are already in place for IE, what remained was countrywide implementation. It was considered to be rather slow, but happening. In view of the concerns about support structures in the DoE, particularly regarding the implementation of IE, the purpose of this study is to investigate experiences of the DBSTs with regard to SIAS.

The South African policy on SIAS changes how educators can assist learners with barriers of any form. According to the article, "The Teacher" of March 2015, the Minister of Basic Education approved the policy on SIAS documented in Government Gazette. No 38356, December 19, 2014. SIAS is a comprehensive policy document applicable to all public schools, which provides guidelines and information on the many processes needed to provide proper support to learners who experience any of a vast array of learning barriers, within the framework of the National Curriculum Statement Grade R-12 (The Teacher, 2015:7).

In view of the concern about SIAS strategy, teachers play a key role in the inclusion of learners who experience barriers to learning. For this reason, it is important to determine the challenges educators face in this endeavor. Challenges facing teachers in the implementation of IE range from their preparedness to implement SIAS strategy (DoE, 2000b), to acquiring competencies that are useful in accommodating diverse learners' needs. The overall feeling when reading this policy document is that it puts learners and their needs at the centre of any intervention process. It demands positive action through all applicable means which is good. However, there is a concern regarding the level of resources available to address the barriers that impact negatively on learner performance.

According to the Le Roux (2013), SBSTs are teams established by schools as a school-level support mechanism, whose primary function is to put coordinated school, learner and teacher support in place. Leadership for the SBST is provided by the school principal to ensure that the school becomes an inclusive centre of learning, care and support. The role and responsibility of the SBSTs is to:

- a) Respond to teachers' requests for assistance with support plans for learners experiencing barriers to learning.
- b) Review teacher-developed support plans, gather any additional information required, and provide direction and support in respect of additional strategies, programmes, services and resources to strengthen the Individual Support Plan (ISP).
- c) Where necessary, to request assistance from the DBST to enhance ISPs or support their recommendation for the placement of a learner in a specialised setting.
- d) Fill in the Support Needs Assessment 2 (SNA2).

De Winnaar (2013) states that EWP 6 determines that all schools, teaching personnel and administrative personnel will also receive additional support and guidance from the DBST. Thus, DBSTs are trans-disciplinary teams whose primary responsibility is to promote IE. The DBST's role in addition is also to administer SIAS of learners who experience barriers to learning (DBE, 2013). Jama (2011) commented that competencies required from DBSTs include a range of skills and experience, including

specialized skills practiced by persons with specialist training as well as other more generic skills that are relevant to addressing barriers to learning and development. Competencies considered crucial to facilitating institutional transformation and providing appropriate support range from the practical to the theoretical, for example, from paramedical to medical support of learners, to learning support relating to specific needs. Especially in the early development of SBSTs, the DBSTs play a central role in building the capacity of the team and school as a whole to understand the challenges relating to building an “inclusive school”.

District offices are a vital link between the education departments and schools. They are central to the process of gathering information and diagnosing problems in schools, and they perform a vital support and intervention function. This latter function includes organising training for personnel, dealing with funding and resourcing bottlenecks, resolving labour relations disputes and a host of other matters. They are key to ensuring that school principals remain accountable to the provincial department, and that accountability lines within the school to the principal and to the school governing body are maintained. The Department’s responsibility is partly to ensure that the various national policies are translated into clear and implementable functions for districts. In this regard, curriculum imperatives, new systemic assessment and teacher development policies are expected to change the role of districts somewhat, and existing district functions will have to be amended and cost implications made clear (DBE, 2012).

According to Thutong, South African Education Portal (DBE, 2013) fact sheet 3, the IE system is to be fully implemented by 2021. Since 2001, the DoE issued a number of other documents about specific parts of the IE system, such as guidelines for inclusive learning programmes, DSTBs, full-service schools and special schools as resource centres (DoE, 2005); guidelines to ensure quality education and support in special schools (DoE, 2007); the National Strategy on Screening, Identification, Assessment and Support (DoE, 2008); and guidelines for full service and inclusive schools (DBE, 2010).

The researcher is of the view that limited resources impact negatively on support service delivery in schools because DBSTs find it difficult to visit schools due to the shortage of transport and district officials. This is a challenge because SBSTs need a lot of support over time. DBSTs are teams established by schools in general and higher education, as a school-level support mechanism, whose primary function is to put coordinated school, learner and teacher support in place. Leadership for the SBST is provided by the school principal to ensure that the school becomes an inclusive centre of learning, care and support. This team is the same as an Institution-level Support Team (DBE, 2014). Furthermore, the ways through which SBSTs deal with issues in schools demand a lot of teaching time for teachers. Some of the SBSTs do not have expertise and knowledge to deal with the challenges (Mahlangu, 2011:239-240). The functions of newly appointed DBSTs should therefore develop from what is already in existence in the system but needs to be extended, recognised and enhanced.

Roberts (2011:21) states that researchers like Engelbrecht and Swart (2007) suggest that the composition of DBSTs presents a multi-disciplinary approach in supporting teaching and learning. The DBSTs take responsibility for building human capacity in schools to recognise and address severe learning difficulties and accommodate a range of learning needs. Defining the roles of team members within a collaborative support team in IE contexts, and acknowledging and utilising the expertise that exists, may present a number of challenges. These challenges include the ability of the role-players to work together in coordinated and collaborative ways (DoE, 2008b). It implies moving from a current fragmented approach towards a more integrated approach to the provision of support for learners who experience barriers to learning.

Support structures which include DBSTs and SBSTs that impact upon IE are diverse and often involve a range of different service professionals, approaches and working methods. Established support structures can act as a support to, or as a barrier to, inclusion. The literature on these points out that SIAS implementation rests upon the effectiveness of the DBSTs to provide support to SBSTs in order to be able assist and support learners, teachers and the school as a whole to practice IE. Furthermore, Nel, Muller and Rheeders (2011:39) emphasise the point that without a new mindset and

the right support system in place, IE policies will remain no more than an idealistic education system.

1.2 LOCATION OF THE STUDY

This study was conducted in the Zululand District of the KwaZulu Natal Province (KZN), South Africa. The province consists of 11 districts. Each district is led by a District Director and is composed of a varying number of circuits that are led by Circuit Managers. In some of the provinces, districts are the smallest units within the education system while in others the smallest unit is a circuit. In the case of the KZN, the smallest unit is a circuit. Districts or circuits have varying numbers of schools (primary and secondary schools). Zululand District is the biggest in KwaZulu Natal Province with 710 schools and 20 Special Needs Education officials whereas the smallest district has 12 Special Needs Education officials. In this study purposeful sampling was employed to select participants who had been in their positions since 2011. The reason for this criterion was that prior to 2011 Zululand District had only a few specialists (including speech therapist, educational psychologist, social worker and remedial advisor) in the Special Needs Education Services (SNES). These specialists were not trained in SIAS policy. Participant selection was based on the fact that they had received SIAS training and that they provided support in schools. Participation was also based on preparedness to participate in the research and willingness to share information. The selected DBST officials were at the time employed under the sub-directorate of SNES in the district and had qualifications in Special Needs Education, Educational Psychology, School Social Work, Speech Therapy, Remedial Education, School Counselling as well as Learning Support Educators and who had been supporting schools since 2011.

1.3 THE PROBLEM STATEMENT

According to research conducted by the Department of Education (DoE, 2005:19) on support systems in IE, findings revealed that there is no meaningful support in most districts in the country. Where there is support, particularly in rural and historically disadvantaged areas, this usually included only some of the functions of support

structures. The roles and responsibilities of newly appointed DBSTs should be based on what is already in existence in the system but needs to be extended, recognized and improved. Recent research on difficulties experienced by teachers in identifying learners experiencing learning barriers also reveal that the majority of district officials who provide training and workshops to teachers regarding identification of learners who experience barriers to learning also showed a lack of strong academic background on the policy. They depended on the training offered by the Department of Education. Some of the officials have inadequate experience of remedial education and therefore are unable to articulate the philosophy upon which the IE policy was founded in practice (Mkhuma, 2012).

The study conducted by Asaram (2014) reveal that teacher training programmes seem to inadequately address the reality of teachers' insufficient knowledge and skills with regard to identification of learners who experience barriers to learn the SIAS policy provides a strategic policy framework for screening, identifying, assessing and supporting all learners to achieve in learning and development within the education system, including those who are currently admitted in resource centres. Thus, Asaram (2014) in his study reflect the lack of skills, competencies, knowledge as well as attitudes of teachers together with one or more of stakeholders regarding the progress of implementation of IE in which SIAS is based in.

Other learners are being admitted into mainstream schools, with varying levels of success. This results in marginalisation and exclusion of those with additional support needs, including a big number having barriers to learning. There is no system of uniformity in identification and assessment to ensure a consistent process of screening and referral of learners into special schools as resource centres. Therefore, there is inadequate knowledge and skills regarding barriers to learning by teachers, caregivers and learners in the assessment process and lack of differentiation of learners with additional support needs. Assessment practices that are currently used fail to outline the nature and level of support needed, and it is difficult to provide the needed support (DBE, 2011). However, the intention of this study is to provide guidelines to DBST in order to support the implementation of SIAS policy in schools. By so doing, this will assist to minimise barriers experienced by learners in schools.

1.4 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The question that is posed to explore the experiences of the DBSTs with regard to SIAS implementation in schools is:

- What are the experiences of DBST with regard to SIAS policy implementation in Zululand district?

The following sub-questions are posed to investigate the study further:

- What are the experiences of DBSTs in SIAS implementation?
- How do DBSTs ensure that schools implement SIAS in support of learners experiencing barriers to learning?
- Which elements hamper the implementation and provision of support services in schools?
- What guidelines could be employed by DBSTs to strengthen effective support in SIAS implementation?

1.5 AIMS OF THE STUDY

The aims of this study are to investigate the experiences of DBSTs with regard to SIAS implementation. The following study objectives were pursued:

- To explore the experiences of DBSTs with regard to SIAS implementation.
- To determine the way in which DBSTs implement SIAS policy in support of learners experiencing barriers to learning.
- To investigate the elements hampering the implementation and provision of support services in schools.
- To provide guidelines that could be employed by DBSTs to strengthen the implementation SIAS effectively and successfully.

1.6 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

In view of the above aim, the significance is to gain a clearer understanding of DBSTs' subjective experiences with regard to SIAS policy and to provide guidelines that could be employed by DBSTs to strengthen the policy implementation process.

The question addressed in this research study is: *What are the DBSTs experiences with regard to SIAS implementation?*

In order to achieve this aim, a literature and an empirical study was conducted. The importance of this investigation is that findings will help to address some experiences which DBSTs have when implementing SIAS policy. It is also anticipated that the findings of this study will notify further development of IE polices as well as reconsideration of the plan for the implementation of SIAS policy. This study is crucial as the researcher would like to add value and contribute to the knowledge base regarding IE in SA, and to provide guidelines that could assist DBSTs to implement SIAS policy effectively and successfully.

1.7 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This study is underpinned by William Edwards Deming's Plan, Do, Check, Act (PDCA) cycle (Deming,1986). The PDCA cycle or model is sometimes called a team involved tool (TIT). It requires a commitment and "continuous conversations with as many stakeholders as possible ... it is a constant process" (Knight, 2012:68). This model outlines the way an organisation should go about implementing and monitoring its work in order to achieve targets. The model fits well as education DBSTs are local departmental organisations that are assigned to provide support for SIAS policy implementation with the aim of improving learners' achievement. Deming's PDCA cycle is relevant to this study as the study seeks to investigate how DBST education officials plan, implement, check and act on matters related to effective SIAS implementation in schools.

In the effort to provide a quality educational programme for learners with additional support needs, I felt this model would assist in achieving the aims of this study. I also viewed this model as one that recommends team work. According to Wilcox (2003) in teamwork every member of the team shoulders duties as well as responsibilities. Cooperation in accomplishing tasks is a must. All must work together for the common goal of the system. This implies that for the successful implementation of SIAS policy all members of the team (DBSTs) must work collaboratively for the benefit of learners with learning difficulties.

Using the Deming Cycle as part of the theoretical framework of this study was relevant since the DBSTs needs to operate under this model for the successful implementation of SIAS policy. *PLAN* is the stage where the team members are expected to establish, identify needs and developments then design or revise policy components to improve implementation. In the *DO* stage the DBST should implement the action plan and measure its performance. In the *CHECK* stage they are expected to assess and monitor the implementation and report the results to decision makers, and in the *ACT* stage DBSTs should decide on changes needed to improve the implementation process (Arveson, 1998).

1.8 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

In an effort to understand the DBSTs' experiences of implementing SIAS policy, the study adopted a qualitative research approach. This approach is regarded as suitable for the research because it allows the researcher to understand the participants' personal experiences.

A case study design was used because the researcher was focusing only on KwaZulu-Natal. A case study is research in which "the researcher explores in-depth a programme, an event, an activity, a process or one or more individuals". It emphasises and focuses attention on what can be learned from a single case specifically (Anderson and Arsenault, 1998). Researchers such as Punch (2003), Punch (2006) and Denzin and Lincoln (2006) point out that a case may be simple or complex, it may be about an individual, a group of individuals, a situation, condition or system. Bearing in mind the purpose of this study, an intrinsic case study was embraced as the

researcher wished to provide guidelines on the support given to schools by the DBST and at the same time, a better understanding of how districts should support SIAS implementation in schools.

It was preferred because it is among the rural districts of KwaZulu-Natal experiencing many challenges regarding learners with psychosocial and psycho-educational barriers. It was anticipated that ample information, evidence and data would be forthcoming from the district about its attempts to implement SIAS and support schools in order to minimise barriers to learning. The DBSTs who were currently implementing SIAS policy in their district were approached to be part of the research study. The rationale for choosing members of the DBST was because they had undergone orientation in the national DBE on the philosophy of SIAS as well as their roles and responsibilities. A second reason for choosing DBSTs had to do with the fact that there is evidence that they had started practising SIAS strategy in KZN province even before it was gazetted in 2014. All the members of the DBSTs from the SNES directorate in this district were requested to participate in the study. The researcher knew how widely the identified sample characteristics can be generalised into the wider population (UNICEF, 2002). As suggested by May (2002), the researcher selected the participants expecting them to represent other district officials assigned to implement SAIS and support schools for the minimisation of barriers to learning.

The researcher purposefully selected Zululand District which is located in the KwaZulu-Natal province. This district is approximately 300 kilometres away from the provincial head office which is located in Pietermaritzburg. It has, as stated above, been counted among the deep rural districts in the KwaZulu-Natal, with more gravel than tarred roads. The district is located in the north of the province and mostly consists of rural areas and has about 710 schools in its jurisdiction. The reason for choosing this particular district is that it is close to the researcher's home town, which made it easy for her to conduct the research.

Engelbrecht and Swanepoel (2013:23) stress that knowledge is constructed and reconstructed through mental and physical activities as individuals progress to higher levels of understanding. The researcher selected this paradigm in the study because

it allowed her to understand the experiences of DBSTs with regard to SIAS implementation. The first step which distinguishes qualitative studies from other modes of inquiry is the constructivist paradigm and indicates that the point of view of the researcher is to explicitly explain the paradigm within which the study is framed (De Vos, Strydom, Fouche and Delport, 2011:297). According to Mahlo (2011:83) when philosophers refer to epistemology, they take a particular structured view and frame the study of knowledge around ontology (the study of what is there to be known), and methodology (the study of methods by which we discover knowledge). Thus, this research concentrated on what is well-known about SIAS policy and how things really work in it.

The researcher selected this paradigm because of her assumptions that the reality of DBSTs experiences with regard to SIAS implementation can only be understood when interviewing them (DBSTs), observing them, and analysing the documents they use during the execution of SIAS policy. In this research, participants were purposively selected on the basis of inherent knowledge and understanding about phenomena under investigation. The participants were allowed to construct knowledge about the reality of their experiences in the implementation of SIAS, but the type of questions the researcher used during the interviews and probing questions were based on her experiences as an education specialist in the district. The researcher was not only a total listener during the interviews and document analysis but also joined the participants in the construction of knowledge. The researcher's participation was however limited in the sense that the essence of the study was to capture the participants' views.

Based on Hatch's (2002:15) recommendation, the researcher spent two to three days in the research site interviewing the participants and analysing the documents which they used. Using constructivism helped the researcher to investigate the constructions or broad meanings of the experiences of DBSTs with regard to SIAS implementation. Furthermore, the researcher wished to become immersed in the social-context (district office) and investigate the experiences of DBSTs in implementing SIAS, therefore explore their experiences and behavior. Using social constructivism, the researcher acknowledged that DBSTs' experiences

The participants in this study were district officials (DBSTs) selected from SNES because they are the ones who are specialists in the section and who visit schools to render support. As the purpose of this research was to investigate the experiences of DBSTs with regard to SIAS policy, team members from the site were interviewed, because they were most informed about IE and its practices. Interviewing the team members provided the researcher with relevant information about the implementation of SIAS policy, the experiences they have, and suggestions on what can be done for the success thereof. A small sample was selected because they are knowledgeable and informative about SIAS implementation that is taking place at their site. The usage of semi-structured interviews, document analysis and observations ensured depth of data generated.

1.9 DATA ANALYSIS

McMillan and Schumacher (2001:67) refer to data analysis as a systematic process of selecting, categorising, comparing, synthesising and interpreting data to provide explanation of a single phenomenon of interest. It refers to transforming the data with the aim of extracting useful information and facilitating conclusions. For the purpose of this study, the researcher used thematic analysis to analyse the data. Thematic content analysis was applied to analyse the data. The researcher identified themes and subthemes related to the experiences of DBST with regard to SIAS implementation in schools. According to Denzin and Lincoln (2006:23), data analysis involves two levels of coding. The first level of coding is called open coding where data is labelled or tagged. The second level entails ascribing meaning to the data or making sense of the data. After labelling the data the researcher logically groups these into themes.

Thematic content analysis refers to the process of capturing relevant themes in the data through the coding procedure. Rule and John (2011:78) refer to this process as concept and thematic analysis, which means working with codes to identify patterns, such as similarities and differences. The categories of data are then reduced after the researcher has familiarised her/himself with the data to make the data manageable.

This is done because qualitative data analysis is primarily an inductive process of organising the data into categories and identifying patterns (relationships) among the categories (McMillan and Schumacher, 2001:461).

1.10 DELIMITATION OF THE STUDY

The researcher imposed certain restrictions known as delimitations in order to provide a more focused study and illuminate the key issues that this study sought to address. Although this is a case study whose purpose is not to generalise, the study was conducted only on twelve Zululand district officials across twelve districts in KZN province. The said officials were employed under SNES section and who were offering support to teachers and learners. The study delimited the sample group so that it only represented the DBST officials who have a role in overseeing the implementation of the SIAS policy within the district. This may impact the generalisability of the study to other DBSTs involved in SIAS policy implementation in the KZN province. It is expected that, as result, the data related to this district will be richer. However, this delimitation will also impact on the sample size. Nevertheless, in-depth interviews generated useful data that can be used as a springboard for further studies situated in different contexts.

1.11 TRUSTWORTHINESS IN QUALITATIVE RESEARCH

To ensure the rigor of the qualitative study, trustworthiness was ensured by applying strategies suggested by Bryman (2012) namely, credibility, transferability, dependability, conformability and authenticity (Roberts, 2011:46).

1.11.1 Credibility

Credibility in qualitative research is the ability of the researcher to demonstrate a prolonged period of engagement with participants, to provide evidence of observation, and to triangulate by using different sources, different methods and sometimes multiple investigations (Guba and Lincoln 1994:307). To ensure that credibility is achieved, the researcher ensured that she described and understood the

phenomenon of interest from the participants' perspective. The researcher conducted in-depth interviews with DBSTs and principals who are SBST chairpersons who had been in those posts for at least five years, to the point of data saturation. The researcher also ensured that the results of the research are believable because the selected participants were the only ones during the time of the research who could legitimately judge the credibility of the results (Guba and Lincoln, 1994).

1.11.2 Transferability

Transferability refers to the degree that findings can be transferred or generalised to other settings, contexts or populations (Guba and Lincoln, 1994). The researcher is of the view that the experiences of DBST who were interviewed, and who represented other members who had been in the system for five years, can be transferred to a wider population of DBSTs who implement SIAS policy in schools.

1.11.3 Dependability

Mkhuma (2012:54) supports Shenton (2004) that dependability can be addressed in a qualitative study by ensuring that the processes are reported in detail to enable future researchers to repeat this study, and to allow readers to gain a thorough understanding of the methods used and their effectiveness. Thus, the researcher used interviews, observations and document analysis to investigate experiences of DBSTs with regard to SIAS implementation in an attempt to achieve dependability.

1.11.4 Confirmability

Confirmability refers to the extent that the research findings can be confirmed or corroborated by others (Guba and Lincoln, 1994). The study presented written records of what the participants said, and individual interviews were audio recorded. Participants were encouraged to speak their freely and openly and the researcher remained objective throughout the study.

1.11.5 Authenticity

McDermott and Davidson (2002) describe authenticity as the presentation of findings in such a way as to allow the voices of the participants to come through. To ensure authenticity in the study, verbatim direct quotes from the participants are presented, including dissenting views. A fair, honest and balanced account of the experiences of DBSTs with regard to SIAS implementation in schools is presented.

1.12 ETHICS IN RESEARCH

De Vos *et al.* (2011:57) stress that ethical guidelines serve as standards and basis upon which each researcher ought to evaluate his or her own conduct and the guidelines should be internalised in the personality of the researcher. With human beings the objects in the study the researcher strictly adhered to the principles outlined below throughout the study:

1.12.1 Permission

Research permission was requested from the Research Ethics Committee of the College of Education of the University of South Africa (UNISA) and from the KwaZulu-Natal Department of Education as well as from the Zululand District office and the relevant primary schools.

1.12.2 Informed consent

Research participants were consulted regarding the aims of the research and its methodology. They were informed about the nature of the study and were given the choice of either participating or withdrawing from participating (Leedy and Ormrod, 2001). Denzin and Lincoln (2005) confirm that participants must agree voluntarily to participate without any form of coercion, and their agreement must be based on full and open information. Officials from the district (DBSTs) and principals (SBSTs) remained anonymous and each participant was given a consent form to sign (Neuman,

2006). The consent form further outlined their rights in terms of their participation in the research.

1.12.3 Privacy and confidentiality

Denzin and Lincoln (2005) warn that all personal data ought to be secured or concealed and made public only behind a shield of anonymity. In consideration of participants' vulnerability, protection of their identities was prioritised and confidentiality was assured.

1.13 DEFINITION OF KEY TERMS IN THE STUDY

District-based Support Team

A DSBT is a management structure at district level, the responsibility of which is to coordinate and promote IE through: training; curriculum delivery; distribution of resources; infrastructure development; and identification, assessment and addressing of barriers to learning. The DSBT must provide leadership and general management to ensure that schools within the district are inclusive centres of learning, care and support. Leadership for the structure must be provided by the senior management of the district who would normally designate transversal teams to provide support (DBE, 2014). According to WP 6 (Department of Education, 2001) the DSBTs are:

[...] groups of departmental employees whose job it is to promote IE through training, curriculum delivery, distribution of resources, identifying and addressing barriers to learning, leadership and general management

The DSBT is a multi-disciplinary group comprising a school psychologist, occupational therapist and teacher with a fourth departmental employee as the head of the team. Each DSBT is assigned a certain amount of schools in their school district with whom they closely work to implement IE (De Winnaar, 2013).

Experiences

The term 'experience' refers to the events or series of events which individuals have participated in or lived through (Heart of Wisdom, 2002). Swart and Green (2001:45) define experience as a process of gaining knowledge or skills over a period of time through seeing and doing things rather than through studying. Experience can be someone's experiences of new ideas or ways of life that they are exposed to.

Inclusive Education (IE)

Inclusive education is a process of strengthening the capacity of the education system to reach out to all learners and can thus be understood as a key strategy to achieve EFA. As an overall principle, it should guide all education policies and practices, starting from the fact that education is a basic human right and the foundation for a more just and equal society. The major impetus for IE was provided by the World Conference on Special Needs Education: Access and Quality, held in Salamanca, Spain, June 1994. More than 300 participants representing 92 governments and 25 international organisations considered the fundamental policy shifts required to promote the approach of IE, thereby enabling schools to serve all children, particularly those with special educational needs (UNESCO, 2009:8).

School-Based Support Teams (SBSTs)

Teams established by schools in general and higher education as a school-level support mechanism, whose primary function is to put coordinated school, learner and teacher support in place. Leadership for the SBST is provided by the school principal to ensure that the school becomes an inclusive centre of learning, care and support. This team is the same as an Institution-level Support Team (DBE, 2014).

Screening, Identification, Assessment and Support (SIAS)

The Policy on Screening, Identification, Assessment and Support ("SIAS Policy, 2014") (DBE, 2014) is the vehicle through which the government will "ensure the

transformation” envisioned by EWP6. The purpose of SIAS Policy 2014 is to “improve[e] access to quality education for vulnerable learners and those who experience barriers to learning” by providing “a policy framework for the standardisation of the procedures to identify, assess and provide programmes for all learners who require additional support to enhance their participation and inclusion in school” (DBE, 2014).

1.14 OUTLINE OF THE STUDY

The study is outlined as follows:

Chapter One is an introductory chapter which provides background to the study, motivation for the study, statement of the problem, research aims as well as research questions guiding the study. This chapter introduces and defines the major concepts which form the basis of this study. It also presents the organization of this research study.

Chapter Two presents and discusses the theoretical framework that underpins the study and its relevance to SIAS policy implementation.

Chapter Three reviews international, continental and national literature pertinent to IE policies, specifically SIAS and provision of IE support in schools.

Chapter Four consists of a detailed discussion of all the methodological issues relating to the research enterprise underpinning the study. This chapter also explains the issues relating to the trustworthiness of data, ethical issues as well as limitations of the study.

Chapter Five outlines the data presentation and discussion of key themes emerging from the findings

Chapter Six provides the findings, recommendations and implications for further studies.

1.15 CONCLUDING STATEMENT

This chapter provided an overview of this research study, and presented the background to IE and the origin of provision of support services in schools. It also contextualized the problem identified in the literature through a literature review of the experiences of DBSTs with regard to SIAS policy implementation in Zululand District, KwaZulu-Natal. This chapter also provided key concepts of the study and finally, the chapter concludes with an overview of the study. In the next chapter the theoretical framework that underpins the study and its relevance to SIAS policy implementation will be discussed.

CHAPTER 2: DEMING'S PDCA CYCLE

2.1. INTRODUCTION

Henning, van Rensburg and Smith (2004:25) define 'theoretical framework' as being a lens by means of which the researcher positions his or her study. It helps with the formulation of the assumptions about the study and how it connects with the world. The theoretical framework reflects the stance adopted by the researcher and thus frames the work, anchoring and facilitating dialogue between the literature and the field research, and is a unique way of abstractly thinking about or looking at the world.

Frameworks are used in qualitative research to connect the parts and provide a lens through which to view the study. This lens or theoretical perspective can help one to understand certain aspects of the phenomenon as well as conceal other aspects (Henning, Van Rensburg and Smith, 2005:25). In this study the phenomena which needed to be understood were the experiences of DBSTs with regard to SIAS implementation in Zululand. Swart and Pettipher (2011:10) defined theory as a set of ideas, assumptions and concepts ordered in such a way that it tells us about the world, ourselves or an aspect of reality. In this study, the Deming cycle theory was used as a framework for exploring the experiences of DBSTs with regard to SIAS implementation in Zululand District.

2.2. THE DEMING CYCLE FOR SUPPORT AND ITS RELEVANCE TO DISTRICT SUPPORT FOR SIAS IMPLEMENTATION

This study is framed within the Plan, Do, Check and Act (PDCA) cycle by William Edwards Deming. In the 1950s, one of Shewhart's colleagues, William Edwards Deming (1986), adapted Shewhart's four-phase, fact-based, approach, which then subsequently became known as the Deming PDCA cycle. Figure 3.1 illustrates the Shewhart cycle. The PDCA is sometimes called a team involved tool (TIT). The PDCA cycle requires a commitment and "continuous conversations with as many as stakeholders as possible ... it is a constant process" (Knight, 2012:68). Deming adopted the framework of PDCA to measure the processes involved in developing,

implementing and improving the effectiveness of a quality management system to enhance customer satisfaction by meeting customers' requirements (www.whatwe.com, 2006).

According to Karuppusami and Gandhinathan (2012:6), "The Deming PDCA cycle is a well-known model for continual process improvement. It teaches organisations to plan an action, do it, check to see how it conforms to the plan and act on what has been learned". Deming's quality measurement framework is used to illustrate how DBSTs deal with quality policy implementation methods and their processes in schools. The researcher felt that using the Deming cycle as part of the theoretical framework of this study was relevant since the DBSTs are structures that should work as teams for the successful implementation of SIAS policy.

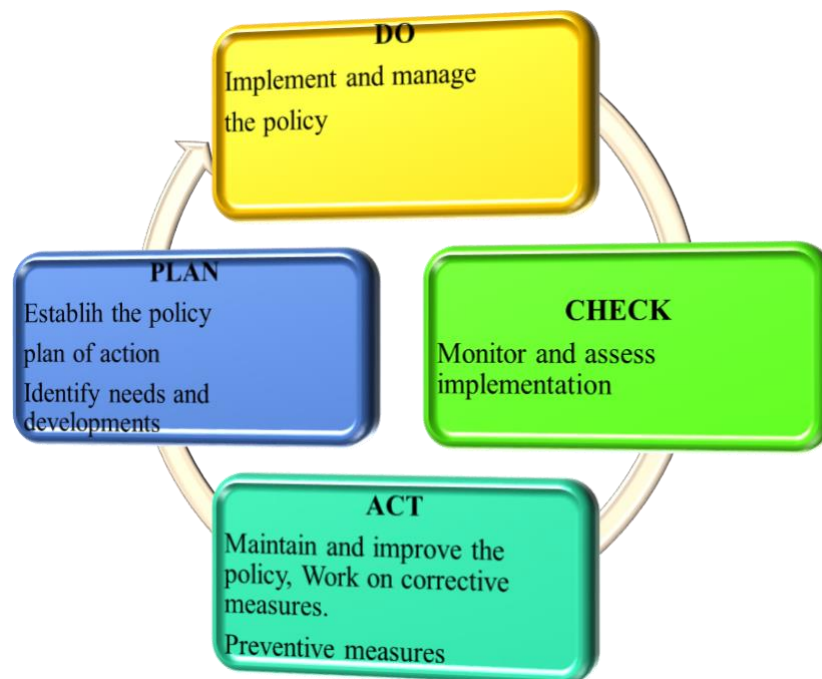


Figure 2.1: The Shewhart cycle, Source: Deming (1986)

This model outlines the way an organisation (district) should go about monitoring its work in order to achieve targets. The researcher thinks that this model fits well as education DBSTs are local departmental organisations that are tasked to support SIAS implementation in schools with the aim of supporting and improving learner performance. In the effort to provide a quality educational programme for learners

experiencing barriers to learning, the researcher felt this model would help to achieve the aims of this study. The researcher also viewed this model as one that recommends team work. According to Wilcox (2003), in teamwork each member of the team shoulders his/her duties and/or responsibilities.

In a team, cooperation in accomplishing tasks is a must. All must work together for the common goal of the system. This implies that for the successful implementation of SIAS policy all members of the team (DBST) must work collaboratively for the benefit of learners who experiencing barriers to learning. In applying the quality model that has proven successful in industry to education, some modifications to the concepts are in order. Foremost the products in education are living, breathing, thinking human beings. In education, schools accept children as they are when they enter the school system. They provide an environment that allows for learning to take place, teachers who are specialised in certain areas of expertise, a curriculum conducive to the age of the child and based on normal expectations of achievement, and textbooks and resources that correlate to the curriculum and support services are provided to add value to children's knowledge base as they progress from grade to grade. Since schools are providing programmes and services that add value, they want the value added to be of high quality and to meet the expectations of parents and other customers (Wilcox, 2003).

According to Knight (2012:32), PDCA focuses on activities that are responsive to education needs and improve learner performance. It refers to a continuous and ongoing effort to achieve measurable improvements in the efficiency, effectiveness, performance, accountability, outcomes, and other indicators of quality in services or processes which achieve equity and improve the education of the learners experiencing barriers to learning. Thus, since SIAS is an integrated approach which involves other governmental departments, it is very important to work collaboratively with DBST and adopt the PDCA cycle in order to improve the implementation of the policy.

Varma (2015:36) points out that the PDCA cycle is commonly used to coordinate continuous improvement efforts. It emphasises and demonstrates that improvement

programmes must start with careful planning and must result in effective action before moving on again to more careful planning in a continuous cycle. The author proposes the steps below for the successful implementation of the PDCA cycle.

2.2.1. Step1: Plan an improvement

The goal at this stage is to decide what needs to be done and how best it can be done. Achievement of this goal occurs through reviewing and studying current work processes and available data. This stage involves examining currently failing or problem areas. In terms of the Zululand District, the researcher's opinion is that limited resources impact negatively on support service delivery in schools because DBSTs find it difficult to visit schools due to the shortage of transport and district officials. According to the study conducted by Geldenhuys and Wevers (2013:13), teachers do not fully understand their roles and responsibilities regarding the SIAS policy due to the lack of effective and structured in-service training programmes, and show negative outcomes on the implementation of IE due to non-compliance with SIAS policy.

At most schools there are SBSTs established according to EWP 6 (2001), but in some schools these teams are not functional and the members who are selected do not have knowledge and skills on guidance and learner support even though they have attended workshops. Therefore, DBSTs should review the way they implement policy and plan improvements in areas that they have identified as needing improvement.

2.2.2. Step 2: Do the planned activity

Stage two involves implementing the improvement or problem-solving plan by doing it. This implementation stage occurs when the plan is actually tried in the operational context. The people responsible need to be trained and equipped with the resources necessary to complete the task. This stage itself may involve a mini PDCA cycle as the problems of implementation are discovered and resolved. At this point, problems begin to arise if implementation of the plan is not providing the desired results. The guidelines for DBST outline their roles and responsibilities not only in terms of SIAS processes but also in terms of verification, decision-making, provisioning, monitoring

and tracking of support. Crucial to the success of support of SIAS is the skills development of teachers to manage diversity in the classroom, as this is assumed by the policy. Attention to teacher training must be a priority.

The Human Sciences Research Council (2009) reveals that the ways in which teachers are being trained are failing them. Without the allocation of additional resources to capacitate school, circuits and districts to provide support, SIAS will remain effective in principle but not in practice and the desired results will not be achieved. The success of SIAS implementation thus rests upon the effectiveness of the DBSTs. Their effectiveness is also intrinsically linked to support provided in school (DBE, 2015). The role of the SBST, as envisaged by the EWP 6 (DoE, 2001), is to liaise with the DBST and other relevant support providers. The team should identify the learners', teachers' and school's needs with regard to barriers to learning and establish an inter- sectoral committee which consists of relevant stakeholders such as health, social services, community, safety and security, child protection units and therapists, and then organise in-service training for teachers in order to support them (DoE, 2005).

2.2.3. Step3: Check the results

In Stage three the newly implemented solution is evaluated to see whether it has resulted in the expected performance improvement. Analysing the new data and measuring the results reveals whether the implementation of the plan is yielding the results that it should. The DBST's support staff will also be trained to provide support to all teachers who are working in mainstream classrooms and who teach learners experiencing barriers to learning. Thus, one of the tasks of the DoE is to successfully change the character of schools and thereby ensure the establishment of IE, which is due to be implemented by 2019 with the necessary support systems in place. This means that the number of schools that effectively implement the IE policy and have access to a centre that offer specialist services should be increased (DBE, 2015:45). Moreover, given the important function of DBSTs in ensuring that schools are prepared and guided towards the effective implementation of IE, particularly SIAS, the

structuring, staffing and capacitating thereof should be a high priority (Geldenhuys and Wevers, 2013:16).

2.2.4. Step 4: Act on the results

If implementation is successful, stage four involves putting controls in place so that the issue never returns. If the change is not successful, this stage allows adjustment where necessary to overcome problems, and formalises the new body of knowledge before starting the PDCA cycle over again. In starting over again, operations may lock in the positive outcomes, take any corrective action that is required, return to the planning stage, and repeat as necessary (Tague, 2005:392).

2.3. EFFECTIVENESS OF DBSTS IN SIAS IMPLEMENTATION

The support that the province provides to districts must result in all districts implementing the SIAS policy, and those that are not implementing the policy to be supported if they have challenges regarding the implementation. If districts improve the implementation of SIAS policy, they become effective districts. Without the allocation of additional resources to capacitate schools, circuits and districts to provide support, SIAS will unfortunately remain effective in principle but not in practice. The success of SIAS implementation thus rests on effectiveness of DBSTs.

As has been indicated earlier, the district offices are tasked with supporting teaching and learning in schools. Deming's cycle theory is relevant to this study as the study seeks to investigate how district offices as education organisations plan, implement, check or study and act on matters related to quality teaching and policy implementation in schools. The main question that this theory addresses is: how do DBSTs experience SIAS implementation in schools? The study looks at how they plan, do, check and act on issues of supporting quality policy implementation (Mavuso, 2013:59).

2.3.1. School effectiveness in implementing SIAS policy

The framework that guides the school effectiveness of SIAS implementation perspective has been explained in a number of ways. School effectiveness of SIAS implementation can be defined as the output of the school which is measured in terms of the average achievement of the learners experiencing barriers to learning at the end of the year (Mavuso, 2013:28). One of the ways depicted by Schereens is an input-process-output process where DBSTs emphasise the inputs that are intended to achieve the required outcomes. SIAS implementation is seen as the degree to which districts achieve their desired goals. Gaziel (1996:17) further argues that principals, teachers, parents, students and evaluators who have an obvious interest in assessing the existing levels of effectiveness of the SBST learners and programmes, would no doubt ideally prefer checklists of indicators to measure the quality of performance, regardless of context.

Mavuso (2013:49) agrees that the advocates of this school of thought believe that a school that is effectively implementing the policy is one that has adequate resources dedicated to help learners experiencing barriers to actually learn. What matters to them are the inputs and their accurate targeting of outcomes. School effectiveness is usually characterised by a top-down approach which makes vague reference to 'a focus on policy implementation'. Gorenflo and Moran (2010:5) confirm that spending adequate time in each phase of the PDCA cycle is imperative in order to have a smooth and meaningful quality improvement process. The elements put forth here comprise a deliberate process based on the scientific method, and help ensure that improvement efforts are conducted in a way that will maximise the degree of success achieved.

Before beginning the PDCA process, it is important to assemble the team that will participate and to develop a communications plan about the effort. Once assembled, the team must designate a team leader and team members, and address the following questions: Do we have the right people (i.e., those who are directly involved with the area needing improvement)? Does the team need training? Who will facilitate the team and process? Another key step is to develop a team charter, which serves to provide

focus and clarity regarding the team's work. Additional resources on tending to teams as they move through the PDCA process may prove useful to optimise the team's performance

2.3.2. Communication plan

As the plan is implemented, the Department strongly suggests a constant flow of communication between the teams providing the intervention and the core teachers. This will support the transfer of implementation from the intervention to the core area being targeted. Additionally, checks for fidelity of implementation should occur by the data team and/or SBST to ensure accurate implementation of the intervention as designed (Barge, 2011:22). Those involved with or impacted by improvements must be kept informed of the changes, timing, and status of the quality improvement project. It's important to establish a communication plan at the outset of the improvement effort, and to communicate and post progress on a regular basis, in a highly visible location, for all to see. Storyboards offer a cogent picture of key points in the PDCA cycle, and can be an effective avenue to tell the story as the team moves through its improvement work.

2.4. PHASES OF THE PDCA MODEL

PLAN is the stage where the DBST is expected to *design or revise* the policy process components to improve support results. The problem statement which this study seeks to address is that most of the district officials who provide training and workshops to educators with regard to identification and support of learners who experience barriers to learning show lack of a strong academic background regarding the IE policy and therefore depend on the training provided by the KZN DBE. Some of the officials have vast experience of remedial education but fail to articulate the philosophy upon which the IE policy is founded in practice (Mkhuma, 2012:28).

Research conducted by the DoE (2005:19) reveals that in many districts in the country there is no meaningful support for IE at the moment. This is particularly true in rural and historically disadvantaged areas. Where there is support, this usually includes

some of the functions of SBSTs. In this stage, the DBST should revisit the policy processes and design a plan of action which will address the problem stated above.

According to the DBE (2014:04), DBSTs should use a tool to help make the decision on the type of support to be provided to the learner or school. This must be used and motivated in the DBST action plan. When determining the support package for the learner or school, the DBST must use the following guidelines:

- The learner has a right to be supported in his/her current school or the school closest to his/her home.
- Irrespective of the level of support required, every effort should be made to make the support available to the learner in his/her current/closest school.
- The DBST may consider accessing Outreach Programmes from Full-Service Schools (FSS) and Special School Resource Centres (SSRC).
- The outplacement of the learner to an alternative setting to access a specialised support programme, should be the last resort.

In the **DO** stage the team should *implement* the plan and *measure* its performance. The DBST forms a key component in the successful implementation of an IE support system. The South African SIAS policy gives an overview of the role functions of DBSTs with regard to establishing an IE support system. The policy is for all support staff in the DBST, including curriculum and school managers, human resource planning and development coordinators, social workers, therapists, psychologists and other health professionals working within the school system.

The policy is binding in terms of decision-making around any form of support-provisioning to learners, schools and teachers (DBE, 2014:36). Thus, in this stage the DBST should review the information and supporting documents provided in Support Needs Assessments 1 and 2 and discuss these with the SBSTs. During the implementation stage, the DBST should first rate the level of support to be provided to the learner or the school and include this in the DBST plan of action.

The planning and implementation for support services is guided by the policy imperatives contained in EWP 6 (DoE, 2001). EPW 6 provides directives with respect

to the provisioning of support programmes and services for learners experiencing barriers to learning and development. It advocates that support must be infused at all levels of educational organisation i.e. classrooms, schools, districts and provincial offices. These support programmes and services must be provided along a continuum ranging from low to moderate to high levels of provisioning. Thus, the DBST should implement their action plan being guided by the support needed at that particular time.

In the **CHECK** stage the DBST is expected to *assess* the measurements and *report* the results to decision makers regarding what support will be provided and where it will be accessed, and how it will be implemented and monitored. This allows teachers, parents and the SBST to decide whether or not the learner's additional support needs are as initially perceived, and whether or not school or home improvements are needed.

Decision-making around the exact nature and extent of support needed, and to whom or what and how, is the focus of **ACT** stage. Assessment of the level and nature of support needed and responsibilities of each partner, should be recorded which then also serves as a tracking tool to monitor progress. In terms of the support needs, these are classified as in EWP 6: Support packages consist of varying combinations of physical, human, and material resources. These packages may be simple or complex, and they should correspond to the levels of support needed.

In the **ACT** stage the team should *decide on monitoring and evaluation processes to improve the support* (Arveson, 1998). Existing studies reflect that there is no monitoring and evaluation of progress regarding implementation of IE in schools. Thus, DBSTs' experiences with regard to monitoring and evaluation of SIAS implementation should be investigated.

The PDCA model illustrated in Figure 2.2 assumes that just one underlying/root cause will be addressed by testing just one intervention. However, the DBST may decide to address more than one root cause, and/or to test more than one intervention to address the cause/s. The roles and responsibilities of newly appointed DBSTs should

therefore develop from what is already in existence in the system and extend, recognise and enhance this.

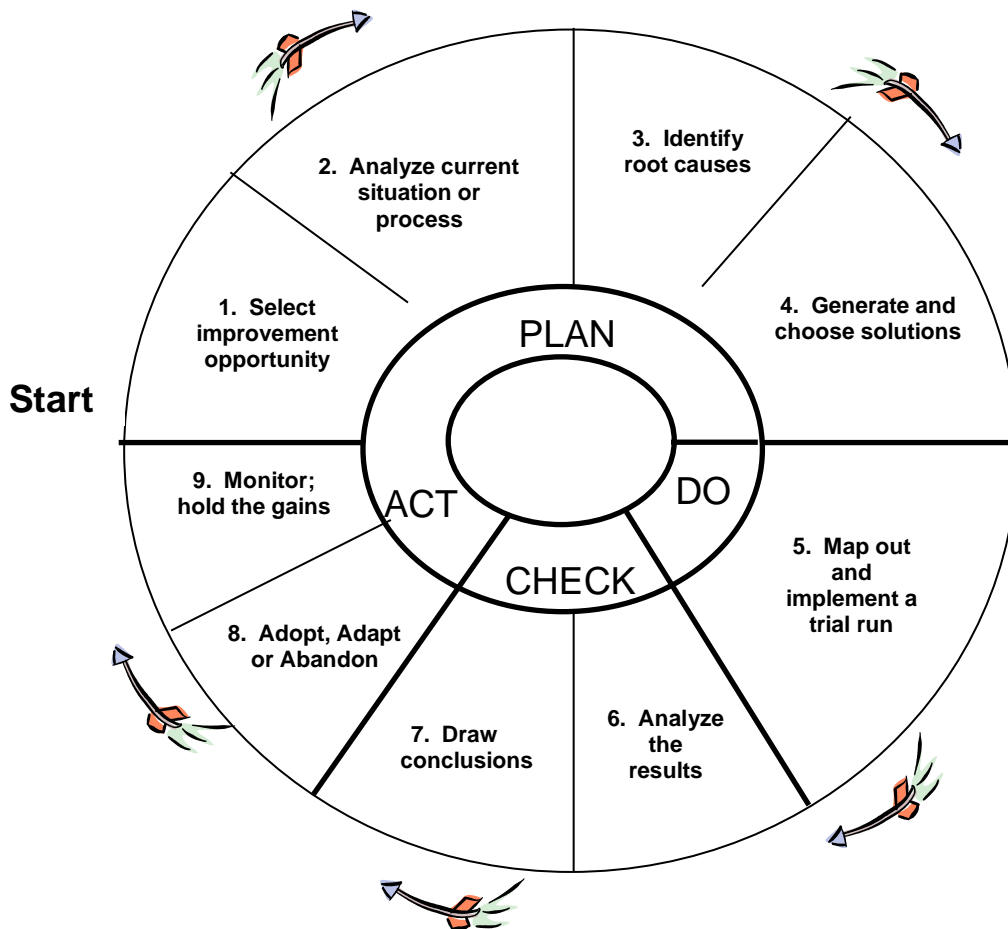


Figure 1.2: The PDCA cycle
 Source: Adapted from Plan-Do-Check-Act Cycle. Porter (2014)

In such instances, it will be important to measure the effect of *each* intervention on the root cause it is intended to address.

2.5. CONCLUSION

Literature on the Deming PDCA cycle theory as well as the DBST effectiveness and improvement has been discussed in this chapter. The chapter highlighted the importance of making use of the PDCA model in supporting DBSTs to improve SIAS policy implementation and in this way support learners experiencing barriers to experience more effective learning in schools. Various perspectives have been

disclosed regarding the PDCA stages in the improvement of team effectiveness as well as the improvement of various processes of policy implementation. The steps and procedures to be followed during the phases were highlighted. The next chapter will focus on the literature reviewed in relation to the study.

CHAPTER 3: DISTRICT SUPPORT FOR SCHOOLS AS PART OF EFFECTIVE SIAS IMPLEMENTATION

3.1. INTRODUCTION

Chapter One gave the background and context of the study. This chapter reviews the literature that is relevant to this study. It is divided into three main sections. The first section focuses on the origin of provisioning of assistance by education support services, the historical background of South African education support services prior to and after 1994, and the way in which education support services were offered, and finally, the policies forcing changes in the education system to accommodate all learners. The second section explains the role-players, their functions and the manner in which DBSTs implement SIAS policy. This section also explores the experiences of DBSTs with regard to SIAS implementation internationally, in other countries and in South Africa. The third section investigates the challenges, successes and elements hampering the implementation and provision of support services in schools and their solutions in implementing SIAS. The chapter ends with a conclusion.

3.2. AN INTERNATIONAL PERSPECTIVE ON INCLUSIVE EDUCATION

Inclusive education is an ongoing struggle for redistribution of access to quality education, recognition and valuing of learner differences and the creation of more opportunities for non-dominant groups (Swart and Pettipher, 2016). Democratic principles including equality and equal access to resources and opportunities underpin the theory of inclusion. As such, IE recognises the imperative of an equitable and quality education system accessible to all and advocates that mainstream schools should accommodate all learners (Swart and Pettipher, 2016).

The movement to IE goes back to the 1960s, with the first global commitment towards EFA being made in Justine, Thailand in 1990. The commitment issued from this conference included 155 countries and representatives from 150 government and non-government organisations (Conway, 2017). A second defining milestone in the development of IE internationally was the Salamanca Statement issued in 1994 in

Salamanca, Spain (UNESCO, 1994). The statement reaffirmed the commitment to EFA. In addition, the statement called on signatory governments to ensure their respective departments of education adopted principles of inclusion offering all children mainstream education. As a follow-up to the Salamanca Statement, the signatory countries including South Africa, again reassembled in Dakar, Senegal in 2000, to reflect on the progress in implementation of the recommendation of the Salamanca statement and the achievement of the goal of EFA, i.e. “Ensuring that children with disabilities receive good quality education in an inclusive environment should be a priority of all countries”. But does a “good quality education” necessarily require an “inclusive environment”? According to IE advocates, the answer is a resounding yes. Separate but equal is never truly equal and whenever possible, children of a similar age should learn together in regular classrooms with age-appropriate classmates, regardless of any disabilities, differences or difficulties (Kim, 2015).

In fact, some advocates have even suggested “segregated education and unequal opportunity of education for children with disabilities amounts to discrimination,” which violates the immediately realisable right of anti-discrimination. Inclusive education, “one of the most acclaimed yet controversial recent developments on the right to education”, is now widely recognised around the world as “an appropriate approach to education for all.” The basic premise is simple: throughout history, certain groups of learners, children with disabilities among them, have been intentionally or unintentionally left out of the education system, and therefore the existing system must expand to include all learners, especially vulnerable and at-risk learners. The education system must be above such discrimination. Beyond this broad, abstract guideline, however, IE has not been defined “consistently or universally,” and distinctions between inclusion and IE are “not clear cut” (DBE, 2015).

The ongoing and current inclusive debates are again shifting towards a balanced view of the interaction between human factors and the environment. Acknowledgement is given to the unique risk factors confronting each individual, but in relationship with the environment. This requires the development of an environment which accommodates these individual risk factors and enables individuals to reach their full potential (Swart

and Pettipher, 2016). The international debates have informed South Africa's path towards inclusion. Inclusive education in South Africa has followed these international trends but differs in the extent of political and philosophical influence. South Africa's journey towards IE is informed by the dismantling of apartheid and the resulting commitment to the protection of human rights and principles of equity and inclusion (Swart and Pettipher, 2016).

3.2.1. Inclusive education in South Africa

Inclusive education can broadly be conceptualised as an education system that accommodates all learner needs by acknowledging the barriers faced by the learner (intrinsic or extrinsic) and meeting these needs to ensure effective learning for all (Ministry of Education and Science Spain, 1994; Stofile, 2008; Inclusion International, 2009; Jacobs, 2015:15). As an international movement towards inclusion and ethics of human dignity and equality, the Salamanca Statement made at the World Conference on Special Needs Education has served as a prominent force behind inclusion in many countries including South Africa (Inclusion International, 2009). The Salamanca Statement proposes a paradigm shift from a medical model of special needs, whereby the problem is within the child, and instead proposes a systems approach which acknowledges the role of the education system, community, parents and other contributing factors which result in barriers to learning (Ministry of Education and Science Spain, 1994).

Barriers to learning are the various factors which may hinder effective learning and these factors may be *intrinsic*, such as physical, mental, or learning disabilities, or *extrinsic*, such as poverty, socio-economic, or family adversity (Stofile, 2008; DoE, 2001). Regardless of the barriers, IE involves amending curricula, teaching strategies, assessment procedures, environment etc. to accommodate and meet learner needs and promote equal access for all (Ministry of Education and Science Spain, 1994; Inclusion International, 2009).

In response to IE, many countries have developed policies and strategies which reach towards context-specific inclusive goals. Full-service school is a strategy that aims to

address a diversity of learning needs and have been adopted within South Africa as well as the United Kingdom (Cummings, 2007; DoE, 2001).

According to the National Development Plan (NDP), November (2011) Implementing Policy on Inclusive Education, as outlined in EWP 6 (2001), is about:

- Transformation of an education system from “special education” and “mainstream education” into one integrated system which embraces justice, equity and quality.
- With the promulgation of the Constitution and the Bill of Rights came a general striving towards equal rights for all learners, along with social justice and dignity after decades of bleak social and education policies that divided people on the basis of race, classifying some groups as superior to others;
- After 20 years of democracy, substantial progress has been made in achieving social justice, equality of access and broadening of support to all learners.
- The education system will play a greater role in building an inclusive society, providing equal opportunities and helping all South Africans to realise their full potential, in particular those previously disadvantaged by apartheid policies, namely black people, women and people with disabilities.
- Provision of IE that enables everyone to participate effectively in a free society. Education provides knowledge and skills that people with disabilities can use to exercise a range of other human rights, such as the right to political participation, the right to work, the right to live independently and contribute to the community, the right to participate in cultural life, and the right to raise a family. Ensuring that all children with disabilities have access to quality education will help South Africa meet its employment equity goals in the long run. For SIAS policy to be effectively implemented involvement of role-players is crucial.

3.3. ORIGIN OF PROVISIONING OF SUPPORT BY EDUCATION SUPPORT SERVICES

One of the core purposes of the DBE is to ensure that the whole system is organised in such a way that there is effective delivery of education and support services to all

learners who experience barriers to learning and development in both public ordinary as well as public special schools (DBE, 2009). Makhalemele (2011:46) states that all learners should have access to support services in education. These services aim at helping people, specifically learners experiencing barriers to learning and development. This kind of support normally takes place in areas of formal education which are known as formal education support services settings. In South Africa, this kind of support service is provided by teams of experts that work together to identify and meet the needs of the learners.

3.3.1. Structural organisation of support services

To facilitate the implementation of IE in South Africa the structures below were suggested by WP6 (DoE, 2001).

3.3.1.1. National level

The roles, responsibilities and communication lines as outlined in the *Framework and Management Plan for the First Phase of Implementation of Inclusive Education* (DoE, 2005b) state that the national will also oversee the implementation of the programme. Landsberg (2005) support the idea that in the execution of its roles and responsibilities, the national DoE in collaboration with all the stakeholders involved in education, is to formulate policy. However, it must be noted that in its execution of the roles assigned to it, the national DoE has approached the implementation from a top-down approach. This approach has the potential to develop a legacy of restrictive centralised control which inhibits change and initiative (DoE, 1998). The national DBE is responsible for implementing the programme and developing the terms of reference for implementation. Service providers are contracted to undertake projects and the national department liaises with programme managers and monitors and evaluates each stage of the programme (DoE, 2005b).

The DBE at national, provincial and district levels have an obligation to monitor all special schools on regular basis and to provide the necessary support. The function of the national DBE is to formulate policy in collaboration with all the stakeholders who

are involved in education. The section in the South African constitution on human rights sets out the fundamental rights of each person in this country. No policy can therefore contradict rights. The *South African Schools Act 9 Act no. 84 Of 1996* makes provision for compulsory education for all and universal admission to public schools. The member (of each province) of the executive council must, where reasonably feasible, provide education for learners who experience barriers to learning at ordinary public schools and also provide relevant educational support service for such learners.

3.3.1.2. Provincial level

The Framework and Management Plan (FMP) states that the provincial education departments' role is to assist through facilitating projects and ensuring that there is appropriate local support (DoE, 2005b). They also need to ensure local buy-in so as to ensure sustainability and deep systemic change. Provincial Does, in their assisting role, assist by following directives from the national DBE. This role should be viewed against the backdrop of potential lack of effective implementation in particular areas of the programme, for example, the dysfunctionality of the DSTBs. Roberts (2011) argues that the challenge in the dysfunction of DBSTs may be as a result of lack of autonomy by provinces to prioritise the implementation of programmes (DoE, 2006a).

3.3.1.3. District level

According to EWP 6 (DoE, 2001) the DSTBs are *groups* of departmental employees whose job it is to promote IE through training, curriculum delivery, distribution of resources, identifying and addressing barriers to learning, leadership and general management.

The DBST is a multi-disciplinary group comprising a school psychologist, occupational therapist and teacher with a fourth departmental employee as the head of the team. Each DBST is assigned a certain amount of schools in their school district with whom they closely work to implement IE (De Winnaar, 2013). There is a management structure at district level, the responsibility of which is to coordinate and promote IE

through: training; curriculum delivery; distribution of resources; infrastructure development; and identification, assessment and addressing of barriers to learning.

The DBSTs must provide leadership and general management to ensure that schools within the district are inclusive centres of learning, care and support. Leadership for the structure must be provided by the senior management in the district that can designate transversal teams to provide support (DBE, 2014). EWP 6 (DoE, 2001) also describes support at district level as being central to the overall strengthening of education support services in South Africa. DBSTs comprise staff from provincial, district and regional offices as well as from existing special schools and Full-Service Schools (FSS). Specialists/professional education officials working in the district support structures include psychologists, specialised and general counsellors, therapists and other health and welfare workers employed by the DBE, and various learning support personnel (for example remedial teachers and facilitators, language and communication teachers, and special needs teachers), departmental officials providing administration, curricular and institutional development support at district level, specialist support and learners who can provide peer support to one another (DoE, 2005a).

One argument that continues to surface in the informal discussions among the departmental officials about the status of the DBSTs is that DBSTs will only be effective once the SIAS strategy is in place. However, the functions of DBSTs are not only confined to the implementation of SIAS, but continue to serve multiple other tasks, such as facilitating referrals of learners for placement in specialised settings, outside the implementation of SIAS, thus they must remain effective throughout (DoE, 2008b). This view on the DBSTs was emphasised by the previous Minister of Education, the Hon. Naledi Pandora in her keynote address at the 48th International Conference on Education on the status of district support (DBE, 2015).

3.4. PROVISION OF EDUCATION SUPPORT SERVICES

Prior to 1994 the provision of support services in education in South African was minimal and unequally provided to different race groups. The availability of resources had great influence on the provision thereof. The limited resources were disproportionately distributed across the different departments, causing the more privileged sectors of society (Whites, for the most part) to receive the best services, while the most disadvantaged sectors (Africans, and those living in rural areas) had little or no access to any support services (NEPI, 1992:13). According to Swart and Pettipher (2009:15), the education support services were reasonably well developed in departments serving Whites, Coloureds and Indians, while they were grossly underdeveloped in departments serving Africans (Makhalemele, 2011:20).

According to the DBE (2014:10) the purpose of SIAS is:

- (1) To provide a policy framework for the standardisation of the procedures to identify, assess and provide programmes for all learners who require additional support to enhance their participation and inclusion in school.
- (2) The SIAS policy is aimed at improving access to quality education for vulnerable learners and those who experience barriers to learning, including:
 - a) Learners in mainstream schools who are failing to learn due to barriers of whatever nature (family disruption, language issues, poverty, learning difficulties, disability, etc.).
 - b) Learners with disabilities in special schools where disability could act as a barrier to their learning.
 - c) Children of compulsory school-going age and youth who may be out of school or have never enrolled in a school due to their disability and other related barriers
- (3) The main focus of the policy is to manage and support teaching and learning processes for learners who experience barriers to learning within the framework of the National Curriculum Statement Grades R –12.
- (4) The policy is closely aligned to the Integrated School Health Policy to establish a seamless system of early identification and effective intervention to minimise learning breakdown and potential dropout.

- (5) The policy directs the system on how to plan, budget and programme support at all levels.
- (6) The policy must further be seen as a key procedure to ensure the transformation of the education system towards an IE system in line with the prescripts of EWP 6 on Special Needs Education: Building an Inclusive Education and Training System (2001).
- (7) Another objective of the policy is to provide clear guidelines on enrolling learners in special schools and settings which also acknowledge the central role played by parents and teachers (EWP 6, p.7).
- (8) The policy includes a protocol as well as a set of official forms to be used in the process of screening, identifying and assessing barriers experienced by learners as well as by teachers and schools with a view to planning the support provision according to programme domains and to monitoring by the DSTB.
- (9) The protocol outlines the role functions of staff appointed in district as well as school structures responsible for planning and provision of support. It also regulates the composition and operations of the key coordinating structures required for the implementation of an IE system, namely SBSTs and DSTBs which are transversal structures aimed at rationalising and maximising support provision at school and district level.
- (10) The Policy on SIAS aligns with other DBE strategies which aim to support teachers, managers, districts and parents in schools.

3.5. SOUTH AFRICAN EDUCATION SUPPORT SERVICES PRIOR TO 1994

Prior to 1994, the education support services in South Africa were combining both a preventative and curative approach even though they were more aligned to an individualistic clinical approach. Thus, deficits were not seen to be in the education system, but within the learners. Furthermore, not all schools were provided with support services and in those schools where provision was available, it was not equal. For the purpose of this study, the history of organisational structure and provision of education support services will be discussed.

During the apartheid era, the education system in South Africa was segregated according to race, with different education departments administering schools for the different races. For instance, in the Western Cape (the then Cape Province) there was the Cape Provincial Department of Education which ran White schools, House of Representatives Education Department ran Coloured schools and Department of Education and Training ran schools for Black students (DBE, 2010).

3.6. DISTRICT SUPPORT FOR SCHOOLS IN POST-APARTHEID SOUTH AFRICA

Since 1994, one of the central foci of the transformation process from an apartheid society to a democratic society in South Africa has been the emergence and development of a new education policy which includes all learners (Lomofsky and Lazarus, 2001:303). The 1994 democratic elections marked an end to the apartheid education system and ushered in new changes. These changes included, among other things, the creation of a single education system and the development of a policy that is committed to human rights and social justice (Mnatwana, 2014:1).

The research conducted by Bantwini and Diko (2011) confirms that with the advent of democracy in 1994, new provinces were established and all schools were controlled by the provincial governments under one system of education. The provinces were tasked with the responsibility of managing primary and secondary education, including government schools, Further Education and Training colleges and adult basic education and oversight of independent schools followed (UNESCO, 2010). In 1996 the new constitution of the Republic of South Africa set the pace for the new dispensation that was totally against discrimination of any person on the grounds of his/her race, gender, age, disability, religion or language. The provincial districts were amalgamated and re-demarcated to allow a system of education that was more inclusive than exclusive. In the new dispensation, the DBE district offices were tasked with supporting schools with the aim of improving the quality of teaching and learning.

“The decision to establish the present districts was also based on the need to take education closer to schools and communities” (DBE, 2009). However, it seems there

are different ways in which different provinces operate their district offices. The concept district office is still very slippery in the SA education system. This means that education district office means different things to different provinces. In other provinces, education district office means the management of schools and ensuring the implementation of policies in schools.

The provision of education for learners with disabilities has been part of that process and the development of an IE system that can be traced back to the nation's founding document, the *Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, Act No. 108 of 1996* (Republic of South Africa 1996). In Section 29 (the Bill of Rights) it is stated that everyone has the right to "a basic education, including basic adult education; and to further education, which the state through reasonable measures must make progressively available and accessible." It further states that the state may not discriminate directly or indirectly against anyone on one or more grounds, including disability (Dalton, McKenzie and Kahonde, 2012:3). In the Western Cape for instance, the education district offices are mandated to manage education at local level. Policy and planning are handled by the provincial DoE (Western Cape DoE, 2009). District directors are responsible for ensuring quality of education and of educational institutions within a district.

In Western Cape there are 49 circuit team managers who assist district directors in enabling schools to provide quality education (Bantwini and Diko, 2011). The operations in the district office are such that assessment coordinators report to curriculum heads who are members of district management teams. The provincial assessment director liaises directly with the eight assessment coordinators who are based at district offices and responsible for managing the implementation of assessment policies at district level. The assessment director, other assessment officials based at the head office and the eight district coordinators form the provincial assessment committee. Districts also have similar committees, which include the district assessment coordinator as well as the General Education and Training (GET) and Further Education and Training (FET) coordinators. District assessment coordinators do not work directly with curriculum advisors, who are also qualified assessors. They work closely with phase coordinators who are responsible for

supervising curriculum advisors. Curriculum advisors account to their phase coordinators for curriculum delivery and for assessment related matters. District assessment committees manage the implementation of assessment, monitoring and evaluation (DBE, 2012). The organisational structure of education district differs from province to province.

3.6.1. The NCSNET/NCESS

The National Commission on Special Needs in Education and Training (NCSNET) and the National Committee on Education Support Services (NCESS) were appointed in October 1996 to investigate and make recommendations on all aspects of “special needs and support services” in education and training in South Africa (DoE, 1997:1-3). The vision of the NCSNET and the NCESS was to have an education and training system that supported education for all and accepts the development of inclusive and supportive centres of learning, where all learners can actively participate in the educational process, develop to their full potential and be involved as equal members of the society (DoE 1997:10). The NCSNET and the NCESS published their final report: Quality Education for All: Overcoming Barriers to Learning and Development, in November 1997 (International Journal of Education Sciences, 2015).

Makhalemele (2011:27) points out that the other force of appropriate support for learners experiencing barriers to learning was brought about by the reports of the NCSNET and NCESS that were published in 1997. These reports contained the results and proposals aimed at creating an education system that recognises and addresses (by removing and preventing) barriers to learning and development. Researchers such as Green (2008:12) and Swart and Pettipher (2009:17) agree that the NCSNET and NCESS reports specifically contributed to an understanding of the nature and extent of barriers to learning within South Africa and the use of acceptable and respectful terminology. In the reports the following were highlighted:

- Under the apartheid education system education for learners who experienced learning difficulties and learners with disabilities was called ‘special education’. These learners were called ‘learners with special education needs.

- Special education and support services had been provided mainly for a small number of learners with 'special education needs' in 'special classes' in ordinary schools or in 'special schools.
- Special education and support services were provided on a racial basis, with the best resources going to the White learners.
- Most learners with disabilities were either not in special schools, or had never been to a school. A few were in ordinary schools that could not properly meet their needs.
- In general, the curriculum and the education system had failed to respond to the many different needs of learners. This caused large numbers of learners to drop out of school, or be pushed-out of school, or to fail at school.

3.6.2. Policies forcing changes in the education system to accommodate all learners

Along with the changes in the political and economic sphere in South Africa over the last decade, there has also been a shift towards a more democratic education system. The foundation for these changes has been laid by the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa and has important implications for education and the concept of IE.

3.6.2.1. The Constitution

The relevant clauses in the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa are those that contain principles of basic rights, equality and non-discrimination. The aim is to rectify the divisions of the past and establish a society based upon democratic values, social justice and fundamental human rights. This also entails the acceptance of an IE policy that will ensure optimum provision for and inclusion of the full spectrum of educational needs within a single education system. Learners with special educational needs in an inclusive classroom are no longer regarded as the responsibility of a particular person outside the classroom, but of all teachers (Makhalemele, 2011:26).

Educational support services such as DBSTs need to make a paradigm shift in supporting SBSTs who are school-based and whose function is to support teachers to

assist learners who experience barriers to learning. In the learning process teachers play a distinctive role and if they do not function effectively this could form a barrier to learning. Teachers have certain skills and abilities to assist learners who experience barriers to learning and these needs to be developed, as educational support services are not in a position to assist teachers and learners individually (Makhalemele, 2011:27). As the implementation of the inclusive policy is inevitable, it is of the utmost importance to determine the needs of educators and how to support them to effectively assist learners experiencing barriers to learning (Mary Anne, 2005).

Provisions in the Constitution also ensure that all citizens, including learners who experience barriers to learning and development, have access to all other fundamental rights such as the right to human dignity, the right to equality before the law, the right to just administrative action, the right to access of information, the right to language and culture and other rights. It is imperative that in building a new system of education which will meet the needs of all learners and accommodate diversity, respect for all these fundamental rights should form the basis of all policy and legislation (DoE, 1997).

3.6.2.2. The South African Schools Act

The South African Schools Act (SASA) (84/1996) was promulgated and completely opposes unfair discrimination at schools. In most schools, learners experiencing barriers to learning are discriminated against (Makhalemele, 2011:32). SASA section 5 (1) boldly states that a public school must admit learners and serve their educational requirements without unfair discrimination in any way. In terms of curbing discrimination against the assistive device and special learning support, the schools are encouraged to make their facilities accessible to learners who need them and also to make necessary arrangements if the school cannot meet the needs of such learners.

3.6.2.3. The White Paper 6 on Integrated National Disability Strategy

In the White Paper on an Integrated National Disability Strategy, strategies for access to the curriculum for learners with impairments are emphasised (Swart and Pettipher, 2009:16). This policy document also emphasises the right of all learners, specifically learners with a disability, to appropriate quality education. Stofile and Green (2009:53) and Swart and Pettipher (2009:16) believe that the policy document stresses and supports a paradigm shift from a medical model of disability to a socio-critical model that is based on the principle that society must change to accommodate the diverse needs of its entire population.

3.6.2.4 The White Paper 6 on Special Needs Education: Building an Inclusive Education and Training system

In 2001, the DoE issued a framework policy document called White Paper 6: Special Needs Education, Building an Inclusive Education and Training System (EWP 6). The document was a response to the post-apartheid state approach to special needs and support services in education and training. Two main findings were that only a small percentage of learners with disabilities were receiving specialised education and support, usually on a racial basis, and that the education system had generally failed to provide services appropriate to the diverse needs of learners. For most learners with disabilities, this meant they were 'mainstreamed by default' or that they did not attend school at all. The number of children with disabilities out of school at that time was estimated at 280 000 (DoE, 2001).

To address these problems, it was recommended that the system be changed to an inclusive one where all learners can access education and training no matter what their individual needs are. This change would permit all children, including children with disabilities, to 'develop and extend their potential and participate as equal members of society.' EWP 6 brings about new terminology such as full-service schools and DSTBs. A full-service school is an ordinary school which is specially equipped to assist students with barriers to learning within the mainstream school system (DBE,

2010). A DSTB introduces strategies and interventions that will assist educators in the mainstream school system to cope with a diversity of learning and teaching needs.

With the publication of EWP 6 (2001), the government announced an ambitious commitment to IE. As early as 2002, the government was experimenting with teacher training on an isolated preliminary trial basis and reporting on the results. The government then reaffirmed and solidified its commitment to IE with the Draft National Strategy on Screening, Identification, Assessment and Support (“Draft SIAS Policy 2005”), then followed up with Draft SIAS Policy 2014 (DBE, 2014). According to Kim (2015:17) the new SIAS Policy 2014 pushes these deadlines back even further. Its 2015-2019 implementation plan lists very similar, if not identical, goals: train Foundation Phase teachers, managers and provincial and district officials on the policy and its implementation by 2016; finalise funding and post-provisioning norms by 2016; train 20,000 members of SBSTs in 5,000 ordinary schools by 2017; train an additional 20,000 members of SBSTs in 5,000 ordinary schools by 2018; train an additional 20,000 members of SBSTs in 5,000 more ordinary schools by 2019; and so on (Kim, 2015:17).

EWP 6 and the work that has been done since 2001 represents an important shift in South African policy towards education of children with disabilities. However, progress in making the policy a reality has been slow and not consistent across learner groups or geographic areas. As noted in EWP 6, belief in and support of IE is not enough to ensure that it will work in practice. Effective implementation of all aspects of the policy is needed in order to ensure that by 2021 all South African children with disabilities can access the education and training they need and that EWP 6 describes (ECWD 2013).

The implementation of EWP 6 (2001) is now in its 17th year of the proposed 20-year implementation trajectory. In South Africa, IE as outlined in EWP 6 (2001) is about:

- Transformation of an education system which has previously been divided into ‘special education’ and ‘mainstream education’ into one integrated system which embraces equity and quality; and

- Acceptance of equal rights for all learners and social justice; and transforming the education system to effectively respond to and support learners, parents and communities by promoting the removal of barriers to learning and participation in that education system in an incremental manner.

According to the DBE (2015: 7), EWP 6 makes the following provisions for the implementation of IE:

- Building capacity in all education departments;
- Establishing and capacitating transversal District-Based Support Teams (DBSTs);
- Establishing and capacitating School-Based Support Teams (SBSTs);
- Strengthening special schools to deliver quality education and support in a specific area of specialisation and to become resource centres (SSRCs);
- Identifying, designating and establishing Full-Service Schools (FSSs);
- Establishing mechanisms for the early identification of learning difficulties using the Policy on Screening, Identification, Assessment and Support (SIAS);
- Developing professional capacity of all educators in curriculum development and assessment e.g. curriculum differentiation; and
- Mobilising public support; and developing an appropriate funding strategy.

3.6.2.5 Screening, identification and support

In 2001, with EWP 6, the DoE set out to implement in an incremental way the main elements of an IE system of which the SIAS is one. The SIAS, like other key strategies of the policy, aims to respond to the needs of all learners in the country, particularly those who are vulnerable and most likely to be marginalised and excluded (DoE, 2001).

The South African education system has put in place various support structures and services in the district and circuit teams of the education department. Their role is to provide support to educators and schools with the ultimate goal of meeting the full range of learners' needs. Unfortunately, in many education districts these teams are not adequately supporting the schools or the educators. Educators receive conflicting

and confusing messages regarding a curriculum and assessment standard which frustrates their ability to manage the diversity in their classrooms. Education officials themselves have varied understanding and perspectives regarding IE which further exacerbates the situation (Makheleme, 2011:45). Educators remain unfamiliar with and inexperienced in utilising the strategies that have been developed by the DBE to support the implementation of IE such as SIAS. SIAS is seen as an additional administrative burden and not a useful tool. Educators with the proper training, skills, attitude and curriculum support are needed to deliver quality education to all children (DBE, 2010).

3.6.2.6. Education support services at district level

Since this study explores the experiences of DBSTs with regard to SIAS implementation in the KwaZulu-Natal, it is necessary first to give a brief historical background of district offices before 1994. District offices as they are now, are a level of government a little above the school. After the introduction of apartheid in 1948 the then government of the Republic of South Africa took a statutory position in which education was provided within racial boundaries (DBE, 2010) to serve perceived race-based skills and needs of the society as constructed in their interests. The education system was based on a national socialist philosophy which promulgated racial purity and racialised the education system in a manner that kept black education inferior (DoE, 2007).

3.4.2.7. Different approaches regarding support

The NCSNET/NCESS report, together with policies such as the White Paper on Education and Training in a Democratic South Africa (1995), The South African Schools Act (84/1996), the White Paper on an Integrated National Disability Strategy (1997b) and EWP 6 (DoE, 2001), promoted a two-pronged, three-tier approach to supporting schools and other educational institutions. The focus of the two-pronged approach centred on:

- Interventions aimed at facilitating transformation of the institutions and curriculum through addressing the barriers to learning and development, and the diverse needs of the learners; and
- Adequate provision of additional support to learners throughout or at some point in their learning.

Besides the above approach, a three-tiered approach introduced:

- Competencies of all sections of national and provincial departments to address diversity and barriers to learning and development, providing the framework for service delivery at district and learning-site level;
- DBSTs with the primary responsibility of developing the capacity of learning sites to understand and address diversity and barriers to learning and development; and
- SBSTs with the responsibility of managing the process of addressing barriers to learning and development at local level (Donald, Lazarus and Lolwana, 2008:52).

The purpose of these approaches was mainly to make use of an integrated approach that utilises all the relevant human and physical resources to support schools to address barriers. Furthermore, it was expected that members of the community be involved in drawing up local and indigenous resources in order to provide support. Donald, Lazarus and Lolwana (2008:52) strongly argue that a community-based approach is a central feature of the support system envisaged for South Africa. Thus, support of schools and other sites of learning is expected to be provided by natural support systems, volunteers, parents and non-governmental organisations.

Support must also be shown by teachers, as well as by peers. Donald, Lazarus and Lolwana (2008:53) emphasise the sharing of human and material resources between schools and other sites of learning as an important aspect of community support, and the utilisation of professional support services from district teams and other government departments.

3.6.2.8. Barriers to learning and development

The DoE (DoE, 2005) refers to barriers to learning as those factors which hinder teaching and learning. These can and do occur at all levels of the system and include:

- Factors relating to specific *individuals*. In the education system this refers specifically to *learners* (e.g. relating to specific learning needs and styles) and *educators* (e.g. personal factors as well as teaching approaches and attitudes);
- Various aspects of the *curriculum* such as: content, language or medium of instruction, organisation and management in the classroom, methods and processes used in teaching, the pace of teaching and time available, learning materials and equipment, and assessment procedures;
- The physical and psychosocial *environment* within which teaching and learning occurs. This includes buildings as well as management styles;
- Dynamics and conditions relating to the learner's *home environment*, including issues such as family dynamics, cultural and socio-economic background, socio-economic status, and so on; and
- *Community* and *social dynamics*, which either support or hinder teaching (Makhalemele, 2011:36).

3.6.3. The District Based Support Team

EWP 6 (2001), has the following to say about the development of DBSTs: The DoE commits itself to:

The establishment of district-based support teams to provide a coordinated professional support service that draws on expertise in further and higher education and local communities, targeting special schools and specialised settings, designated full-service and other primary schools and educational institutions, beginning with the 30 districts that are part of the national district development programme.

The Ministry believes that the key to reducing barriers to learning within all education and training lies in a strengthened education support service. This strengthened education support service will have, at its centre, new district-based support teams that

will comprise staff from provincial, district, regional and head offices and from special schools.

Education support personnel within district support services will be orientated to and trained in their new roles of providing support to all teachers and other educators. Training will focus on supporting all learners, educators and the system as a whole for the full range of learning needs. The focus will be on teaching and learning factors, and emphasis will be placed on the development of good teaching strategies that will be of benefit to all learners; on overcoming barriers in the system that prevent it from meeting the full range of learning needs; and on adaptation of support systems available in the classroom. The key challenges for the development of district-based support teams include establishing new district-based support teams where they do not currently exist;

- Developing and strengthening existing district-based support teams;
- Integrating the special school's/resource centres into these teams, and drawing the growing expertise from the full-service institutions into the support provision network creating a pool of resource people to serve local sites of learning;
- Drawing on a broad range of 'community resources' to provide the support needed;
- Developing and supporting institutional-level support teams, schools and other learning sites;
- Developing the capacity of members of district and school-based support teams as well as the special/resource schools to identify barriers to learning, and to develop and evaluate strategies to address these challenges. This includes moving away from a way of seeing and responding to problems that focus on the learner only, towards one that tries to understand and respond to problems from a broader 'systems' view. This acknowledges that problems and solutions can be located at different points in a system
- Developing the capacity of all support service providers to provide a holistic and comprehensive support service, including the ability to 'work together' in coordinated and collaborative ways. This involves moving from a currently fragmented, uncoordinated approach to an integrated one that brings together the different role-players to understand and address barriers to learning.

The implementation of IE policy is undoubtedly the responsibility of all stakeholders involved in the school as well as the community in which it exists.

The enhancement of collaboration between support structures will be determined by the involvement of all role-players.

3.7. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF ROLE-PLAYERS

3.7.1. Class teacher

According to the SIAS policy (DBE, 2014) the first level of intervention is to provide teacher-developed classroom-based interventions to address the support needs of identified learners. When a learner has been identified through the initial screening as being vulnerable or at-risk, it is the responsibility of the teacher to assume the role of a case manager, driving and coordinating the support process. Le Roux (2013) recommends that it is, first of all, the responsibility of the class teacher to gather information and identify learners at risk of learning breakdown and/or school dropout. The parent/caregiver and the learner (from the age of 12 as far as possible) must be involved throughout in the decision-making process of the SIAS. The teacher will be guided by the SIAS forms, starting with the completion of the Support Needs Assessment form 1 (SNA1). The school needs assessment form 1 (SNA 1) is used to plan and record support. Once the class teacher has exhausted all strategies and support options, a referral to the SBSTs must be made. Once the barrier has been identified, the teacher should develop an ISP which is monitored and reviewed after a certain period. Stakeholders which include the SBST, class teacher, parent and the learner should form part of the ISP development.

3. INDIVIDUAL SUPPORT PLAN (COMPLETED BY CLASS TEACHER AND SBST)

List the areas) in which the support needs to be provided: Communication; Learning; Behaviour and social competence; Health, Wellness and personal care; Classroom and school; Family, home and community; Teacher development/training, etc. (See SHAA)

Areas) in which support is needed	Target to be achieved	Strategy of intervention (If the learner needs concessions, or is an immigrant who needs exemptions, use Annexure B If a medical condition must be investigated by a medical or other specialist, use Annexure D)	Responsible person	Time frame	Review date (to assess achievement of the target)	Comment on progress made in achieving target(s)
Eg. Behaviour and social competence	Stop bullying behaviour	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assign a mentor teacher to support learner Place learner during assembly Review school conduct policy Call in the parent/guardian 	Principal	Within a week	15 April 20...	

Figure: 3.1 Individual support plan (ISP) form

Source: Adapted from: Alternative and Adaptive methods of Assessment for Learners Experiencing Barriers to Learning Manual: Suid Afrikaanse Onderwyse Unie (Le Roux, 2013).

3.7.2. School-Based Support Team

School-Based Support Teams are teams established by schools as a school-level support mechanism, whose primary function is to put coordinated school, learner and teacher support in place. Leadership for the SBST is provided by the school principal to ensure that the school becomes an inclusive centre of learning, care and support. Le Roux (2013) asserts that the role and responsibilities of the SBST are:

- To respond to teachers’ requests for assistance with support plans for learners experiencing barriers to learning.
- To review teacher-developed support plans, gather any additional information required, and provide direction and support in respect of additional strategies, programmes, services and resources to strengthen the ISP.

- c. Where necessary, request assistance from the DBST to enhance ISPs or support their recommendation for the placement of a learner in a specialised setting.
- d. Fill in the SNA 2.
- e. Where high-level support at school level cannot be organised in any practical and cost-effective way, the DBST is the next level to provide additional support. The SBST should provide the DBST with evidence of support provided to the learner school level. The SBST should always involve and inform the parent about decisions taken to support the learner. The DBST should establish what kind of support is needed by the SBST in order to support the learner, what the strength of the SBST is and explore ways in which additional support can be obtained, and also assist the SBST to recognise further community-based support and facilitate collaboration (DBE, 2014).

3.7.3. District-Based Support Team

A district-based support team is a management structure at district level, of which the responsibility is to coordinate and promote IE through: training; curriculum delivery; distribution of resources; infrastructure development; identification, assessment and addressing of barriers to learning (DBE, 2014). The DBST must provide leadership and general management to ensure that schools within the district are inclusive centres of learning, care and support. Once the district-based support team receives the SNA 1 and SNA 2 from the school, they then need to: identify learners for outplacement into specialised settings, e.g. special schools, to access specialised support services attached to ordinary or full-service schools or to access high-level outreach support

The DBST forms a key component in the successful implementation of an IE support system. This policy gives an overview of the role functions of DBSTs with regard to the management of the SIAS process as a measure to establish such a support system. The policy is for all support staff in the DBST, including curriculum and school managers, human resource planning and development coordinators, social workers, therapists, psychologists and other health professionals, working within the school

system. The policy is binding in terms of decision-making around any form of support-provisioning to learners, schools and teachers (DBE, 2014).

3.7.4. Parents

Masha (2017:31) reveals that the KwaZulu-Natal Department of Education (KZN DBE) (2012:23) draft document Curriculum Management and Delivery Strategy points out that “education is a social phenomenon. Parents and community involvement play a vital role in learners’ academic success. The shared responsibility translates into a child who is developed holistically”, has good character, good results, good morals, healthy ambitions etc. Schools have particular responsibility for engaging parents and community in improving learner performance (Masha, 2017:31). The parents play an important role in the identification and support of their child.

The SIAS (2014) policy outlines the responsibility of parents/caregivers as being the following:

- a. Parents/caregivers need to take responsibility for the support of their children in the most inclusive setting possible.
- b. Parents/caregivers should be empowered to understand how the potential of their child can be optimally developed.
- c. They need access to information on the kinds of support needed by their child.
- d. They must know their rights in terms of accessing available support.
- e. Parents/caregivers must make every effort to ensure that their child has access to an appropriate early-intervention programme which is available in their area.
- f. Parents/caregivers who suspect that their child has additional support needs, but has not accessed early-intervention programmes prior to the child turning 3 years old, must report to the local ordinary school as early as possible but no later than the age of 5 years.
- g. They must ensure that the relevant sections of the support needs assessment are completed in respect of the child’s needs.
- h. Documentation to be included in the child’s application for support needs assessment may consist of any appropriate reports such as social or medical

records, the Health and Disability Assessment Form, or reports from early intervention support providers.

- i. The local school must complete the relevant forms in consultation with the parent/caregiver.
- j. Parents/caregivers must play a meaningful role in forming a partnership with the teacher to ensure that the support outlined in the ISP is successfully implemented.
- k. Parent/caregiver participation in the SIAS process is not a matter of choice, but is compulsory.

3.7.5. Learners

The learning needs, social relationships and emotional growth of learners need to be considered when decisions are made about the site where they are to receive additional support. Such decisions cannot be made without consulting the learners themselves. The learner (from the age of 12 as far as possible) must be involved throughout in the decision-making process of the SIAS. For learners who are minor and are below the age of 12, parental consent is required (DBE, 2014). Where possible, explicit consent needs to be obtained if the information held is sensitive. Explicit consent can be oral or written. Written consent is preferable, e.g. through a signature on the SNA Forms. If there is ongoing contact, the consent should be reviewed regularly.

3.8. INTERNATIONAL LITERATURE ON SCREENING, IDENTIFICATION AND SUPPORT FOR LEARNERS EXPERIENCING BARRIERS TO LEARNING

Different countries use different terms to refer to department of education officials – ‘superintendents of education’, ‘school advisors’, ‘school managers and ‘school inspectors. Purely for convenience, they will collectively be referred to as district-based support teams (DBSTs). The experiences of DBSTs regarding IE have not been as comprehensively researched as other stakeholders namely principals, educators, learners and parents. The South African SIAS policy forms the basis on which IE is built and provides guidelines regarding early identification of learners’ strengths and

weaknesses, correct assessment strategies of the nature and extent of the barriers that learners may be experiencing, and effective design and implementation of individualised support plans for these learners (DoE, 2008:88).

In some countries like Vietnam, classroom teachers are supported by a network of IE coordinators or specialist teachers whose only job is to provide special support to both classroom teachers and learners with disabilities. They collaborate with regular school staff to provide technical counselling in lesson planning and provide direct support to students and teachers (Catholic Relief Services, 2010:17). By so doing, identification and support of learners with learning difficulties is not a great challenge.

Since 1984, the State of Georgia has been implementing its commitment to a federal district court instruction which required a student support team (SST) in every public school. Its function is to provide a problem-solving team to prevent inappropriate referrals to special education, and to prevent unnecessary removal of students from general education, especially Georgia's minority students, in disproportionate numbers. In 2004 Georgia increased its focus on providing high quality research-based instruction, interventions, and data driven practices to help all students succeed in the general education curriculum. This reinforced the legitimacy and vitality of what has become known as Response to Intervention (RTI). In that framework, SST is now part of a system of four tiers of support in Georgia, collectively referred to as the Georgia Pyramid of Interventions (Barge, 2011:3). The process of teachers changing their instruction based on how well the students respond to it is known as "Response to Intervention", and has steadily become the national model for successfully reaching students when they are just beginning to fall behind expected benchmarks and providing appropriate supports and interventions at increasing levels of intensity. This can prevent the rapid decay of learning desire that comes when a student senses it may be impossible for them to catch up with the class (Barge, 2011: 3).

In most American states there are several possible reasons for the decline in learning difficulties (National Centre for Learning Disability, 2014:13). The expansion of and attention to early childhood education, including universal preschool and the use of early screenings and diagnostic evaluations to support school readiness, is

increasingly common. Improvements have been made in reading instruction provided in general education, making reading difficulties a characteristic of most students classified as having learning difficulties less prevalent. In the nation's elementary schools there is a dramatic shift in the way in which a learning difficulty (LD) is identified. Changes made to the 2004 version of Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) and its 2006 regulations required all states to develop new criteria for LD identification and eliminate the requirement for an "ability versus achievement" discrepancy. As a result, states have developed a variety of ways to identify LDs. Many include the use of RTI, which might result in greater numbers of struggling students receiving early assistance in general education and ultimately reducing the need for special education classification (National Center for Learning Disabilities, 2014:13).

3.9. SCREENING, IDENTIFICATION AND SUPPORT FOR SCHOOLS IN SELECTED COUNTRIES OF THE WORLD

It is estimated that the majority of the world's population of people with disabilities live in developing countries of Africa, Asia, Latin America, Caribbean and the Middle East, some 150 million of them being children, but less than two per cent are receiving any form of support service. Thus, successful implementation of IE could increase the number of those with disabilities receiving educational support and other services in DCs. Evidence, however, indicates that IE is not being satisfactorily implemented in most DCs. Factors such as the absence of support services, relevant materials, inadequate personnel training programmes, lack of funding structure and the absence of enabling legislation are the major problems of effective implementation of IE in these countries (Inclusive Education in Developing Countries, 2018).

3.9.1. Developed Countries

In Scotland, an overarching category termed "additional support needs" is used to record children who require extra support (Donald and Iona, 2014). This was introduced alongside the presumption of general education for most children with disabilities. This focus on inclusion has led to significant numbers of learners with disabilities in general education classrooms. Scotland is not unique in this respect,

and analogous trends are apparent across Europe and the United States. Evidence shows positive outcomes for inclusion in general education, including better grades, improved opportunities for social engagement and enhanced development of life skills. Benefits for typically developing children in inclusive settings are also identified. A rights-based argument that inclusion in general education is an entitlement for all learners is a strong consideration. Definitions of inclusive practice are broader than placement, however, reflecting issues of acceptance, participation, equality and social relationships. This understanding of inclusion focusses not only on increasing the participation of learners with disabilities, but also on the changes required by schools regarding staff behaviours, environments, routines and structures (Donald and Iona, 2014).

Teachers have embraced the challenges of meeting the wide range of learners' needs, but often wonder how to best go about this task. They are looking for ideas to help them simultaneously teach students who excel, those who learn at an average pace, and those who learn differently (Kirk, Gallagher and Anastasiow, 2008). Clearly, no simple answers exist. However, it is helpful to focus on fundamental principles for creating and sustaining learning spaces in which all students can succeed (Catholic Education Commission of Victoria, 2014: 9). Different countries use different terms to refer to Department of Education officials – superintendents of education, school advisors, school managers and school inspectors.

In a study to determine the perceptions and beliefs of regular and special school administrators and teachers regarding the provision of services to students, including at-risk learners and students with disabilities in Georgia, United States of America, the researcher found that special education directors most strongly agree with the IE concept. These authors reason that because the directors are closest to policy formulation and advocacy and therefore are more attuned to the legal and policy ramifications of IE, they therefore support the theoretical concept of IE (Mathopa, 2007:61).

3.9.2. Developing Countries

In 2010 the Cambodian Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport conducted a study indicated that a significant number of “disabled” children not receiving an education in Cambodia were suffering from easily treatable ailments such as hearing loss caused by an infection (Logan, 2014). Many others merely needed glasses to improve their vision. If disabled children do have access to education, often teachers lack the appropriate training necessary to accommodate their disability. Children with disabilities are proven to be more likely to drop out of school than any other vulnerable group. Not only is there a lack of resources, many cultures in developing countries marginalise disabled children from society, making them extremely vulnerable and more likely to experience discrimination. Children with special needs are more susceptible to abuse, neglect and exploitation than children without disabilities.

The good news is that the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities is moving disabilities up the international agenda. In fact, one of the United Nations International Children’s Emergency Fund’s main goals is to enhance the development and inclusion of children with disabilities, allowing for their increased access to health and education services. The United Nations International Children’s Emergency Fund (2015) has recommended improved screening tools to help schools identify disabilities early and understand how to help children, rather than exclude them. A 10-question screen has been developed in order to identify children early on who are at increased risk for disability. Many countries lack the resources to provide comprehensive, diagnostic evaluations of children screening positive for a disability. This hinders a school’s ability to determine that child’s specific medical, rehabilitation and educational needs (Logan, 2014).

There are many challenges teachers face regarding adequate support for implementing IE in primary schools in Tanzania (Chaula, 2014:12). There is poor collaboration and interaction among teachers, students and parents, which makes implementation of IE very challenging. Teachers need parents’ support in doing their work. In most cases teachers are unwilling to involve parents in school matters. There is lack of proper knowledge regarding inclusion. Most teachers in primary schools lack

the knowledge of IE that makes it difficult for them to implement it. Lack of adequate knowledge makes them fail to adapt inclusion. If the teacher lacks the inclusive knowledge, he or she may face another problem of poor classroom management. There is lack of awareness among teachers, parents and guardians regarding IE. This is because in Tanzania inclusion has not been advocated very much so it is difficult to implement it. This means that most teachers do not discover the uniqueness of their learners which could help them to help the learners based on their uniqueness (Chaula, 2014:12).

The Tanzanian government is committed to working to identify the needs of each child with disabilities and to create an individualised education plan with appropriate accommodations and adaptations as necessary. This is made clear in Tanzania's 2002 National Policy on Disability. The policy also advocates for the training of educators and other service providers so that they can be comfortable and competent with the identification of children with disabilities. However, there is a discrepancy between rhetoric and reality (Thompson, 2017).

Tanzania's 2002 National Policy on Disability makes it clear that educators and other service providers should be trained to identify each student's unique learning and developmental needs and create an individualised education plan with appropriate accommodations and adaptations as necessary. The policy indicates that Tanzania is committed to providing individualised, appropriate education and support to students and other citizens with disabilities. Tanzania is also committed to improving the skills training offered in vocational training centres so that they are more effective at preparing people with disabilities to work independently (Thompson, 2017).

The Uganda Inclusive Education programme aims to increase enrolment of visually impaired students in Uganda by 25 per cent by 2016. Sight Savers (World Health Organisation, 2014) supports the programme by supplying equipment, assistive devices and Braille machines, as well as specialised training for teachers. The programme proves that visually impaired children can thrive and have the confidence to achieve anything their sighted peers can, with the right support "Inclusive education offers mutual understanding and removal of any potential stigma attached to special

needs. We need to realise that there are millions of children out of education simply because they have a disability (World Health Organisation, 2014).

In Botswana teachers in regular schools refuse to admit learners with disabilities fearing that they may lower the mean score for the class since teacher performance is evaluated in terms of mean score achieved in the final exam (Mundi, 2012:6). The teachers do not appreciate the learners with hearing impairment; they look at them as failures and they fear that the school mean score may drop. Other difficulties experienced by teachers in regular schools is not having enough knowledge on how to handle learners with disabilities hence some children withdraw from school. The children need appreciation, when ignored they tend to withdraw and close up. The teachers noted that the students with impairment are very enthusiastic to learn if proper attention and text books are given. The teachers who had integrated learners with hearing impairment argued that the learners in integrated schools are already facing problems; they lack enough trained teachers, and many cannot follow the adapted programme. Where integration is taking place, the regular teachers kept referring the learners to the special education teacher. Other challenges are the inadequate finance to purchase facilities and adapt the school environment. There are few trained teachers and the existing cultural beliefs that exist limits enrolment and involvement (Mundi, 2012:6).

According to Mukhopadhyay, Molosiwa and Moswela (2009), a favourable attitude towards learners with disabilities plays an important role in the implementation of IE. Unfortunately, many teachers in Botswana fail to demonstrate a favourable attitude and complain about the deficit of the learners. On reflection, the Special Education teachers recognise that the majority of them are not well recognised and lack skills required for inclusive classroom settings.

A South African and an American study discovered that DBSTs who were supervisors of special education displayed positive attitudes towards IE (Mathopa, 2007:61). In an investigation of the management of inclusion in Free State (South Africa) primary schools found that other DBSTs were very positive about inclusion. They perceived it to be the most appropriate system for bringing learners with different abilities together

in the same learning environment. However, other studies contend that DBSTs have a negative attitude towards IE. Some South African researchers portray DBSTs negatively regarding their attitudes towards IE.

The IE policy is an international agenda which requires that for it to be effectively implemented in South Africa it must be viewed in both a local and an international context. Terminology is one area in IE that poses difficulties for teachers and related practitioners not only in South Africa but also worldwide. Teachers should have a clear definition of what constitutes learning difficulties in order to be able to identify such learners in their classrooms. The controversy around IE springs from operational meanings of terms such as 'learning disabilities' or 'learning difficulties' or 'specific learning disabilities' and 'barriers to learning'. To a lay person, these terms refer to the same conditions that prevent learners from full participation at school. Practitioners argue that the clarity of what constitutes a learning disability is pivotal because that then makes it possible for teachers to design programmes that are tailor-made to address that specific difficulty (Moala, 2010).

International Journal of Education Sciences (2015:11) assert that some teachers are unable to identify learners because of the huge numbers of learners in their classroom. They also stressed that the lack of collaboration is another challenge that inhibits teachers when identifying learners in school. The inability of the teachers to meet and discuss issues about the learners experiencing barriers to learning could also be attributed to lack of collaboration. The DoE (2002:191) states that the lack of knowledge of teachers and parents in identification of barriers to learning prevents learners from being identified timeously for intervention. It further states that the lack of identification can also compound the child's needs over an extended period of time and later manifest in behavioural difficulties, low self-esteem, early dropout, passiveness and a low self-concept. Teachers need to have skills in detecting the barriers in children so that they are able to assist them in a relevant way. Absence of proper knowledge of the problems that the learners encounter may deny teachers a chance to address the barriers to learning. Teachers may regard these learners' lack of academic achievement as a result of stubbornness, laziness or lack of motivation (Raj, 2015).

A study conducted by Geldenhuys and Wevers (2013:11) revealed that due to the lack of collaborative partnerships between educators and parents, learners were not able to comprehend how the school and their parents relate to each other in terms of learners' development. Consequently, learners saw their teachers and their parents as being separate entities, working independently of each other. It was evident too that teachers found it difficult to accommodate learners that experience barriers to learning and to work at a pace that suited their special abilities. Others referred to educators' desire to complete work within a certain time frame, as required by the DBE. Many of the teachers wanted to be at a certain point at a certain time, according to the so-called pace setters. Others were of the opinion that, as a teacher, you must give thorough attention to the children, which is not always possible. Likewise, Pieterse (2010) concurs that because of the challenge of large numbers of learners needing support and the associated limitation in time constraints, the majority of learners who experience barriers to learning simply go unsupported in schools and this consequently nullifies the envisaged benefits of their inclusion in diverse mainstream classrooms.

3.10. DISTRICT SCREENING, IDENTIFICATION, ASSESSMENT AND SUPPORT POLICY IMPLEMENTATION: A SOUTH AFRICAN PERSPECTIVE

According to the EWP 6 (DoE, 2001:24), the IE and training system was to be changed so that learners who experience barriers to learning could be identified early and support given. The DoE further acknowledged that teachers were the primary resources in the accomplishment of the goals to establish IE and training, and their knowledge should be improved and new skills developed. However, according to the researcher's experience, evidence of such skills and knowledge remains elusive. Other challenges that are facing the teachers include extra paperwork, shortage of time, lack of knowledge about a wide range of learner's needs, overcrowded classrooms, and lack of quality support from the DBSTs (International Journal of Education Sciences, 2015).

Researchers like (Naicker 2005, Sukhraj 2008 & Welton 2001) observes that in general South African educationists (including DBSTs) within mainstream education are perplexed by the notion of IE simply because of a lack of exposure to inclusive practices and the dominance of special education theory and practice. They also maintain that South African teachers do not have faith in the inclusion process because they do not receive support promised by departmental officials. They also found that in South Africa, many personnel at circuits, district, regional and provincial level report that they lack role models for the new paradigm of management and learning and are left feeling ill equipped for their role as agents of change.

Mavuso (2013) points out that the world conferences on EFA in 1990 and 2000 gave new impetus to offering all children quality education. Different countries have adopted different strategies in seeking to achieve this goal. This, among other things, means two things. One is that there should be a clear focus on teaching and learning once children are at school. The other is that central governments through their ministries of education should develop effective management tools which are decentralised to levels closest to the schools. One of the ways in which South Africa, like other nations of the world, has prioritised EFA goals is by establishing education districts whose function is to manage quality in schools. Over the years the district mandate has been variously characterised, as 'inspection', 'supervision', and more recently, 'support'.

The Draft SIAS Policy 2005 and SIAS Policy 2014, set forth an additional implementation plan for 2005-2009 that required, among other things, that protocols for screening, identification, assessment and support were to be field tested by 2005 and "revised, approved and ready for system-wide implementation" by 2006; with consolidation and reviews planned for 2008 and 2009. The Draft SIAS Policy 2005 detailed sub-goals such as "develop funding norms for [IE] based on findings of the field test of the Strategy" by March 2007 and "roll-out training on strategy throughout all districts in the system" by March 2008. The process "to move from the current situation to the one that is envisioned by [WP 6] . . . was to be concluded in 2009 for system-wide implementation. The DBE then introduced immediate measures to out rule discriminatory practice which prevents vulnerable children from exercising their constitutional right to basic education and services (Kim, 2015:15).

The DBE, in collaboration with provincial DBEs, has been engaged since 2008 in preparing the system for the implementation of the draft policy on SIAS. This entailed utilising the expansion of the IE budget to create and fill IE posts at provincial, district and circuit levels, to appoint learning support teachers, establish transversal district/circuit teams to support schools and establish SBSTs. It was therefore anticipated that the policy was to be promulgated before the end of 2014 for implementation in 2015. Therefore, structures (DBSTs) need to be in place in which everyone understands that support for schools is multi-faceted and entails management, governance, curriculum, psycho-social and HR planning and development support (DBE, 2015:52).

The guidelines for the DBST outline their roles and responsibilities not only in terms of SIAS process but also verification, decision-making and provisioning, monitoring and tracking of support. Crucial to the success of support of SIAS is the development of educators' skills to manage diversity in the classroom, as this is assumed by the policy. Attention to educator training must be a priority. The Human Sciences Research Council reveals that the ways in which educators are being trained are failing them. Without the allocation of additional resources to capacitate school, circuits and districts to provide support, SIAS will remain effective in principle but not in practice. The success of SIAS implementation thus rests upon the effectiveness of the DBSTs. Their effectiveness is also intrinsically linked to support provided in schools (DBE, 2015).

EWP 6 (DoE, 2001) describes the support at district level as being a central aspect of the overall strengthening of education support services in South Africa. While SIAS is a processing tool to identify individual school, learner and teacher needs, it is also a planning tool because it can assist schools to work out and make provision for all additional support needs and assist the DBSTs to determine support requirements for the school, circuits and district as a whole to plan and budget for their most effective delivery (DBE, 2015).

The DoE (2005a:19) expanded the effectiveness of support even further and by instituting district support teams to evaluate other programmes and to diagnose their

effectiveness and to suggest improvements. The DBSTs are trained to provide support to all educators who are working in mainstream classrooms and who teach learners with barriers to learning. Their role is to support these educators and to help to address barriers to learning (Nel, Muller and Rheeders, 2011b:41). The DoE (DoE, 2000:28) further acknowledged that the establishment of IE systems require appropriate district as well as school-based support services, which is more than just accepting learners with different learning needs in mainstream classes (Mahlo, 2011:5).

Baboo (2011:65) states that DBSTs are significant agents of change on the South African education landscape. DBSTs play a critical role in ensuring that educational policies (including IE) conceived at both national and provincial level are brought to fruition at school level. Teachers who have included learners with disabilities reported that this experience has forced them to consider different ways of teaching a concept, and has enhanced their teaching skills. Recent studies conducted by local researchers indicate commonality of the challenges that classroom teachers face with regard to the assimilation of inclusive practices in their classroom and the identification of learners who experience barriers to learning in particular.

Motitswe (2014:260) acknowledges that DBST and SBST have attended workshops on SIAS. SIAS offers guidelines on how to screen, identify, assess and support learners who experience barriers to learning, including those with disabilities, and thereby improve the teaching and learning environment for maximum participation by all learners (DoE, 2008). At most schools there are SBSTs established according to the EWP 6 (2001), but in some schools these teams are not functional and the members who are selected do not have knowledge and skills on guidance and learner support even though they have attended workshops.

The role of the SBST as envisaged by the EWP 6 (DoE, 2001) is to liaise with DBSTs and other relevant support providers. The team should identify the learners, teachers and school's needs with regard to barriers to learning and establish an inter- sectoral committee which consist of relevant stakeholders such as health, social services, community, safety and security, child's protection unit and therapists and organise in-service training for teachers (DoE, 2005). A study conducted by Maguvhe (2014:1762)

revealed that some teachers had received in-service training after the inception of EWP 6. The training was on screening, identification, assessment and support. It also emerged that if there is proper training for teachers on multi-stage teaching, if there is good time management in schools and appropriate mechanisms for multi-disciplinary cooperation, then inclusion is an attainable reality. The study also revealed that since support structures such as institution-based and DBSTs are already in place for IE, what remained was for countrywide implementation. Maguvhe (2014:1762) considered implementation to be rather slow, but acknowledges that it is happening.

Figure 3.2 outlines the systems, structures and operations required at provincial and district level for the implementation of SIAS, clearly demonstrating the importance of transversal collaboration across units and the creation of specialist units at provincial and district levels.



Figure 3.2: Implementation of SIAS

Source: Adapted from: Report on the Implementation of EWP 6 on Inclusive Education: An Overview for the Period: 2013-2015 (2015).

A lot of work needs to be done to make sure that all directorates within the DBE work together. First of all, all directorates need to see that IE is their business. All directorates need to understand that planning and interventions need to be integrated. In addition to integrating and coordinating the planning and implementation of Outcome Based Education IE and health, it also involves mobilising all of the expertise available in the DBE in relation to the challenges facing schools. This needs to be managed well so that it is coordinated and provides opportunities for team work to address the needs and barriers identified. To do this, human and other resources need to be made available. While this may involve the creation of new posts and portfolios, it also includes better use of existing personnel and other resources in the Department (DoE, 2002:78).

However, in view of the concerns about support structures in the DBE regarding the implementation of IE, the purpose of this study was to investigate experiences of the DBSTs regarding SIAS implementation. The section below highlights some challenges and elements which hamper the implementation and provisioning of support services in schools and their solutions

3.11. HOW SIAS POLICY IS IMPLEMENTED IN KWAZULU-NATAL PROVINCE

According to the KZN DBE (2009) the size of the province and the vast number of schools falling within a district places the effectiveness of the DBST's support role at risk. To this end, KZN DBE has their DBSTs at two levels, one at a circuit office level and one at a district office level. The circuit-based support team (CBST) focuses on operational/processing issues related to requests for additional support services from schools. The DBST has the role of strategic planning, provisioning, monitoring and ratification of additional support services. One role which remains the sole responsibility of the DBST is that of the outplacement of any learner from mainstream education. While the CBST can recommend outplacement for a learner, in the KZN model, the final decision remains with the DBST.

3.11.1. Support structures/delivery arms

As mentioned previously, EWP 6 (2001) advocates the establishment of two types of support structures, namely the SBST and DBST. In KZN, SBSTs are established at school level. The DBST operates at two levels within the district:

- At the circuit level (CBST), and
- At the district office level (DBST).

3.11.1.1. School-Based Support Team (SBST)

Every education institution (schools, FET colleges, ABET centres, ECD sites) is supposed to have a SBST. The SBST's core responsibility is to identify support needs, and to assist educators, learners and the institution to access additional educational/developmental support from within the school, local community and/or ward/circuit/district.

Responsibility: The principal of the institution is responsible for ensuring that the SBST is organised so that it addresses additional support needs of the institution, educators and learners.

3.11.1.2. Circuit-Based Support Team

The CBST's core responsibility is to assist SBSTs to access additional support programmes and provisioning from within the ward/circuit/district so that they can address additional support needs of their learners, educators or institution. The CBST is responsible for ensuring that schools within the circuit are both supported and developed so they can meet the diverse learning and development needs of learners. All applications for outplacement of learners from the local school environment to full-service and special schools is processed by the CBST, and submitted to the DBST for endorsement.

Responsibility: The circuit manager is responsible for ensuring that the CBST is organised in such a way that it addresses institutional, educator and learner support needs.

3.11.1.3. District Based Support Team

The DBST’s core responsibility is the strategic planning, budgeting, programming and monitoring of the implementation of the additional support services for the district. The DBST has a specific operational function regarding additional support programmes/services for learners. It must endorse all applications for outplacement from the local school environment to full-service and special schools.

Responsibility: The District Director must ensure that the processing of these applications is designated to the appropriate team/section within the district (DBE, 2014). This team will then provide a detailed report and recommendations for the District Manager to endorse, as well as a feedback report for DBST meetings. The CBST applies only to KZN. The size of the province and large number of schools falling within a district jeopardised the effectiveness of the DBST’s support role. For this reason, the KwaZulu-Natal Department of Education (KZN DBE) established its DBSTs at both district and circuit level.

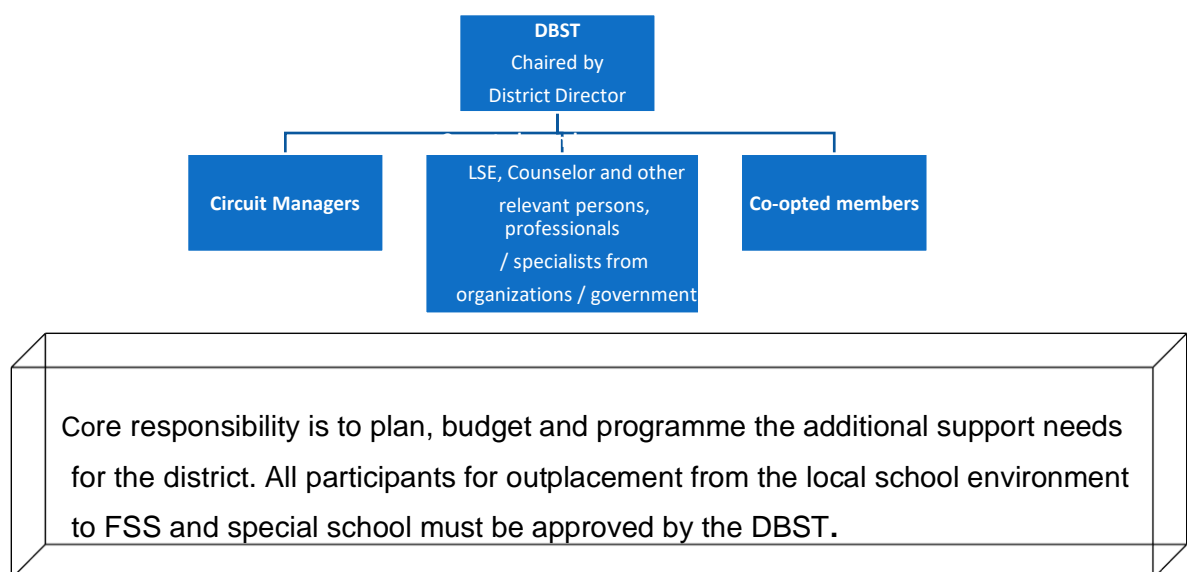


Figure 3.3: District-Based Support Team within the KZNDBE
 Source: Adapted from KwaZulu Natal Department of Education and MiET (2009).

3.12. CHALLENGES HAMPERING THE PROVISION OF SUPPORT SERVICES IN SCHOOLS

Bantwini and Diko (2011:229) point out that even though education districts South Africa play a significant role in many ways, they still lack a legislative framework that spells out their powers and functions. Roberts (2012) is of the view that there has been an historical neglect of the subsystems level of the education system and the disappointing results of previous school improvement approaches. The national DoE (2005) also acknowledges that in some districts there has been no meaningful support for some time. This is particularly true in rural and historically disadvantaged areas. They also note that even if support is available, it is often fragmented and uncoordinated and to unite it into cohesive practice that works is a challenge (DoE, 2005). The literature indicates that the persistent calls for a legislated district framework over the past decades have not yet borne fruit (Narsee, 2006).

The role played by DBSTs, and their capacity to work with schools and more, is a relatively unexplored area in the South African context. Each province consists of a number of school districts that vary depending on the size of the province and population. The school districts are the governing institutions, the “eyes and ears” of the government, and are led by the District Director. Bantwini and Diko (2011:229) state that districts are key elements and authorised agents that oversee and guide schools.

The districts are the intermediaries between the national and provincial DBE and the local schools, and their officials (DBSTs) play a fundamental role of overseeing the implementation of all new policies (including SIAS) developed by the national DoE and implemented by the nine provincials DBEs. Bantwini and Diko (2011:229) describe the primary function of school districts in South Africa as being two-fold: to support the delivery of curriculum in schools and to monitor and enhance the quality of learning experiences offered to learners. Despite the critical role played by school districts, South African school improvement literature continues to show that DBSTs do not receive sufficient attention in their role in the curriculum reform process which creates deficiencies in our comprehension of the struggles confronting any new policy

implementation. The neglect of the district offices and their officials (DBSTs), as Murphy and Hallinger (2001) caution, weakens curriculum and policy reform implementation at the contextual level.

Support professionals are thinly spread (Engelbrecht, 2013) throughout the South Africa, particularly in “Free State”. This hamstring the DBSTs and SBSTs in their efforts to provide the services needed by vulnerable learners. Poor or lack of adequate training among teachers who, according to EWP 6 (2001), should be core members of the SBSTs, also makes it difficult for learners to access the services that they need in order to gain access to the curriculum. Furthermore, SBSTs and DBSTs, which are expected to provide quality education support services to learners who experience barriers to learning and development, do not seem to operate within their frame of work.

Furthermore, the DBSTs seem to lack human resources such as psychologists, social workers, and speech and language therapists. Lack of proper parental involvement in support services at school and district levels is another challenge facing the education support services. At school level, the SBSTs are getting inadequate support from the DBST, which might be caused by the lack of facilities and infrastructures and also the unclear process of changing special schools to resource centres (Makhalemele, 2011:47).

The vision of the DBE is to ensure that all South African people have access to lifelong education and training opportunities that will contribute towards improving the quality of life and building a peaceful, prosperous and democratic society. The critical role of the DBE is to develop education policies that are later filtered to schools through the provincial Departments of Education (DoE, 1996) and providing a broad management framework for support (DoE, 2005). Generally, it is responsible for matters that cannot be regulated effectively by provincial legislation, and also for matters that need to be coordinated in terms of norms and standards at a national level (DoE, 1999). The national DBE provides active assistance to provincial departments in strengthening their administrative and professional capacity.

A study conducted by Makhalemele (2011:48) revealed that the manner in which DBSTs view challenges and elements that hamper implementation of SIAS policy contributes a great deal to the success of these teams. In an IE system, understanding and responding to barriers to learning are systematic when trying to unravel problems. Therefore, the DBST has to engage all areas (including the learner, teacher, curriculum, school, home environment, and broader community and social factors) carefully when dealing with the challenges they face in their work. This helps to develop profiles of the learner and diagnostic forms of assessment to ensure that many aspects of the system are considered in understanding and responding to challenges.

3.12.1. Suggestions to the challenges in provision of support in schools

There are aspects that need to be considered when a barrier to learning has been identified. These include:

- When a barrier has been identified, the purpose of assessing the intensity of the barrier is to support the learner to cope with that problem in and outside the classroom through addressing the barriers involved. Sometimes the learner him/herself may contribute to the problem and it is the responsibility of the DBSTs and SBST to determine how the learner is actually contributing. For instance, he/she may not be able to hear properly.
- The team also has to keep in mind that teachers may sometimes contribute to the problem. According to the DoE (2005a:28), this includes considering how the teacher manages the class, how teaching and learning take place in the classroom, and so on. If the teacher fails to manage the class effectively, that may also disadvantage learners, because others who are ill-disciplined will capitalise on that and misbehave, while those who are bored may seek attention until they are noticed. Thus, it is important that the teacher is able to manage and control a class firmly, because an uncontrolled class can be like a runaway lorry and cause havoc and misery to a great number of people. Without authority, a teacher is unlikely to be able to control a class.
- At times, teachers, through inadequate training, use teaching styles which may not meet the needs of some of the learners. For instance, the teacher may teach

at a pace which only suits learners who learn very quickly and, alternatively, the pace and style of teaching may limit the initiative and involvement of learners with high levels of ability. It is the DBST's responsibility to ensure that teachers are adequately trained.

- The curriculum in itself has an influence on teaching and learning. The DBSTs have to consider whether there are aspects of the curriculum impacting on the problem (DoE, 2005a:28). In this regard, one may consider the adequacy or inadequacy of the learning materials and whether they are accessible or not to all learners. Learners may be prevented from accessing the curriculum through inadequate provision of materials or equipment they need for learning to take place. Learners with disabilities, who do not receive the necessary assistive devices which would equip them to participate in the learning process, are often the victims of these barriers.
- The DoE (1997a:16) mentions that lack of provision of assistive devices for learners who require them may impair not only the learning process, but also their functional independence, preventing them from interacting with other learners and participating independently in the learning environment. Furthermore, the assessment procedures that are not sensitive to the different needs of learners in the class may have an impact on the problem. The assessment that leads to problems are the ones that are often inflexible and designed to assess only particular kinds of knowledge as aspects of learning, such as the amount of information that can be memorised, rather than the learner 's understanding of the concepts involved.
- The physical and interpersonal environment of the school may also affect the problem and it is the responsibility of both teams to keep this issue in mind. Factors such as interpersonal conflict at the school, mismanagement, a lack of adequate materials or equipment, inaccessible buildings and classrooms for learners with disabilities, may indirectly be acting as barriers to the teaching and learning process (DoE, 2005a:28). The teams have to take into consideration that, in many contexts, the vast majority of schools are inaccessible to a large number of learners, teachers and communities and this inaccessibility is evident when schools are, for instance, physically inaccessible to anyone with disabilities using wheelchairs or other mobility devices.

- The DBST also has to consider in what way the teaching and learning process is influenced by the home environment. The DoE (2005a:28) believes that influences from the home environment include consideration of family dynamics, home-language, socio-economic class, cultural background and the economic conditions of the family, including employment or unemployment status. For example, for many learners teaching and learning takes place through a language that is not their first language and this not only places these learners at a disadvantage, but also leads to linguistic difficulties which contribute to learning breakdown. In many cases, second language learners are often subjected to low expectations, discrimination and lack of cultural peers.
- The DBST also has to look at the broader community and social factors that create barriers to the learning process. The DoE (2005a:29) states that this includes the number of social challenges facing schools and other education institutions, including poverty, the HIV and AIDS pandemic, various forms of violence, substance abuse and so on. For instance, lack of access to basic services may be a result of the effect that sustained poverty has on learners, the learning process and the education system. Most learners from poverty-stricken families are subject to increased emotional stress that adversely affects learning and development, and also a lack of concentration and other symptoms caused by under-nourishment that affect the ability of the learner to engage effectively in the learning process.

The DoE (1997a:13) indicates furthermore that poverty-stricken communities are communities which are frequently characterised by limited educational facilities, large classes with high pupil/teacher ratios, inadequately trained staff and inadequate teaching and learning materials. Learning breakdown and the inability of the system to sustain effective teaching and learning are impacted by these factors. Another example, when recognising the broader community and social factors that have significant impact on learners, is the occurrence of HIV/AIDS. Many learners do not only have to deal with HIV/AIDS infection, but also have to deal with the loss of family members, particularly breadwinners, due to HIV/AIDS.

3.12.2. Disseminating information and teacher training by DBST

Jacobs (2015:26) points out that after releasing the EWP 6 on IE, the DBE faced the challenge of disseminating this information to society and providing the necessary training for teachers to implement inclusive practices including identification and assessment of learners experiencing barriers to learning in the classroom. Teachers are at the forefront in implementing IE policies but they have often reported a lack of skills and in-depth knowledge of IE. Authors such as Ntombela and Mayekiso (2011), Mdikana and Ntshangase (2007) and others have reported that teachers have not been adequately trained on IE and hence they lack confidence in teaching and supporting learners with special needs, especially those with severe learning difficulties.

With the poor dissemination of information regarding IE, teachers inaccurately assume that mainstream schools should now accommodate learners with all learning disabilities, including severe learning disabilities, hence reluctance and fear over IE has arisen among educators (MIET, 2009). This study clearly reveals that the DBSTs are experiencing difficulty when it comes to information dissemination and also the training of teachers on policy implementation. In this regard, the DoE needs to ensure that schools are equipped with the necessary support services, infrastructure and resources to accommodate learners experiencing barriers to learning (DoE, 2001). In addition, learners with severe learning disabilities cannot be placed in schools without the available resources and support services and special schools must still be maintained for these learners (DoE, 2001).

Jacobs (2015:29) further states that specialist support services from the DBST should be provided by therapists, special needs teachers, curriculum specialists to assist with differentiated teaching and learning, institutional development specialists, administrative experts and other specialist support personnel (DoE, 2005).

The DBSTs require clear direction and understanding of their roles as well as support from the DoE and national government (DoE, 2005). Sadly, SBSTs have been short lived (Kalenga and Fourie, 2011:66). The reasons provided for this include uncertainty

over team member roles and the fact that many teachers feel overburdened by the increased workload (Kalenga and Fourie, 2011:68). The community members from whom the SBST expected support and to whom they expected to provide support were unaware of the functions and existence of this team. Another identified problem for SBSTs was the lack of access to the DBST to facilitate the development of SBSTs and to provide the necessary support (Daniels, Lazarus and Nel, 2010).

3.12.3. Identifying and assessing barriers to learning

The lack of training and support systems available to schools may make identifying and assessing barriers to learning a challenging task. Bornman and Donohue (2014) have indicated that many teachers and schools are uncertain of the parameters of learning disabilities which can be accommodated in schools. According to Bornman and Donohue (2014), this uncertainty is due to poor clarification from the national DoE. Additionally, the scope of learning disabilities and barriers is broad and how schools should cater to these is uncertain, especially for those barriers which are extrinsic in nature (Bornman and Donohue, 2014). This uncertainty may hinder the implementation of IE (particularly SIAS) as teachers and all interacting systems would be unable to identify and develop support strategies for meeting the needs of barriers to learning.

According to a study conducted by Mkhuma (2012) in a full-service school (FSS) in KZN, teachers still utilise a deficit model in identifying barriers to learning. The author found that teachers in the study only referred to difficulties faced by the learner, rather than challenges in the environment and educational system. It is evident that these teachers, like many others, lack the necessary training to assist them in understanding the broad spectrum of barriers to learning and, most importantly, how to address these. The study further indicated that no protocol exists in the identification of barriers to learning. Rather, teachers utilise their intuition (Mkhuma, 2012). This challenge was identified despite some limited training provided by the DBE on utilising the national strategy of SIAS. Teachers indicated a lack of practical experience in applying these documents and methods to everyday teaching and learning which also made their work more demanding. Additional challenges to utilising SIAS were misconceptions

surrounding the number of learners with barriers identified each month, and the misconception that barriers to learning should be identified in the foundation and intermediate phases only and not the senior phase (Mkhuma, 2012). An evident need for support, further training and access to resources exists, and this illustrates the shortcomings in SIAS strategy and IE in the identified FSS.

A pilot study was conducted at an FSS in an Ugu District study whereby relevant individuals were provided with direct training on all elements of IE (MIET, 2009). This training was provided in collaboration with all important stakeholders involved. Feedback from the sample group indicated that the training and support provided assisted them in developing skills to identify intrinsic and extrinsic barriers and create multi-level teaching and learning plans as well as providing relevant support (MIET, 2009). According to EWP 6, assessments and the identification of barriers to learning need to occur on all levels, i.e., at home by parents, teachers, and peers and from the learner's general performance (DoE, 2005). It is evident that a multi-level support system is necessary in the identification and support of learners with barriers to learning.

According to the SIAS policy, it is expected that each level plays a role in identifying and assessing barriers to learning as well as participating in development of strategies and managing the identified barriers (DoE, 2005). The purpose of assessments is to identify barriers to learning and develop means to effectively meet the learners' needs (DoE, 2005). In addition, assessments need to be valid, reliable and ethical (DoE, 2005). Therefore, it is the DBST's responsibility to ensure that SBSTs, teachers and parents are adequately trained on how to implement the SIAS policy for the benefit of learners experiencing barriers to learning.

3.12.4. Successes in the implementation of EWP 6

Jacobs (2015:32) maintains that South Africa, as a developing country, faces challenges on the road to developing the country. The Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) provides a platform for all governments to exchange ideas and seek recommendations on their education system. The OECD

reported that although the South African education system has many challenges ahead, but what it has been achieved thus far is commendable. There have been noticeable achievements related to equity and access to schooling. Strengths that will now be discussed include the commitment of the DBE to IE, the action-research method within the education system, and the broad acknowledgement of barriers to learning (Khumalo, 2008).

The DoE (2001) and MIET (2009) state that it is commendable that the South African DoE has acknowledged that barriers to learning are not simply the physical and mental disabilities found within the child. Instead, the DBE has looked far beyond the learner into the community and society at large. This reflects a holistic and systemic approach to learning and marks a clear paradigm shift. The DBE further encourages this approach by providing training for teachers to address diverse learning needs and move towards a social perspective (Oswald and Swart, 2011). This broad concept of barriers (age, gender, ethnicity, language, class, and disability and HIV status) acknowledges all learners and encourages unity, human dignity and equality (Jacobs 2015:33).

3.13. CONCLUSION

In this chapter the origin of provisioning of assistance by education support services prior to and after 1994 has been presented. The chapter focused on role-players, their functions and the manner in which DBSTs implement the policy. Experiences of DBSTs with regard to SIAS implementation in other countries, in South Africa and specifically in KwaZulu-Natal were discussed. The greatest challenge faced by all systems involved is to recognise and act in accordance with the paradigm shift in IE post-1994. In this chapter the researcher reviewed literature on some of the challenges, successes and elements which hamper the implementation and provision of support. However, with the commitment and collaborative involvement from all levels of the system, the successful implementation of SIAS policy is possible.

This chapter has sought to show that DBSTs are support teams in educational institutions aiming at providing support to learners who experience barriers to learning

and development. The primary function of these teams is to put in place properly coordinated learner and teacher support services that will support the learning and teaching process by identifying and addressing learner, teacher and institutional needs. It was also indicated that, at provincial level, the DBE established DBSTs which should develop and support the SBSTs. Furthermore, DBSTs should link the SBSTs and schools with formal and informal support systems in their communities, and link schools with one another and with community-based organisations, parent groups and others.

Chapter four will focus on the research methodology that will be employed during the investigation.

CHAPTER 4: RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

4.1. INTRODUCTION

In Chapter Three the theoretical framework that underpins the study as well as the DBST effectiveness and improvement strategies were discussed. This chapter will briefly describe and discuss the research design and methodology which was used in collecting data on experiences of DBSTs with regard to SIAS policy implementation in Zululand District. It describes the research process that informed the study and provides details of the choice of research approach, paradigm, design and sampling of participants. The chapter also provides a detailed description of the data collection processes, explaining how issues of trustworthiness in qualitative research was attained. Ethical considerations of the study are discussed. The chapter concludes by explaining the importance of the study in the broader context.

4.2. QUALITATIVE APPROACH

A qualitative approach was suitable for this study as it provided the necessary information to achieve the objectives of the research, namely, to investigate the experiences of DBSTs with regard to SIAS policy implementation in Zululand District. A qualitative approach allowed the researcher to gain in-depth understanding of social realities and derive a comprehensive portrait of a range of human endeavours, interactions, situations and perceptions.

McMillan and Schumacher (2010:320) describe qualitative research as an analysis of people's individual and collective social actions, beliefs, thoughts and perceptions which is primarily concerned with understanding the social phenomena from the participants' perspective. In addition to this definition, Creswell (2010:56) states that the aim of a qualitative research study is to engage in research that probes for a deeper understanding of a phenomenon rather than to search for causal relationships. Qualitative research sets out to penetrate human understanding and the construction thereof.

In addition to that, Creswell (2012:68) stresses that the qualitative approach helps in exploring a problem and developing a detailed understanding of a central phenomenon.

The research began with a planning phase (Hoberg,1999:77) in which general research questions, the kind of site and types of participants needed were identified in accordance with McMillan and Schumacher (2006:322-323). This approach was chosen because it would provide a clear understanding of the DBST member's views and experiences regarding SIAS policy implementation and of support for schools, teachers and learners experiencing barriers to learning. This approach captures participants' perceptions as they naturally occur (Wiersma and Jurs, 2009:232) and in their actual words (Johnson and Christensen, 2011:18).

For this particular study, the researcher conducted interviews with DBST and SBST members, particularly the chairpersons (principals) of the SBSTs. These interviews intended to capture their perspectives on how do they implement SIAS policy in schools in support of learners experiencing barriers to learning. Semi-structured and open-ended questions were used to provide the participants with every opportunity to describe and explain what was most salient to them. Verbatim words and phrases from the interviewees were then analysed and used as data to illustrate the findings.

4.3. RESEARCH PARADIGM

Kuhn (1977) defines a paradigm as “an integrated cluster of substantive concepts, variables and problems attached with corresponding methodological approaches and tools ...”. According to him, the term paradigm refers to a research culture with a set of beliefs, values, and assumptions that a community of researchers has in common regarding the nature and conduct of research. Denzin and Lincoln (1994) define a paradigm as a set of basic beliefs (or metaphysics) that deal with the ultimate first principles and represent the worldview that defines for its holder the nature of the ‘world’, the individual's place in it and the range of possible relationships to that world and its parts.

Guba and Lincoln (1994:107) state that the purpose of research and how it is concluded are influenced by the researcher's pragmatic beliefs. Paradigms basic systems are based on ontological, epistemological and methodological assumptions.

According to Kuhn (1977) epistemology refers to the nature of the relationship between the researcher (the knower) and nature, and it denotes:

"the nature of human knowledge and understanding that can possibly be acquired through different types of inquiry and alternative methods of investigation. Ontology refers to enquiry into, or assumptions or theories about, the nature of what exists, including whether anything can be said to exist at all. One influential area of disagreement here concerns whether all phenomena have the same fundamental character or whether there are multiple kinds of being. Another is about whether ideas or matter are the true nature of being; or whether both exist and are of equal importance; with the latter position leading to questions about the relationship between mind and body" (Kuhn,1977).

In general terms, 'phenomenology' refers to study of the appearance of things in experience. And sometimes what it means in social and educational research is detailed investigation of how people see or experience themselves and their world (Hammersley, 2012:45). Methodology refers to how the researcher goes about practically finding out whether whatever he or she believes can be known.

Thus, a paradigm encompasses three elements, of which the first is ontology, and raises the basic questions about the nature of reality. This is followed by epistemology which poses the question, how do we know the world? What is the relationship between the inquirer and the known? The third is methodology, which focuses on how we gain knowledge (Denzin and Lincoln, 1994:185).

4.3.1. The interpretive paradigm

As mentioned in Chapter One, this study is approached qualitatively from within an interpretive paradigm. This paradigm is characterised by a concern for the individual. The main aim of the interpretive paradigm is to understand the subjective world of human experience. Researchers within this paradigm aim to obtain a viewpoint of the participants as opposed to that of the researcher (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2007). Interpretive researchers begin with individuals and set out to understand their interpretations of the world around them. The interpretive paradigm can be also called the “anti-positivist” paradigm because it was developed as a reaction to positivism (Mack, 2010; Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2007).

Choosing an appropriate research design helped the researcher chose the right participants for the study, ask the required questions and generally directed the study. There are other approaches that underlie qualitative research such as the deep tradition, the critical tradition and post tradition (Hennink, Hutter and Bailey, 2011). Interpretivism emphasises the significance of interpretation, observation and understanding of the social environment (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2000).

The researchers of this school of thought believe that “reality is socially constructed as people’s experiences occur within social, cultural, historical or personal contexts” (Hennink, Hutton and Bailey, 2011:15). Scholars of the interpretive school believe that what the reader gets is not what the researcher sees or has had direct experience of, but rather what the reader gets is what the researcher sees or explains and interprets of the subject (May, 2002; Flick, 2006). This study sought to understand the successes and challenges experienced by DBSTs with regard to SIAS implementation in Zululand District. Although in reality the study is influenced, to a lesser or greater extent, by a number of paradigmatic tools of research, it is mainly anchored in the interpretive paradigm. Interviews and interpreted data constitute the empirical aspect of this thesis. Working in this paradigm entailed using qualitative research methods and techniques. The research design reflects an interpretive design focus in its approach to the research questions, data collection procedures and later, data analysis (McMillan and Schumacher, 2001:409). The interpretivism paradigm implies

that meaning is subjective with the aim of interpreting the reality of the phenomenon from the point of view of others (McMillan and Schumacher, 2001:398; Denzin and Lincoln, 1994:2).

The link between the topic under discussion and the paradigm was that participants might have a different meaning or understanding of the concept of support in SIAS implementation. The study took place in education district office where DBST was involved as participants. The researcher through qualitative case study research method wanted to uncover how different meaning to the context were attached through interaction and collaboration in enhancing effective SIAS policy implementation.

4.3.2. Philosophical Assumptions

Creswell (2007) believed that in the choice of qualitative research, enquiries make certain assumptions. These philosophical assumptions consist of stance towards the nature of reality (ontology), the knows what she or he knows (epistemology), the role of values in the research (axiology), the language of research (rhetoric) and the methods used in the process (methodology). As a researcher, I thought that the philosophical assumptions relate to the above-mentioned features in all qualitative studies. Thus, it was important for me to consider the application of ontology and epistemology since these parameters describe perceptions, beliefs, assumptions, the nature of inquiry as well as the individual values (Creswell, 2007).

4.3.2.1. Ontology

In general, qualitative research is based on relativistic, constructivist ontology that posits that there is no objective reality (Hatch & Cunliffe, 2006). Creswell (2013) points out that people impose order on the world perceived in an effort to construct meaning which lies in cognition not in elements external to us, information invading on our cognitive systems is screened, translated, altered, perhaps forbidden by the knowledge that already exists in that system. The resulting knowledge is idiosyncratic and is purposeful.

The ontological issue relates to the nature of reality and its characteristics. When researchers conduct qualitative research, they hold the idea of multiple realities (Creswell,2007). Different researchers hold different realities as well as the individuals being studied and the readers of qualitative study. In this research study, the researcher made use of multiple realities of the various study participants to explore the experiences of DBST which included the use of multiple quotations based on the actual words of different participants (officials and principals) and presenting different perspective from participants when analysing data. To compile a phenomenology, the researcher reported how participants participating in the study views their experiences from their different ontological instances.

4.3.2.2. Epistemology

Epistemology describes the relationship between the researcher and the acquired knowledge and how this knowledge becomes understood (Maree, 2007; Merriam, 2009). The epistemology of this study based in the interpretive paradigm would refer to the subjective meanings of the participants. The methodology of a study is the way in which the researcher approaches the question of epistemology and then attempts to bring the unknown reality into the known by studying the participants' subjective realities and perspectives. This allows the researcher to appreciate the feelings, attitudes and behaviour of the participants (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011). In the setting of this study, it was possible to understand the participants and experience their emotion and the passion for their jobs as they spoke.

Within an epistemological assumption, conducting a qualitative study means that researchers attempt to get as close as possible to the participants being studied. In practice, qualitative researchers conduct their studies in the "field" where the participants live and work as these are important contexts for understanding what the participants are saying (Creswell, 2007). In this study, the researcher spent much time in the field to get to know and understand the participants and the phenomenon she was exploring which was experiences of DBST regarding SIAS implementation utilising case study design. A good case study requires lengthy stay at the research site (Barbie & Mouton,2009).

4.4. RESEARCH DESIGN

Mouton (2006:55) defines design as a plan of how one intends conducting the research. According to his explanation, a research design focuses on the end product, formulates a research problem as a point of departure, and focuses on the logic of the research. Thus, a research design ensures that there is a structure for the way in which data will be collected and analysed as well as the procedure to be followed.

Creswell (2012:20) defines research design as the plan of the study that will answer the research objectives. Research designs are the specific procedures involved in the research process, namely: data collection, data analysis and report writing. In addition to that, Babbie and Mouton (2011:74) explain that research design is a plan or blueprint of how you intend conducting the research, based on: what kind of study is being planned, what kind of results are aimed at, research problem or question to study and what kind of evidence is required to address the research question adequately. The three designs are: ethnographic studies, case studies and life histories.

The aim of this study is to understand the experiences of DBSTs with regard to SIAS policy implementation, therefore a case study approach has been applied to gain an in-depth knowledge of a situation and meaning from those involved (Merriam, 1998:98). A case study refers to the collection and presentation of detailed information about a particular small group of participants, in this case DBST members, in a particular (i.e. district) setting. This is also emphasised by Stake (1995:1) who states that a case study is the study of the particularity and complexity of a single case, coming to understand its activity within important circumstances. It is through the case study approach that results of qualitative research can be presented in a most effective way.

Yin (2014:18) argues that a case study is used in order to gain in depth understanding of a real-life phenomenon; such understanding also encompasses important contextual conditions, because they are highly pertinent to the phenomenon of the study. Contextual issues in this study would be the learning environment, especially

those classroom variables that are related to mathematics teaching. The case study was preferred because Baker (1999:321), McMillan and Schumacher (2010:344) and Creswell (2010:75) indicate that it can afford the researcher a better understanding of the problem. Another important fact is that a case study has to do with a limited number of units of analysis such as an individual, a group or institution, which are studied intensively (Creswell, 2010:75).

In this study, the units of study constitute the DBSTs and SBSTs in Zululand District. The district and schools were selected according to the sampling procedure outlined below. The case study method offered the researcher a multi-perspective analysis in which the views, voices and perspectives of the individuals and relevant groups of actors and the interactions between them (Creswell, 2010:75) were considered. Thus, the case study opened the possibility of giving a voice to the voiceless and powerless, e.g. dissatisfied and demoralised educators, uninvolved parents and marginalised groups. This was essential, because the researcher came to a deeper understanding of the dynamics of the situation, which is the salient feature of case studies. The case study method was important because it offered the opportunity to learn new experiences (Stake 1995:85).

4.4.1. Case study

Case study is particularly a complexity of a single case, coming to understand its activity within important circumstances (Stake, 1995:11). There are two main types of case studies, that is, single and multiple case studies (Leedy, 1997:14). Multiple case studies involve two or more sites as the settings, where relevant data can be collected. A single case study focuses on one setting as a case for investigating that particular research question (Leedy, 1997:22). Furthermore, in a case study, the main assumption is that a phenomenon is investigated is a bounded system. This system may be a group of people or a set of documents. Any social entity that can be bounded by parameters and that shows a specific, dynamic and relevance revealing information that can be captured within these boundaries, may be a case study (Henning, Gravett, and Van Rensburg, 2002:32).

Yin (2008:84) distinguishes between single and multiple case study designs. Within these two types of case study designs there can be a holistic (single) unit of analysis or embedded (multiple) units of analysis. For the purpose of this study, the single case study design with embedded units of analysis was followed to explore the DBST and SBST's experiences regarding the implementation of SIAS in schools. Yin (2008:88) states that this type of case study design enables the researcher to explore the case while considering the influence of the various members. The case study is thus an intensive description and analysis of a phenomenon or a social unit such as an individual, group, institution, or community (Merriam, 2002:12). In this case it refers to the DBST/SBST as part of the identified district. The unit of analysis, not the topic of investigation, is what characterises a case study.

The researcher chose the case study approach to conduct the investigation because the topic of the research in IE is eco-systemic in nature. The phenomenon under investigation, including DBST's experiences in implementing SIAS policy in support of learners experiencing barriers to learning, is intricately related to, and reciprocally influenced by, the district, the school, its context and the individual characteristics and contexts of the DBST members themselves. Yin's definition of a case study supports the approach chosen and defines a case study as an "empirical enquiry that investigates contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context ... where the boundaries between the phenomenon and context are not clearly evident" (Yin, 2014:13).

The case study approach aims to develop a comprehensive understanding of the phenomena and all the elements involved, including learners experiencing barriers to learning. Understanding the phenomena and elements involved in a case will assist in developing general theoretical statements (Patton, 2002:11).

The research design and purpose of the current study were to gain an insight into DBSTs' experiences regarding the implementation of SIAS in Zululand Education District. The issue was approached through an interpretive paradigm. The district identified to be investigated is the biggest in the province of KwaZulu Natal. There are five circuits under its management and the biggest circuit has 210 schools. Zululand

District is located in the northern part of KwaZulu Natal. It is an area that is beset by poverty, unemployment and low-income levels, and hard hit by high HIV infection and prevalence rates. Most of the children in the area are historically disadvantaged and their basic right of education, health, safety and protection are often compromised. Circuits are very far from the district and most of the roads are gravel. However, the focus of the investigation is mainly in the district office officials and purposefully selected principals.

4.5. POPULATION AND SAMPLING

Creswell (2010:79) explains sampling as being the process used to select a portion of the population for a study. Sampling implies selecting a section of a population for investigation in which we are interested. A sample is studied in an effort to understand the population from which it is drawn. As such, the researcher is interested in describing the sample not primarily as an end in itself, but rather as a means of helping to explain some facet of the population. McMillan and Schumacher (2010:129) describe sampling as the group of participants from whom the data are collected.

Sikosana (2014:159) indicates that sampling is the selection of research participants from the entire population, and involves decisions about people, settings, events, behaviour and social processes to observe. The sample can be selected from a larger group of people, identified as the population from whom data are collected even though the subjects are not selected from the population. Sampling decisions are made for the purpose of obtaining the richest possible source of information in order to answer the research questions. Qualitative research usually involves smaller sample sizes than those required for quantitative research studies. Sampling in qualitative research is flexible and often continues until new themes no longer emerge from the data collection process – termed data saturation (Creswell, 2010:82).

In this study purposeful sampling was employed to select participants who, on the basis of experience had been in their positions since 2011. The target population for this study were all DBST members and purposefully selected SBSTs chairpersons (principals). Researchers often select a representative sample from the population

since it is impossible to include the whole population in a single study. There are twelve education districts in KwaZulu-Natal province. The number of the DBST members in these IE sub-directorates vary, depending on the size of each district.

The biggest district has a total number of 20 DBST members and the smallest district DBST has 12 members. Zululand is the biggest district in KwaZulu-Natal with a total number 710 schools. Only twelve participants were selected to participate in the study. Six principals (SBST chairpersons) members were also selected. The researcher selected participants who would be able to provide the requisite information, be prepared to participate in the research and be willing to share the relevant information. Inclusion criteria were:

- DBST members who had been employed since at least 2011 under the sub-directorate of IE in the district and who had qualifications in special needs education, educational psychology, school social work, speech therapy, remedial education, school counselling as well as learning support educators.
- SBST members (especially the chairpersons [who were also school principals]) who had been in position since 2011.
- Experience of implementing SIAS at district level and in schools.

Purposeful sampling was employed to identify the participants. Purposive sampling is often used when conducting qualitative research and is “based on the assumption that the investigator wants to discover, understand, and gain insight and therefore must select a sample from which the most can be learned” (Merriam, 2008:77). Purposive sampling allowed the researcher to choose a participant because they displayed features or experiences in which she was interested (Silverman, 2002:104). It was assumed that DBST members and principals (SBST chairpersons) would yield the most relevant information about the topic under investigation because they are transversal structures aimed at rationalising and maximizing support provision at school and district level.

According to Creswell (2007), criterion sampling works well when all individuals studied represent people who have experienced the phenomenon. The researcher has decided to conduct the study with DBST because it is a management structure at

district level, the responsibility of which is to coordinate and promote IE through: training; curriculum delivery; distribution of resources; infrastructure development; identification, assessment and addressing of barriers to learning. The DBST should provide leadership and general management to ensure that schools within the district are inclusive centres of learning, care and support (DBE,2009).

Leadership for the structure must be provided by the District Senior Management that could designate transversal teams to provide support (DBE, 2014:24). If this team is not functional or providing support to schools it means schools cannot be able provide support to teachers. Teachers must also identify, assess and provide support to learners experiencing barriers to learning. Inclusive education and specifically SIAS which this study is based will remain in policy but not in practice. Furthermore, SBSTs have also been selected as they are teams established by schools in general and further education, as a school-level support mechanism, whose primary function is to put coordinated school, learner and teacher support in place. Leadership for the SBST is provided by the school principal to ensure that the school becomes an inclusive centre of learning, care and support. (DBE, 2014:24).

4.6. METHODS OF DATA COLLECTION

Guided by the research questions, three main data collection techniques were used in this study, namely, semi-structured interviews, observations and document analysis. This section presents the instruments used, followed by a description of the process of data collection. Data collection is a series of interrelated activities aimed at gathering good information to answer emerging research questions (Creswell, 2007). For the purpose of this study interviews, observations as well document analysis used to collect data. These data collection methods are said to be generally favoured by researchers working within an interpretive paradigm.

4.6.1. Research instruments of data collection

There are three main tools of data collection. Set out below is a summary of how the interview schedule was used. This is followed by a description of observation and finally the document analysis.

4.6.1.1. Interviews

Mnatwana (2014:41) states that interviews can be described as a process of learning about people's views and their lived experiences. The qualitative interview is a frequently used data collection method in qualitative research (Babbie and Mouton, 2001). Miller and Glassner (2011) describe interviewing as "a two-way conversation" with the purpose of obtaining rich descriptive data about how the participant perceives reality based on their beliefs, opinions, views and ideas. According to Patton (2002:305), the main purpose of interviewing is to enter into the participants' perspective to find out how they interpret the issues under discussion. As the focus of the study is on the experiences of DBSTs, the interviews will allow participants to recall and reflect upon their emotions and thoughts. Thus, interviewing will be an appropriate and relevant technique for this study.

Merriam (2002:41) mentions that a semi-structured interview is where a researcher has one topic to explore, where the questions and their order are predetermined. The semi-structured interview contains a mix of more- or less-structured questions. The largest part of the interview is guided by a list of questions or issues to be explored, and neither the exact wording nor the order of questions is determined ahead of time. Data for the study was collected through semi-structured individual interviews and the use of an interview guide. This was identified as being one of the principal data collection methods in case study research.

The main questions as well as the issues to be explored were planned, but the wording and the order of questions were not prearranged. An interview guide that contained questions and important issues was developed to guide the interviews. The researcher conducted all the interviews in this study. To promote privacy, participants were

interviewed at a mutually agreed upon time and location. Before commencing with the interviews, participants had to sign a letter of consent. Throughout the interviews, the researcher used verbal and non-verbal probes that focused on the participants' experiences (Patton, 2002:305). The researcher clarified with participants any ambiguity in their description, so that they would be understood correctly. The interviews were conducted after working hours and the duration of the interviews ranged from 45 minutes to 60 minutes.

Interpretivist researchers reject the notion that there is only one truth and therefore employ the technique of in-depth interviewing to gain insight into many lived experiences (subjective truth) which people hold as their realities (Miller and Glassner, 2011). They approach the interview with research participants as partners participating in an active process of creating understanding (Fontana and Frey, 2008; Holstein and Gubriun, 2011:150). The interviews and analysis focused on the "meanings that people attribute to their experiences and social worlds" (Miller and Glassner, 2011:133).

The advantage of using interviews is that although a semi-structured interview guides the interview by providing broad discussion categories for the interaction between the researcher and the participant, it allows the researcher freedom to explain terms and adapt questions to suit individuals' abilities and understanding (Maree, 2007:87). Furthermore, interviewing allows for the researcher to probe during questioning in order to obtain more details during the research process (Maree, 2007:87).

In-depth interviews use open response questions to obtain data on participants' meanings, which is how individuals conceive their world and how they explain or make sense of the important events in their life. In-depth interviews are extensive, and allow for probing. In this study interviews allowed participants to discuss their experiences in the district support services and freely share their opinions regarding the implementation of SIAS policy in schools for the support of learners experiencing barriers to learning (McMillan and Schumacher, 2010).

As per De Vos *et al.* (2006:299), the researcher acknowledges the limitations of the interviews, that they involve personal interaction and therefore cooperation between the researcher and the participants cannot be guaranteed. The researcher divided the interview schedule into three main sections. Section A covered the biographic characteristics of participants. The experience of participants over time were important as these enabled the researcher to link the information they gave to their experiences over time.

Section B sought a description from participants of their roles and approaches in supporting the implementation of SIAS in schools. It was important to understand how each official (DBST member) understood what his or her job is. Data here included information on the frequency of visits to schools, what they did once at school and how their support visits focused on SIAS implementation, their experiences and perceptions on effective SIAS implementation, and if they attained their desired outcomes. In this section the researcher wanted to discover what they do when they manage support in SIAS implementation in schools.

Section C focused on support and monitoring. The purpose was to understand how the DBST balance support and monitoring.

4.6.1.2. Observations

According to the Merriam Webster Dictionary (2013), observation is the act of careful watching and listening, the activity of paying close attention to someone or something in order to gather information. The data collection strategy of observation was used to record how DBSTs conduct training in support of SBSTs and teachers to ensure that SIAS policy is being implemented in schools for the benefit of learners experiencing barriers to learning in the Zululand District. The researcher kept a record of the activities that took place in the training events of the teachers who were chosen for observation. The observation period lasted for a duration of one training session of approximately three hours. The strategy of observation complemented and supplemented the strategies of interviews and document analysis. The observation strategy was structured in terms of the interviews. This third data collection method of

the three-pronged approach ensured that all the loose ends were tied up and that the data collected solidified the responses of the questionnaires and interviews (Erradu, 2012:57). This method of data collection also ensured that the research question and sub-questions were answered.

McMillan and Schumacher (2006:346) state that although researchers should adhere to the principle of non-interference, they need to be active in eliciting different views of events from different participants for the sake of accuracy and confirmation. Researchers can corroborate what participants actually do, and what they imply with non-verbal movements and body language. In this study, the researcher, as the interviewer, fulfilled the role of observer in order to assess the correlation between the participants' verbal and non-verbal responses. Participant observation is defined as a combination of particular data collection strategies: limited participation, field observation, interviewing etc. (McMillan and Schumacher, 2006:346).

McMillan and Schumacher (2006:346) define field observation as the researcher's technique of directly observing and recording without interaction. The researcher used participant observation where non-verbal movements were observed. The later was done without interaction with participants and also directed some of structured questions to participants. What is observed (seen and heard) is the researcher's version of what is "there" (Henning, 2005:81). In general, observation implies seeing as well as observing with the other senses (Henning, 2005:82). Depending on the research question, observation may be brief and serve as a research tool for gathering information (Henning, 2005:82).

4.6.1.3. Document analysis

Documents are sources of quantitative information such as statistics but also qualitative information which is the explanation and analysis of the data they contain. Documents are referred to as "standardised artefacts, in so far as they typically occur in a particular format: as notes, case reports, contracts, drafts, death certificates, remarks, diaries statistics, annual reports, certificates, judgements, letters or expert opinions" (Bless and Smith, 2007). Some documents are personal and others are

official. Henning *et al.* (2004:99) point that document analysis entails scrutiny of relevant documents, which can be a valuable source of information. In the current study scrutiny of documents gave the researcher an idea of the experiences of (challenges and successes) of DBSTs with regards to SIAS policy implementation. Document analysis included DBST trainings, intervention programmes, assessment tools, and monitoring tools, as well as SBST registers of learners experiencing barriers to learning, intervention reports, ISPs, and minutes books.

The researcher used the documents to verify the data which was collected through interviews and observations. A combination of procedures enabled the researcher to validate and crosscheck the findings, since each data source had its own strengths and weaknesses, the strength of one procedure compensating for the weakness of another (Patton 2002:306). In most cases, documents are not produced for the purposes of research. Patton (2002:307) notes that documentary analysis is the study of excerpts, quotations, or entire passages from organisational or clinical memoranda and correspondence, official publications and reports, personal diaries and open-ended written responses to questionnaires and surveys with the aim of collecting data.

The information they contain can be used for research and the researcher acquires knowledge by analysing them. In this study unsolicited documents, that is, support and monitoring tools of district officials (DBST) and principals (SBST chairpersons) were used. The purpose of analysing these documents is discussed in the data analysis section below.

4.7. DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

Data analysis is a systematic process of selecting, categorising, comparing, synthesising and interpreting data to provide explanation of a single phenomenon of interest (McMillan and Schumacher, 1997:67). It refers to transforming the data with the aim of extracting useful information and facilitating conclusions. For the purpose of this study, the researcher used thematic analysis to analyse the data. The researcher identified themes and subthemes related to the experiences of DBST with regard to SIAS implementation in schools.

According to Denzin and Lincoln (1995:23), data analysis involves two levels of coding. The first level of coding is called open coding where data is labelled or tagged. The second level entails ascribing meaning to the data or making sense of the data. After labelling the data the researcher logically groups these into themes. Thematic content analysis refers to the process of capturing relevant themes in the data through a coding procedure. Rule and John (2011:78) refer to this process as concept and thematic analysis, which means working with codes to identify patterns, such as similarities and differences.

Qualitative data analysis is primarily an inductive process of organising data into categories and identifying patterns (relationships) among the categories (McMillan and Schumacher, 2001:461). Inductive data analysis was applied in this study, to allow the development of codes before analysis took place, thereby specifying the themes to receive focus (McMillan and Schumacher, 2001:461).

4.7.1. Analysis of data from semi-structured interviews

Semi-structured interviews were used, where the participants were allowed to elaborate on their understanding, practices and experiences. The interviews were conducted in a conversational way and face to face between the participants and interviewer. Participants were interviewed individually in their spare time, when they had enough time to concentrate on the subject. Accordingly, appointments for interviews were scheduled to take place on weekends or during weekdays after work.

4.7.2. Analysis of data from observation

The data from the observations were recorded on the training observation tool. See (Appendix M) The researcher kept a record of the activities that took place in the trainings of the teachers who were chosen for observation. The observation period lasted for a duration of one training session of approximately three hours. The observation strategy was structured in terms of the interviews. According to Leedy and Ormrod (2001:151) the researcher remains an observer, listener and interviewer throughout the data collection process.

4.7.3. Analysis of data from documents

The data from the document analysis were recorded on the document analysis tool. (see Appendix N). The first step was to read through each document analysis tool and transcribe the data into themes based on the research questions. Documents that DBST use when conducting trainings and visiting schools include school-based assessment tools, workshop manuals, support and other monitoring tools of district officials (DBST) will be analysed. Documents which principals (SBST) use include registers of learners who have additional support needs, minute books, vulnerability assessment forms and case-registers were also analysed. The data from the document analysis was recorded on the document analysis tool. The first step was to read through each document analysis tool and transcribe the data into themes based on the research questions. In analysing DBST's support and monitoring tools, the researcher wished to get a sense of their approach to implementing SIAS policy in schools.

4.8. ANALYSIS OF PDCA CYCLE STAGES IN THE PROCESS OF EFFECTIVE SIAS IMPLEMENTATION

The findings from the study show that the support provided by DBST to schools is not adequate and is not coordinated centrally by all officials tasked to support schools. It appeared that the support that is given to schools by DBST has no impact on the improvement in the effective implementation of the SIAS policy. The support has little impact on internal quality monitoring by SBSTs. In trying to address the issue of the lack of effective support by DBST, the PDCA cycle suggests stages that would assist DBST in supporting effective SIAS implementation in schools. Since schools has been declared as a centre of learning, care and support, the stages provide how DBSTs can apply the theoretical framework so that it takes into account the relevant procedures in implementing the policy. According to Deming's PDCA cycle it is expected that all sections in the district be involved and meet in a district education forum to discuss issues that affect policy implementation and how best DBST 's support for SIAS and other IE policies can be improved in schools. Below are the stages of PDCA that DBST should follow for successful implementation of SIAS.

4.8.1. PLAN

The purpose of the planning stage is to investigate the current situation, fully understand the nature of any problem to be solved, and develop potential solutions to the problem that will then be tested. Barge (2011:22) confirms that at this stage, the team (DBST) has the responsibility of deciding which intervention(s) (whether available pre-identified or individualised) would be most appropriate for supporting schools. A deep review of learners, teacher and SBST historical data will guide this decision. The DBST will create a specific plan to include progress monitoring, growth expectations, and timelines to evaluate progress. Professional learning support will be in place to ensure and monitor that the interventions are implemented with fidelity. Below are the procedures to follow during the planning stage.

(i) Identify and prioritise quality improvement opportunities

Usually a team will find that there are several problems in relation to policy implementation or quality improvement exercises when programmes or processes are investigated. A prioritisation matrix may help in determining which one to select. Once the quality improvement opportunity has been decided, a problem statement needs to be articulated. The teams need to revisit and, as appropriate, revise the problem statement as it moves through the planning process. The DBST should identify the areas of concern that they see as challenges in implementing SIAS policy. According to DBE (2014:17) in this stage the teams must:

- Identify learner, teacher and school needs in relation to policy implementation.
- Identify and plan tools/resources to be used during the SIAS process.
- Plan interventions to respond to requests for assistance from SBSTs.
- Identify learners for outplacement into specialised settings e.g. special schools, to access specialised support services attached to ordinary or full-service schools or to access high-level outreach support (DBE, 2014: 17).

(ii) Develop an AIM statement

The DBST should have a clear area of concern in order to be able to act accordingly. The DBST should know exactly who their target population is. SIAS policy implementation involves various stakeholders such as learners, teachers, parents, school governing bodies, non-profit organisations, early childhood development service providers, health care practitioners and social workers. Once the DBST has identified the area of concern or the root cause which they perceive as the challenge in the SIAS policy implementation that they wish to address, then it is easy to also know what is the target population in order to improve the implementation. The team must know exactly what corrective actions or measures and procedures they are going to follow. They also need to use turnaround strategies in order to improve the situation. A measurable improvement objective is a key component of the entire quality improvement process. It is critical to quantify the improvement you are seeking to achieve. Moreover, the aim statement also needs to be revisited and refined as the DBST moves through the planning phase.

Collectively, the DBST is responsible for the implementation of IE and the effective functioning of the SIAS process. In order to ensure that their plan of action happens, the DBST should understand that IE strategies rely on parental involvement, committed teachers and a process driven by effective SBSTs and supported by a can-do DBST. They also rely on teamwork between different directorates, government departments and groups that might not have worked together before. Thus, one important priority task in the planning phase is to build relationships and establish working teams with a collaborative ethos. They should build relationships between mainstream, full-service and special schools in the district to ensure resource provisioning is shared. The DBST also needs to be constituted according to the requirements. DBST structures need to be aligned to the existing structures so that no new structures are established. They should also have proper planning in order to get buy-in and support from other officials. They should identify the kind of support they can offer to schools immediately, and develop a checklist to evaluate and assess the existence and functionality of the SBSTs and then provide the required support (DBE, 2015:79).

(iii) Describe the current process

The team must describe the current process surrounding the problem in order to understand the process and identify areas for improvement. The DBST must describe issues around the area of concern and try to understand the whole situation. By so doing they will identify areas that need improvement and be able to employ the relevant strategies in order to improve these areas. Barge (2011:23) suggests that flow charts and value stream mapping are two examples of methods to accomplish this. The area of concern (problem statement) in this study is that recent studies reveal that most of the district officials who provide training and workshops to educators with regard to identification and support of learners who experience barriers to learning also show lack of a strong academic background regarding the IE policy and therefore depend on the training provided by the KZN DBE (Mkhuma, 2012:27).

Some of the officials have vast experience of remedial education but fail to articulate the philosophy upon which the IE policy was founded in practice (Mkhuma, 2012:28). Research conducted by the DoE (2005:19) reveals that in many districts in the country there is no meaningful support at the moment. This is particularly true in rural and historically disadvantaged areas. Where there is support, this usually includes some of the functions of SBSTs. The roles and responsibilities of newly appointed DBSTs should therefore develop from what is already in existence in the system but needs to be extended, recognised and enhanced.

(iv) Collect data on the current process

Baseline data that describe the current state are critical to further understanding of the process and establishing a foundation for measuring improvements (Gorenflo and Moran, 2010). The data may address, for example, time, people, space, cost, number of steps, adverse events, and customer satisfaction. A host of tools are available to collect and interpret data on the process. The data collected must be aligned with the measures listed in the aim statement. The DBST should collect data based on the current SIAS process. The collected data will assist in the improvement of the proposed plan of action.

(v) Identify all possible causes of the problem and determine the root cause

While numerous causes will emerge when examining the quality improvement opportunity, it is critical to delve into and carefully identify the underlying, or root cause of the problem, in order to ensure that an improvement or intervention with the greatest chance of success is selected. According to Wilcox (2003), each member of a team needs to shoulder his/her duties and or responsibilities and team members must work cooperatively. To accomplish this, each member of the DBST should be assigned to a number of schools around full service in the district and act as a district level coordinator for SIAS implementation (DCSI) to serve as a support and liaison to schools in the SIAS improvement process. This member will then also serve as a key member of the district leadership team responsible for overseeing cluster-level accountability and conducting performance-based monitoring interventions.

The responsibilities of the DCSI will, as appropriate, include: serving as a member of the cluster intervention team (CIT); overseeing the SIAS implementation process; ensuring responsiveness of school to improvement efforts; providing a direct line of communication to the schools. Throughout the duration of the required improvement interventions, the DCSI will assist in eliminating any cluster-level barriers that may hinder improvement and will serve as a resource and mentor to administrators and schools engaged in monitoring progress.

(i) What characteristics should an effective DCSI have?

- Expertise in planning, implementing, and managing improvement efforts in the district and/or cluster level (Porter, 2014).
- A view of this role as an integral part of his/her responsibilities.
- A sense of responsibility for the success of the district and/or the cluster of schools regarding SIAS improvement.
- Be supportive of all components of the DBST.
- A direct line of contact with the director and other critical district personnel.
- Authority to influence district office departmental procedures.

- Successful leadership and management experience.
- A view of the self as a positive change agent.
- Strong communication skills.

(ii) Roles and responsibilities of a DCSI in teamwork

- Ensure the participation of all relevant staff in the improvement process.
- Ensure schools are provided operational flexibility (Porter, 2014).
- Ensure effective implementation of all components of the SIAS process.
- Monitor the progress of improvement plans.
- Conduct data analysis and process monitoring.
- Be in frequent communication with schools regarding improvement plans.
- Regularly schedule meetings with the improvement clusters.
- Remove school barriers that may hinder the SIAS improvement process.
- Provide support and feedback to SBSTs as needed or requested.
- Take an active role in problem-solving with the SBST(s).
- Attend cluster leadership meetings regularly or coordinate the work of other DCSIs who are responsible for attending cluster leadership meetings.
- Assist in the replacement of ineffective SBST members and the recruitment and retention of effective team members.
- Assist in efforts to increase community and parental involvement in the implementation of SIAS policy.
- Be knowledgeable of all school improvement requirements.
- Partner with clusters to generate a positive school culture.
- Attend required training and have knowledge of IE policy.

When all members of the DBST have clear roles and responsibilities in the implementation process of SIAS, they will gain leadership and management experience. They will also view themselves as positive change agents which will help them develop effective communication skills. With these skills they will ensure the effective implementation of all components of the SIAS process. They will be able to monitor the progress of improvement plans and will have extensive knowledge of data analysis and process monitoring (Gorenflo and Moran, 2010).

(vi) Identify potential improvements to address the root cause, and agree on which one to test

Once the improvement has been determined, the DBST should carefully consider any unintended consequences that may emerge as a result of implementing improvement (Gorenflo and Moran, 2010). This step provides an opportunity to alter the improvement and/or develop countermeasures as needed to address any potential unintended consequences. Revisiting the aim statement and revising the measurable improvement objectives are important steps at this point.

(vii) Develop an improvement theory

Porter (2014) points out that an improvement theory is a statement that articulates the effect that you expect the improvement to have on the problem. Writing an improvement theory crystallises what you expect to achieve as a result of your intervention, and documents the connection between the improvement you plan to test and the measurable improvement objective.

(viii) Develop an action plan

An action plan, according to Porter (2014), indicates what needs to be done, who is responsible, and when it should be completed. The details of this plan should include all aspects of the method to test the improvements – what data will be collected, how frequently data are collected, who collects the data, how they are documented, the timeline, and how results will be analysed. This is the final stage of planning where the team has everything in place and they are ready to embark on addressing the identified root cause which needs improvement. All team members know their duties and responsibilities.

According to the DBE (2008:21), compiling an action plan for an area involves reviewing that area to determine the level and nature of support that is required (on a 5-point scale) and capturing the detail of curriculum differentiation, devices, environmental access, staff and training that are needed. An action plan is developed

for all learners in the school who have been identified as needing additional support (DBE, 2014). This does not mean that the service that is rendered will focus only on these learners. A holistic service will be delivered to all the schools in the district, from which the individually identified learners will also benefit. The action plan will also serve the purpose of deciding where best learners can access the support. If the decision is made that placement in a special school is advisable, it must be understood that this decision will be temporary and reviewable (DBE, 2014). This process is not a placement process but a support provision process. The whole process constitutes the official decision for learners who are eligible for high-level support and where it can most effectively be provided by the district.

It is critical that the district has a record of all learners who have an official decision. This record will inform planners in terms of resource allocation for each year and will also serve as the basis for tracking of support provision. No assessment is meaningful if it does not ensure access to support (DBE, 2008). The support tracking component of the SNA 4 form is a critical tool of both the DBST and the SBST to ensure that the learner is being effectively supported. It will also be the basis for annual decision-making on whether the school which has applied for the resource allocation is still eligible to receive it. This form must be updated throughout the year during each consultation session of the SBST or monitoring visit of the DBST. No end-of-year decisions on progress on promotion can be made without having the tracking tool available (DBE, 2008:21).

DO

The purpose of this phase is to implement the action plan. DBSTs implement and manage the improvement of the SIAS policy.

(i) Implement the improvement

The DBST reviews the action plans of the teachers and SBST and uses the DBST support guidelines table (DBE, 2014) to rate the level of support needed and the

checklist to help determine the decision on how support is to be provided to the learner.

The plan will spell out a suitable support package and include the following:

- Planning and budgeting for additional support programmes as per SNA 3.
- Resource and support-service allocation to school and learner.
- Training and counselling and mentoring of teachers and parents/legal caregivers.
- Monitoring of support provision.

The DBST can use the various tools attached as annexures to the SIAS policy to help carry out their decisions (DBE, 2014:29). The DBE (2015:54) states that SIAS is a processing tool used to identify and support an “at -risk” learners (i.e. a learner who is vulnerable to learning and development breakdown). Thus, in this stage **(DO)** of the PDCA cycle, the DBST is responsible for the implementation of the policy. The steps in the SIAS process that should be followed during implementation of the SIAS policy at school level are laid out in Table 2.2.

Table 4.1: SIAS policy implementation at school level

What happens?		Main role-players
S	Screen all the learners for vulnerability to learning and developmental breakdown	Parents, teachers, SBST, specialist within the DBST, other service providers, government departments (e.g. Departments of Health and Social Development)
I	Identify the barriers to learning and development	
A	Assess their support needs (What support is needed now? Who can give support? How often does the learner need it? etc.)	
S	Facilitate the development of the necessary support to meet these needs – individual support plan (ISP). Review the support and develop plan of action if necessary.	

Source: Adapted from: Policy on screening, identification, assessment and support (SIAS). A participant manual for provincial and district officials (DBE, 2015)

On the whole, schools are able to offer effective support as described above, but sometimes the needs of the learner are greater than what the school can access and

offer. At that point the school might need to apply for additional support-provisioning from the DBST.

The next stage of the SIAS process occurs at district level. This stage deals with identifying, planning, budgeting and delivery of the identified additional support-provisioning needs at an individual or school level (DBE, 2015).

Table 4.2: SIAS policy implementation at district level

What happens?		Main role-players
S	School (SBST) screens for additional support needs not being met by the current plan of action.	SBST, DBST, parents / caregivers, learners, specialists, government departments.
I	School (SBST) identifies its additional support needs in order to be able to support a learner / group of learners, and applies for the additional support.	
A	DBST assesses the requests for additional support. What support is required? What has the school done so far? What resources are available in the ward/circuit/district? Where and how can the required support be given? What is in the best interest of the learner?	
S	DBST plans, budgets and facilitates the development/provisioning of the identified support needs	

Source: Adapted from: Policy on screening, identification, assessment and support (SIAS). A participant manual for provincial and district officials (DBE, 2015)

(i) Collect and document the data

All the data that is collected during the implementation process is documented and reviewed at a later stage and used for further improvement.

(ii) Document problems, unexpected observations, lessons learned and knowledge gained

All experiences learned during the policy implementation process are also documented. This will assist the DBST to improve the plan of action when the PDCA model has to be reviewed and implemented again (DBE, 2014).

4.8.3. Check/Study

Gorenflo and Moran (2010) stress that the check/study phase involves analysing the effect of the intervention; it compares the new data to the baseline data to determine whether an improvement was achieved, and whether the measures in the aim statement were met. Pareto charts, histograms, run charts, scatter plots, control charts and radar charts are all tools that can assist with this analysis. In this process, the DBST must reflect on and document lessons learned, knowledge gained, and any surprising results that emerged.

4.8.4. Act

This phase marks the culmination of the planning, testing, and analysis regarding whether the desired improvement was achieved as articulated in the aim statement, and the purpose is to act upon what has been learned (Porter, 2014). Options to be considered are laid out below.

(i) Adopt

Standardise the improvement if the measurable objective in the aim statement has been met. This involves establishing a mechanism for those performing the new process to measure and monitor benchmarks on a regular basis to ensure that improvements are maintained. Run charts or control charts are two examples of tools to monitor performance.

(ii) Adapt

The DBST may decide to repeat the test, gather different data, revise the intervention, or otherwise adjust the test methodology. This might occur, for example, if sufficient data weren't gathered, circumstances have changed (e.g. staffing, resources, policy, environment, etc.), or if the test results fell somewhat short of the measurable improvement goal. In this case, adapt the action plan as needed and repeat the "Do" phase (Deming, 1986).

(iii) Abandon

If the changes made to the process did not result in an improvement, consider lessons learned from the initial test, and return to the "Plan" phase. At this point the DBST might revisit potential solutions that were not initially selected, or delve back into a root cause analysis to see if additional underlying causes can be uncovered, or even reconsider the aim statement to see if it is realistic. Whatever the starting point, the DBST will then need to engage in the "Plan" cycle to develop a new action plan, and move through the remaining phases (Deming, 1986).

Wilcox (2003) indicates that PDCA offers a data-based framework based on the scientific method. This simple yet powerful format drives continuous and ongoing efforts to achieve measurable improvements in the implementation, efficiency, effectiveness, performance, accountability, outcomes, and other indicators of quality in the services or processes which achieve equity and improve the education of learners experiencing barriers to learning. At the designated points for data collection, the team will measure plan success. The team will document growth and create the next level of support for the intervention. The Georgia Department of Education (2011:23) recommends that a problem-solving process checklist be used as a guide for implementation of the problem-solving process. Team members involved in the plan for addressing learners' achievement concerns should be knowledgeable about teacher development and instructional pedagogy. This will provide a common framework of understanding for school and system level professional learning

initiatives designed to ensure that the SIAS policy interventions are implemented with fidelity.

4.9 CONCLUSION

This chapter provides a detailed description of the research context, paradigm, design and methodology of this study. The main aim was to provide information about the methods of data collection and analysis which were employed in the study. The chapter also discusses how the theoretical framework is applied. The final section of this chapter described the steps that the researcher took during this study to ensure that the research was conducted in an ethical way and that the research findings are trustworthy within the research context. In Chapter Five, the collected data is presented, analysed, interpreted and discussed

CHAPTER 5: PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

5.1. INTRODUCTION

The previous chapter provided a detailed description of the research context, paradigm, design and methodology of the study. In this chapter the position of the researcher as the main research instrument is explained. A qualitative investigation conducted as part of this study serves as the main source of information in determining the experiences of DBSTs with regard to SIAS policy implementation in Zululand District, in KwaZulu-Natal. The SIAS policy implementation is discussed as a backdrop to the presentation and discussion of the findings. The relevant literature was reviewed in Chapters 2 and 3. The interviews provided valuable data to be presented verbatim in this chapter so that the voice of participants can be heard, leading to an in-depth understanding of their experiences.

Participants were observed during the sessions and the notes were transcribed. The documents that the DBST used to support SBSTs, teachers and learners were also collected and analysed. The data generated from the interviews with principals (SBST Chairpersons) is also presented. The findings are then presented with reference to the themes and subthemes that emerged from the data, followed by a deeper level engagement with the findings in relation to the research question posed at the onset of this thesis, namely: *“What are the experiences of DBSTs with regard to SIAS policy implementation in Zululand District, KwaZulu-Natal?”*

The study sought to find answers to the following critical questions:

- What are the experiences of DBSTs in SIAS implementation?
- How do DBSTs ensure that schools implement SIAS in support of learners experiencing barriers to learning?
- Which elements hamper the provision of support services in schools?
- What guidelines could be employed by DBSTs to strengthen effective support in SIAS implementation?

Verbatim quotations are used throughout in the data presentation, analysis and interpretation. Data is presented then followed by a brief analysis by the researcher.

5.2. PROFILES OF DISTRICT BASED SUPPORT TEAM

In Table 5.1 the participants of the study are introduced based on the information acquired during the interview sessions. The participants were asked in the first ten minutes of the interview to tell the researcher about themselves, their qualifications and work profile. Their responses were written down as part of the field notes and later analysed. Confidentiality and anonymity were assured. Participants are identified according to their area of specialisation such as school counsellor SC followed by the acronym DBST (thus SCDBST), educational psychologist (EP), learning support educator (LSE), school social worker (SS), remedial education specialist (RES), special needs education (SNE) specialist. Their true identity will remain known to the researcher and the supervisor only.

Table 5.1: Profile of the participants (P) from the DBST

P	Gender	Qualification	Work Profile
SCDBST	F	Post-Graduate Certificate in Education (PGCE) Bachelor of Art (B.A.) in Social Sciences Currently registered for Honours Degree in Educational Psychology	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 15 years teaching experience • Taught in high school • 7 years as School Counsellor • Supports learners experiencing psycho social problems
EPDBST	F	Secondary Teachers Diploma (STD) B.A. in Psychology Honours in Education Psychology Master's in Education Psychology with specialisation in Guidance and Counselling	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 11 years teaching experience • Taught in high school • Taught in special school for severely mentally handicapped learners • Taught in prevocational school • Did internship programme in psychology • 8 years as educational psychologist • 4 years as a registered educational psychologist • Works with teachers and learners experiencing psychosocial problems and with learning difficulties

LSEDBST	M	<p>Senior Primary Teachers Diploma (SPTD)</p> <p>Advanced Certificate in Education (ACE) Specialised in Inclusive Education</p> <p>Bachelor of Education (B.Ed.) Honours in Inclusive Education</p> <p>Currently registered for Master of Education in Inclusive Education</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 10 years teaching experience • Taught in mainstream primary schools • 7 years as learning support education specialist • Supports learners experiencing psycho educational barriers to learning • Trains and develops teachers on IE policy
SSDBST	F	<p>Master of Business Administration (MBA)</p> <p>Bachelor of Art (B.A.) in Industrial Psychology</p> <p>B.Ed. (Hons) Education Leadership and Management</p> <p>Post-Graduate Certificate in Education (PGCE) Specialised in Life Orientation</p> <p>Postgraduate Diploma in Tertiary Education (PDTE)</p> <p>Currently registered for Master of Sociology in Social Sciences (MSSC)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 13 years teaching experience • Taught in secondary and FET colleges • 7 years as school social worker • Supports learners experiencing psychosocial problems in mainstream schools.
RESDBST	F	<p>Senior Primary Teachers Diploma (SPTD)</p> <p>Further Diploma in Education (FDE)</p> <p>B.Ed. (Hons) in Leadership and Management</p> <p>Master of Education in Inclusive Education</p> <p>Master of Philosophy in Monitoring and Evaluation</p> <p>Completed Doctor of Philosophy in Leadership and Management</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 13 years teaching experience • Taught grades 4-6 at primary school • Head of Department for Foundation Phase. • 7 years as remedial education specialist • Supports teachers, learners and parents in mainstream schools • Supports teachers in designing support programmes for learners experiencing psycho educational barriers to learning
SNEDBST	F	<p>Senior Primary Teachers Diploma (SPTD)</p> <p>Further Education Diploma (FED)</p> <p>Bachelor of Education Honours in Special Needs Education (B.Ed.) Hons</p> <p>Currently registered for Master of Education in Inclusive Education</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 18 years teaching experience • Taught in primary school • 6 years as special needs education specialist • Supports teachers in outplacement of learners who are severely disabled in mainstream schools • Trains teachers on early identification of disabilities in mainstream schools.

SCDBST was 45 years old and a school counsellor at the time of data generation. She studied for a Bachelor of Social Sciences. She had not been trained to teach learners experiencing barriers to learning. She upgraded her qualifications and obtained a

Postgraduate Certificate in Education. She has taught in high school for 15 years. She has seven years as a School Counsellor in Zululand District. She is currently registered for a Master's Degree in Educational Psychology.

EPDBST was 55 years old at the time of the study with 11 years teaching experience at a high school. She did her internship programme in a special school for severely intellectual disabled learners and again in pre-vocational school. She received promotion and worked in one of the KwaZulu-Natal education districts as a senior education specialist under the special education components for one year. She was promoted again the following year and worked as deputy chief education specialist in Zululand District. She is presently an educational psychologist in Special Needs Education Services. She is currently registered for Doctor of Philosophy in Psychology of Education.

LSEDBST was 45 years old male at the time of data generation. He studied for Senior Primary Teachers Diploma. His initial training did not include learners experiencing barriers to learning. His niece had a learning difficulty and struggled to read and write. This is the reason he decided to register for an Advanced Certificate in Education where he specialised in Inclusive Education in order to acquire information on barriers to learning. After gaining employment in the Zululand District, he continued upgrading and registered for an Honours degree in Inclusive Education. He has been working at the Zululand District as a Learning Support Education specialist for the past seven years. During the time of interview, he was registered for Master of Education in Inclusive Education.

SSDBST was 45 with Bachelor of Art in Industrial Psychology at the time of data generation. Her initial training had not included learners experiencing barriers to learning. She then diverted to education and obtained a Bachelor of Education in Leadership and Management. She taught in secondary schools and in an FET college. While teaching in the FET college she upgraded her qualification and obtained a Postgraduate Diploma in Tertiary Education. She later had an interest in supporting students. She registered and received a Postgraduate Certificate in Education specialising in Life Orientation. She thought it was not enough and upgraded her

qualification and attained Master's in Business Administration. She is currently studying towards a Master of Sociology in Social Sciences. During the time of interview, she was doing her Chapter five and had already completed the course work. She is working for the district as a school social worker.

RESBST was a 44-year-old female at the time of the study with a Senior Primary Teachers Diploma. Her initial training had not included teaching learners experiencing barriers to learning. She later registered and obtained a Further Education Diploma in Education. She also registered and obtained Bachelor of Education Honours in Leadership and Management. She was interested in supporting learners experiencing barriers to learning and registered for a Master of Education in Inclusive Education. After having obtained her degree in IE she wanted to work with full-service schools in order to find out how they were operating. She then registered and obtained a Master of Philosophy in Monitoring and Evaluation. At the time of the interviews she had completed her Doctor of Philosophy in Leadership and Management and was waiting for the graduation confirmation. She had been a Foundation Phase HOD and had taught in mainstream primary school for 13 years. She is currently a remedial education specialist in the district.

SNEDBST was 46 old at the time of data generation and held a Primary Teachers Diploma. She has Bachelor of Education in Special Needs Education. Her experience included teaching learners with special educational needs and those experiencing barriers to learning. She taught in a mainstream primary school for 18 years. Her interest in supporting learners experiencing barriers to learning encouraged her to upgrade her qualification. She then enrolled for a Masters of Education in Inclusive Education. During the time of interview, she was doing the literature review and had already completed the course work. She has worked for the Zululand District for the past six years.

The ages of the participants were 44, 45, 45, 46, 46 and 55. It can be concluded that the majority of the participants were middle aged and might be expected to be settled in terms of career and finances. It should also be noted that even though they were

trained before IE was adopted in South Africa, they were willing to accept change in the education system and embrace diversity.

The majority of the participants were females with one male. This might be evidence that the profession of supporting learners experiencing barriers to learning is gender based, possibly because of the nature of the work. This type of work is mostly favoured by females because of their passion and sensitivity. Even though they had not trained in IE in their initial training, they developed an interest in supporting learners experiencing barriers to learning. They had all upgraded their qualifications which qualified them to be in the positions they are currently in. The participants had been in mainstream schools for more than 10 years and in the district for more than six years. The researcher also held interviews with principals of schools where IE had been implemented since 2011. The rationale behind this is that the researcher believed that principals as chairpersons of SBST work collaboratively with DBSTs for the effective implementation of IE. As mentioned in Chapters one and two that these teams are interdisciplinary teams whose main responsibility is to support schools, teachers and learners.

5.3. PROFILES OF PRINCIPALS (SBST Chairpersons)

In this section the information of principals who participated in the study is discussed. The principals were also asked in the first ten minutes to tell the researcher more about themselves, their training and experience. The responses were written down as field notes and later analysed. Confidentiality and anonymity were assured. The principals will be identified as SBSTC1-SBSTC6 in the study with their true identity remaining known by the researcher and the supervisor.

SBSTC1 was female and 44 years old at the time of the interview. She started teaching in the early 1990 s. She taught in primary school as post level one until 2000. She was promoted as HOD from 2000 to 2005. She became a deputy principal in 2005 and towards the end of 2013 she became a principal. She mentioned that she was responsible for twenty-four teachers including those in Grade R. She got fully involved in the implementation of inclusive education when she was a principal because she

was supposed to ensure that teachers understand their roles in the process of IE implementation. She had been in the position of being a chairperson of SBST for four years now. At the time of the interview she had already registered for Masters in Inclusive Education. She mentioned that what mostly interests her is that she gets more information to know people and different personalities. She is also able to handle their differences and help them accordingly. She also mentioned that learners also come up with different challenges and what is interesting is to be able to identify their problems and support them or get other ways to help them so that they can achieve their goals. At the time of the study the school had 570 learners.

SBSTC2 was female and 46 years. She had qualified as a teacher in the early 1990s. She had been a teacher in post level one for a period of eleven years. She became an HOD for thirteen years. She mentioned that during her term as HOD she worked with learners experiencing barriers to learning in her school since 2004. She was selected as learner support portfolio head in 2011. In 2014 she was promoted as principal and responsible for seventeen teachers. She mentioned that she loves to work with kids and to support them especially those with challenges. She mentioned that she would like to upgrade her qualification and register for inclusive education in future. She further mentioned that she likes to support and assist teachers who are the members of SBST by always reminding them about their duties and about the importance of action plan. She mentioned that her responsibility is to monitor the progress made by teachers as well as learners. The school had 415 learners at the time of the study.

SBSTC3 was male and 53 years old during the time of data generation. He had qualified as teacher in the late 1980s and had taught as a primary school teacher for more than ten years. He had been a principal since 2005. He mentioned that he likes to work with the portfolio heads which is also SMT members. He became the chairperson of the SBST when inclusive education was introduced in his school in 2011. He mentioned that his school was also one of the pilot schools for Media in Education Trust (MiET) Africa project. The project worked with rural schools to implement IE. He had been in the principal for twelve years and responsible for eighteen teachers and the school had 380 learners at the time of the study.

SBSTC4 was a 51-year-old male at the time of data generation. He had been a primary school teacher for five years. He got promoted as HOD in the late 1980s. He later went to teach in Finishing school for one year. He had been a principal of primary school for 21 years. He mentioned that he was responsible for fifteen teachers at the time of data generation. He also mentioned that what he likes about his work is to develop and give directive to teachers. He further mentioned that he likes to see teachers being able to support learners experiencing barriers to learning. He would also like to see all stakeholders work collaboratively for the better implementation of SIAS policy. At the time of the study the school had 420 learners.

SBSTC5 was a male and 52 years old. He had qualified as a teacher in the late 1980s. He taught in a primary school as post level one for eight years. He had been the school principal for past twenty years and managing seventeen teachers. He mentioned that he enjoyed working with learners and helping those who are vulnerable. He also mentioned that sometimes he would use his car to transport learners and their parents whenever they needed support. He became involved in IE in 2010 when his school was selected as Full-Service School. He also mentioned that he established SBST to ensure that teachers and learners especially those who experience barriers to learning are supported. At the time of the data generation process he had been a chairperson of the SBST for seven years. He had an enrolment of 410 learners.

SBSTCP6 was 46-year-old male and had qualified for his teaching in the late 1990s. He taught as post level one in primary school for thirteen years. He was later promoted as the principal in the same school. He mentioned that his school was selected by Media in Education Trust (MiET) Africa for IE project as one of the pilot schools in the district in 2012. He further mentioned that during the time of the project he became much interested in helping learners experiencing barriers to learning and their families. He had been supporting learners experiencing barriers to learning since the project started in 2012. He mentioned that sometimes it is difficult to work with parents of these (learners experiencing barriers to learning) learners because they do not cooperate. However, as the chairperson of the SBST he tried by all means that learners

access education and are supported regardless of difficulties they come across. At the time of the study the school had 214 learners and ten teachers.

The principals who were participants in the study were aged 44, 46, 46, 51, 52 and 53. They ranged between 44 and 53, thus, it can be concluded that most of them were experienced in the teaching and management of the schools they were holding. The gender ratio was two females and four males. This might be evidence that management position was still dominated by males. All six principals supported the implementation of inclusive education because they had been part of implementation for the past six years. The principals aged 46 and 53 took part in the MiET project which was about implementation of inclusive education. The two principals had been involved in IE practices and have developed interest for supporting learners experiencing barriers to learning since then.

Principal aged 52 became involved in IE because his school was selected as full-service school. Full-service school accommodate learners who has moderate support needs. So, it is evidence that this principal accepted and accommodated learners experiencing barriers to learning in his school. The two female principals would like to develop themselves by upgrading for IE qualification. Principal aged 44 had already registered while principal aged 46 had not yet registered. This shows that some of the principals are willing to upgrade despite their ages. Their willingness to upgrade is evidence that managers should lead by example so that teachers in their schools would also accept change for the better implementation of IE and support learners experiencing barriers to learning.

5.4. PRESENTATION OF THE FINDINGS

In this chapter a detailed presentation of findings emanated from the data generated through individual interviews, observations and document analysis will be presented.

The data presented was obtained through qualitative methods of generating data and the main participants were members of DBSTs. As indicated in Chapter Four, the data was generated until saturation was reached. The researcher started by transcribing

the data through making texts from recorded interviews and documents, and typing them as word processing documents. The researcher identified themes and subthemes related to the experiences of DBST with regard to SIAS implementation in schools. After labelling the data the researcher logically grouped these into themes. Patterns that share similar characteristics, were also identified by means of coding.

Rule and John (2011:78) refer to this process as concept and thematic analysis, which means working with codes to identify patterns, such as similarities and differences. The researcher analysed the data that was found in the text and considered the results in order to determine whether the data was useful in fulfilling the aims of the study. The data was then summarised and linked to the literature reviewed as well as the theoretical framework of the study. The data presented four overarching main themes namely:

1. Understanding of functions of support structures in SIAS implementation;
2. Conceptions of effective SIAS implementation;
3. Practices in monitoring SIAS implementation in schools; and
4. Elements that hamper the provision of support services in schools.

The subthemes relating to each of the main themes are indicated in Table 5.2.

Table 5.2: Emerging themes and subthemes relating to DBST experiences

MAIN THEMES	SUBTHEMES
THEME 1 UNDERSTANDING CORE FUNCTIONS OF SUPPORT STRUCTURES IN SCREENING, IDENTIFICATION ASSESSMENT AND SUPPORT IMPLEMENTATION	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Roles and responsibilities of support structures in SIAS • Screening, assessment and support for the minimisation of barriers to learning • Challenges in professional development or training for teachers • Inactive support structures for IE
THEME 2 DBST PRACTICES IN ENSURING SIAS IMPLEMENTATION IN SCHOOLS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teachers attitude towards DBST visit to schools • Vastness of district and poor accessibility to schools • Monitoring progress in the process of policy implementation
THEME 3 ELEMENTS THAT HAMPER PROVISION OF SUPPORT IN SCHOOLS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inequality in provision of support and recognition of work done by DBST • Insufficient tools of trade and inadequate human capital • Community participation in learning interactions and activities of learners in and out of school

THEME 4PERCEPTIONS OF DBST REGARDING
EFFECTIVE SIAS IMPLEMENTATION

- Stakeholder involvement
- Teacher empowerment
- Lack of collaboration and complementarity between district support teams

5.5. UNDERSTANDING CORE FUNCTIONS OF SUPPORT STRUCTURES IN SIAS IMPLEMENTATION

Participants were asked to indicate their understanding of their role with regard to supporting the implementation of SIAS policy in schools. As introduced in Chapter Two, the literature indicated that DBST is a management structure at district level. Their responsibility is to coordinate and promote IE through training, curriculum delivery, distribution of resources, infrastructure development and identification, assessment and addressing of barriers to learning. Another responsibility is to respond to requests for assistance from SBSTs and assess their eligibility by gathering any additional information or administering relevant assessments, conducting interviews or site visits.

Once all the relevant information has been gathered, the DBST must provide direction in respect of any concessions, accommodations, additional strategies, programmes, services and resources that will enhance the school-based support plan. The leadership of the SBST is provided by the school principal to ensure that the school becomes an inclusive centre of learning, care and support. The core purpose of the DoE is to ensure that the whole system is organised in such a way that there is effective delivery of education and support services to all learners in schools.

One argument that continues to surface in the informal discussions among the departmental officials about the status of the DBSTs is that DBSTs will only be effective once the SIAS policy is in place. However, the functions of DBSTs are not only confined to the implementation of SIAS, but involve many other tasks, such as facilitating referrals of learners.

5.5.1. Roles and responsibilities of support structures regarding SIAS

Support refers to structured interventions delivered at schools and in classrooms within specific time frames. Support programmes should be put in place to address barriers that prevent access to teaching and learning. Participants indicated that they understand their role and the value of supporting schools, teachers and learners for the effective implementation of SIAS policy. In this regard RESDBST said:

To me support should focus on three stakeholders which is parents, teachers and learners. My responsibility is to support schools with the help of SBSTs to better understand the concept of IE.

In addition, SCDBST commented:

Being a member of DBST means that I must support teachers and learners who have additional support needs. Support means that if a learner is having a problem there must be an intervention that is given.

Similarly, SBSTC4 also confirmed what was noted by RESDBST when she stated that:

Understanding of SIAS as a policy is to support all teachers and learners in schools to meet their maximum potential.

The above findings indicate that when a learner experiences a barrier to learning and development, the support is not only given to him/her but also the teacher. The parent too should be advised on how to assist the child at home and work cooperatively with the school. This was also evident during the observations, that when DBST members were screening and assessing a learner, the parent and the teacher were also part of the whole process. After a particular screening process observed by the researcher in the field, the DBST member reported that:

Joy was 11-year-old girl in Grade four during the time of the study. She was repeating the Grade but was still struggling with reading

Grade appropriate English book. She was always interested in reading during reading period but would not read what is written in the book. She would pretend as if she is reading whereas she interprets the pictures. The class teacher had designed a reading programme for her which was reviewed three times but with no success. She was then referred to the DBST for intervention

The above finding is in line with DoE (2014:04) guidelines which must be used and motivated in the DBST action plan. The guidelines direct the DBST in determining the support package for the learner. It states that the learner has a right to be supported in his/her current school closest to his/her home. It further emphasises that a learner should be supported irrespective of the level of support required. Therefore, every effort should be made to make the support available to the learner in his/her current/closest school. This makes sense because all learners experiencing barriers to learning need to be supported wherever they are. Parents of learners who have additional support needs should not have to be the ones seeking support for their challenged children. It is the responsibility of the schools to identify the needs and implement the support required, ensuring that parents are involved and work together with schools in support of the affected learners. Teachers too need to be supported since they are having challenges in overcoming the identified barriers and if this is the case, the DBST is informed for further intervention.”

As per Deming’s (1986) theory, the ‘doing’ phase in this study was the support teams implementing and managing the improvement of the SIAS policy. They reviewed the action plans of the teachers and SBSTs, using the relevant guidelines. They rated the level of support needed and used the checklist to help determine how support was to be provided to the learner, teachers and school based on the information available. Further, the roles and responsibilities of DBST and SBST were seen as that of capacitating teachers and the identification of their needs. The following narratives serve to highlight this perception. LSEDBST noted:

It is to capacitate teachers and identify their needs. Teachers need skills and knowledge on IE policy.

SNEDBST, confirmed what was noted by LSEDBST as she perceived support as:

Capacitating teachers, SBSTs in all schools in the district and assisting them on the policy practices.

The DBE (2015:7) supports the above quote and stresses that the EWP 6 makes the following provisions for the implementation of IE by building capacity and establishing and capacitating SBSTs. SBSTC3 further said:

My role is to check if teachers implement SIAS or IE. I also ensure that I support them by capacity building.

This indicates that, from the participant's point of view, teachers need to be capacitated in order for them to understand the IE policy and practices. Teachers face a challenge with regard to the assimilation of inclusive practices in their classroom and the identification of learners experiencing barriers to learning in particular. Fulfilling teachers' needs, therefore, has a direct impact on their preparedness to implement IE effectively. The EWP 6 (DoE, 2001) document maintains that teachers should be the primary resource for achieving the goal of an IE and training system. Continuing assessment of teachers' needs makes a critical contribution to inclusion.

The above findings correlate with those of Mnatwana (2014:79) who cautions that continuous capacity building regarding IE needs to be provided to bring about a mind shift and the acquisition of new skills for teachers. She further writes that teachers should also take responsibility for keeping themselves abreast of the latest developments in inclusive practices through upgrading and reskilling courses. It is not practically possible to make IE specialists of all teachers, but there may be a way of assisting all learners to benefit from inclusive classes, which is by capacitating competent inclusive teachers.

5.5.2. Screening, assessment and support for the minimisation of barriers to learning

When asked what they do when visiting schools in support of SIAS implementation the participants gave different explanations. However, their explanations had one thing in common, that the success of SIAS was seen through there being a decreased number of learners experiencing barriers to learning. SNEDBST indicated that:

My visits are about screening learners who have been identified as having additional support need. I also visit schools to capacitate educators on early identification and referral procedures.

LSEDBST confirmed what was noted by SNEDBST, as he values commitment as demonstrated by attending the referrals to screen learners. SCDBST made the same point:

I attend the referrals to screen the learners. I also support SBST and teachers on how to screen learners.

Seemingly, SBSTC1 agreed with SCDBST and commented:

DBST come to screen and assess learners who have additional support needs. When they screen learners, they invite a teacher concerned and a parent to be interviewed. When the screening process is finished, the officials explain to the parent what is the problem with the learner and also assist the teacher how to support the learner in class.

The guidelines for inclusive schools corroborate the above findings, that uncovering and minimising barriers to learning is a central objective of screening, identification and assessment (DoE, 2010). Participants perceived that it is one of the DBST's roles to assist teachers on how to continue to supporting learners after intervention has been provided. SBSTC5 made his point clear when he said:

The DBST members visit our schools whenever we have referred learners experiencing barriers to learning. They come to assess those learners and advise us on how we should continue to support them.

This confirms what Deming's PDCA theory says, that when the intervention plan is implemented, there should be a constant flow of communication between the teams providing the intervention. Some participants stated that the core responsibility of the DBST is the minimisation of barriers to learning and development. It can be deduced from the above presentation that all the participants, though their explanation of roles and responsibilities were not the same, viewed their roles as being an effort by district officials to minimise barriers to learning at school level. The data showed that indicators of these efforts are improved scholastic performance and improved ability of teachers to identify, screen and assess learners.

The study found that participants had a clear understanding of their roles in terms of screening, assessment and support. However, the study found that there is still a need for capacity building for all education support services providers at district level. This needs to be done in order to improve intervention strategies related to learners experiencing barriers to learning. This means that teams need to commit themselves to thinking about how they operate and how they can improve intervention services for the diverse needs of learners (DoE. 2005:32). The next discussion is based on challenges regarding the professional development of teachers on the topic of inclusion which became one of the emerging themes during data generation stage.

5.5.3. Challenges in the professional development or training for teachers

One of the main challenges in the training of teachers is for them to effectively implement and facilitate the training that they have received. The success of SIAS policy depends on the support given to its key implementers – teachers, not only in implementing the policy, but in understanding and engaging with it.

Many schools have teachers who were not initially trained to teach learners experiencing barriers to learning, and there is a high staff turnover of teachers.

Ongoing development of teachers on policies such as SIAS is vital. Development should not only be on a theoretical level, but should include as much practical work and as many implementation opportunities as possible. The participants were asked to describe how they support teachers to develop themselves with IE practices in schools, which raised different perceptions of teacher development. EPDBST said:

I provide workshops where teachers attend in groups or in clusters. I train them on guidelines on psychosocial issues and on early identification of learners experiencing barriers of such nature. Teachers are also equipped with early identification skills of learners who are at risk of social problems. What I have noticed is that many teachers lack the identification skills of learners at risk of undergoing psychosocial barriers to learning.

The DBE (2010) is in line with what was indicated by EPDBST and stresses that teachers with the proper training, skills, attitude and curriculum support are needed to deliver quality education to all children. As can be seen in the above quote, participants believed that workshops enhance the implementation of SIAS policy in schools. Observations conducted during the data generation stage, showed DBSTs conducting SIAS training for teachers in one of the clusters of schools in their district. The above finding is in line with the DBE (2014:11) which highlights that crucial to the success of SIAS is the skills development of teachers to manage diversity in the classroom. The DBE (2010) corroborates the above finding and suggests teachers with the proper training, skills, attitude and curriculum support are needed to deliver quality education to all children.

The literature on management and support of learners experiencing barriers to psychosocial barriers indicate that the guideline for school management teams and SBSTs serves to provide direction to teachers, learners and support teams. It enables them to be responsive to the care and support needs of learners that are affected by psychological, behavioural and socially related barriers (DoE, 2015:37). Seemingly, SBSTC2 agreed with EPDBST by commenting:

They assist us a lot with workshops and trainings. Before trainings were conducted teachers could not identify some barriers, but now they can identify some even though there are still challenges.

It was evident that even though trainings were provided, there were still challenges which teachers encountered as far as trainings are concerned. My observation during the data generation stage seemed to suggest that teachers did not receive adequate training on psychosocial barriers to learning. In one of the training sessions that I observed, the facilitators (DBST) presented questions for teachers to discuss and make presentations after a given time. After each presentation, the facilitators had to elaborate on what the groups discussed. The facilitators explained that the strategy they used helped them to build from what teachers already know and the elaborate on the knowledge they needed still to acquire. However, what I observed during the training was that teachers expressed frustrations with this strategy because it made them feel insecure. The training involved presentations that included explanations of statements and concepts as they appear in the SIAS documents that teachers received in advance. The training took a content heavy formal presentation approach, rather than a practical approach in its mode of delivery, thereby presenting little engagement and dialogue between teachers and facilitators.

Effective training workshops are important in that they are not only for improving teachers' knowledge and skills but also for establishing interpersonal relationships and overcoming gaps in teaching practice. This means that these training workshops should address the problem of relationships among the teachers themselves and close the gaps on practical ways of teaching learners experiencing barriers to learning. However, some teachers still struggle to understand the importance of IE. This is evident in the following comment from SSWDBST:

I offer trainings and workshops. It also depends on individual teacher. There are those who are willing to learn and implement. Others attend workshops and also resist change.

This study found out that even after trainings have been offered to teachers, there are those who still resist implementing the policy. Teachers tend to resist change because they lack confidence or knowledge about the strategies needed in inclusive classrooms. From the documents reviewed and analysed, it was evident that the new curriculum expects teachers in South African classrooms to be agents of change; however, making a success of inclusion requires a mind shift on the part of the teachers as well. The PDCA theory confirms that team members involved in the implementing plan for addressing barriers should be knowledgeable about teacher development and instructional pedagogy. This provides a common framework for understanding school and system level professional development initiatives designed to ensure that SIAS policy interventions are implemented with fidelity (Deming, 1986).

Professional development strategies should equip teachers to have a responsibility for making sure that learners from whatever background feel included and affirmed in the classroom through curriculum differentiation. This requires the provision of resources as outlined in the policy. This was affirmed and made clear by SNEDBST when she indicated:

I support teachers through workshops and trainings. I visit those schools which invite me for development. I also provide resources such as training manuals, policy documents and other information that may help them develop within IE processes. Due to time allocated to teacher trainings and inadequate tools of trade, teachers are given one document per school to generate for all staff at school and continue discussing them as a staff.

It appears from the above quote that SNEDBST has in mind more than resources when she refers to training manuals that have to do with teacher training and development. The documents reviewed and analysed provided evidence of what she stated in the above quote. My observation during the data generation process were that teachers have been provided with policy documents including the SIAS policy document as well as the Curriculum Differentiation, and Concessions and Adaptation, documents. In my view, based on my observation all the three documents deserve to be given a full day each but all of them were covered in one day within a three-hour

period. From the SIAS document the following topics were covered: SIAS concept and its purpose, SIAS intention, the principle of SIAS, SIAS process and the request for assistance forms to be completed. Curriculum Differentiation topics included: CD concept, aspects of CD, lesson planning, and Concessions and Adaptation; discussion concentrated on barriers to learning and their support.

As mentioned in Chapter two, the study conducted by Maguvhe (2014:1762) revealed that some teachers had received in-service training on SIAS after the inception of EWP 6. The majority of participants interviewed shared the view that supporting teachers to develop themselves with IE practices in schools requires continuous training and workshops. There may be many definitions of training and workshopping but what is common with them is that teacher support means equipping and developing teachers with knowledge and skills regarding teaching learners with diverse needs. It can be deduced from the above presentation that all participants viewed teacher training as being efforts by support teams and a subsequent improvement in teachers' implementation processes. The data so far shows that indicators of teacher support can only be seen from what teachers can do in terms of SIAS implementation. It can also be seen through the minimisation of barriers to learning and development in schools. This can only be achieved once learner performance is improved.

5.5.4. Inactive support structures for IE

In Chapter Two it was explained that one of the roles of the DBST is to support SBSTs. It was further stressed that if there is no SBST at a school, the DBST must assist to set it up. SBSTs need to support teachers and care givers by providing opportunities for regular, collaborative problem-solving around barriers of concern of concern in their setting. They also need to facilitate the provision of support where needed. However, the challenge is mainly the dysfunctionality of DBSTs which makes it difficult for the SBSTs to support their school and fulfil their duties effectively. If the DBSTs are not functional in implementing SIAS, the vision of IE may not be realised.

It is evident from the data generated that DBSTs try to fulfil their duties by supporting SBSTs, teachers and learners. However, often there are elements which hinder their

functionality. The literature study on teachers' perceptions regarding the role of DBST and IE teams revealed that there is a lack of support in the form of human resources and that teachers wait too long to get support personnel from the district. In view of the above points, SSDBST commented:

The gap I see is that the DBST is not functional or effective in supporting SBSTs, there are less opportunities that the SBSTs can be functional. SBSTs rely mostly on the support received from DBST. This is not happening in our district. That is why many schools do not have functional SBSTs and where they are functional, not all teachers are fully involved in the process of SIAS implementation. I think there is a lack of flow of instructions.

SSDBST complained that many schools did not have functional SBSTs because there is a lack of flow of instructions; even where SBSTs are functional not all teachers are involved. The above finding from the structured interviews corroborate Daniels, Lazarus and Nel (2010:56) who identify lack of access to the DBST as being a problem in inhibiting the development of the SBSTs, also resulting in a lack of ongoing support. The literature study conducted by the South African DoE (2005) also revealed that, in some districts, there has been no meaningful support for some time. This is particularly true in rural and historically disadvantaged areas. The data also correlates with Jacobs (2015:26) as he argues that after releasing the EWP 6 on IE, the DBE faced the challenge of disseminating information to society. They also faced the challenge of providing the necessary training for teachers to implement inclusive practices including identification and assessment of learners experiencing barriers to learning in the classroom.

Moreover, the DBSTs, like other examples of district and provincial bodies, appears to lack the capacity and expertise necessary to guide SBSTs in the implementation of an IE policy. This argument is supported by LSEDBST, who said:

The gaps in this process of SIAS implementation is that if DBSTs are not functional and not effective, it affects the functionality of the SBSTs because they do not receive the support they need.

Currently, there are challenges in the functionality of DBSTs due to the shortage of tools of trade, human resource and district is too vast. These things make it difficult for DBSTs to perform their duties successfully.

LSEDBST confirmed what was noted by SSDBST, that the functionality of SBSTs rests upon the effectiveness and the functionality of DBSTs. Both participants seemed to be very concerned about the nonexistence of a DBST in their district. They believed that it is the provincial office's responsibility to empower all stakeholders on the policy implementation. The document on SIAS policy corroborates the above findings which maintains that support structures (DBST and SBST) need to be in place so that everyone understands that support to schools is multi-faceted and entails management, governance, curriculum, psycho-social and human resource planning and development (DBE, 2015:32).

Interestingly, RESDBST agreed with what was reported by LSEDBST and SSDBST stating:

DBSTs we do not normally have sessions with all SBSTs especially in site. The reason being the vastness of our district and the problem of shortage of human resources.

Affirming the above statement, SBSTC6 agreed with RESDBST and further expressed his concern:

As SBSTs we are dependent on DBST to guide and give us direction since IE is still a challenge in our schools. DBST try by all means to support us but you could see that it is not always easy to meet them.

Evidence from observation during data generation was that DBST members intervene by screening a learner who was referred by the SBST because the school had exhausted all resources trying to support the him but could not succeed. The policy document which was reviewed clearly indicates that the SNA3 form guides the DBSTs

in their intervention strategy. It also assists to review the action plan of the teacher and SBST and the guidelines should be used for support. This finding correlates with the DBE (2014) where it acknowledges that the role and responsibility of the SBST is to respond to teachers' requests for assistance with support plans and where necessary, to request assistance from the DBST. Cooperation in accomplishing tasks is necessary.

According to Deming's PDCA theory, teams must work together toward a common goal. Wilcox (2003) stresses that in teamwork each member of the team should shoulder his/her duties and or responsibilities. It appears from the above quote that participants were aware that it was not always possible to have sessions together because of the vastness of the district. They further indicated that another problem which may cause their inability to reach all schools is inadequate human resources. A major gap at mainstream schools is the establishment of inclusive classrooms with an effective and functional SBST.

The effectiveness and functionality of the SBSTs depends on the role played by DBST members who need to ensure that inclusive policies are implemented and maintained. Findings from the data indicated that schools depend on DBSTs for guidance on IE practices and need to be capacitated. However, the finding seems to suggest that regardless of efforts by DBSTs, many teachers still displayed negative attitudes towards learners experiencing barriers to learning in mainstream classes.

5.6. DISTRICT BASED SUPPORT TEAM PRACTICES IN ENSURING SIAS IMPLEMENTATION IN SCHOOLS

Despite the attitudes and challenges facing teachers in implementing SIAS policy, the majority of participants believed that something needs to be done to improve support in schools. Some participants believed that teachers' negative attitude is caused by the lack of knowledge and skills in the implementation of the IE policy. Others viewed teachers' attitude as being positive in the sense that they were willing to learn about learning difficulties and accepted any support offered by the DBST.

5.6.1. Teachers' attitude towards DBSTs' visits to schools

The majority of participants believed that the work of supporting the implementation of SIAS policy is accomplished through visiting and checking the work done by teachers and evaluating progress. Participants were asked to describe the attitude displayed by principals and teachers when they visited schools to do this work. RESDBST commented:

Their attitude is irritating, teachers are defensive. They always feel as if IE has come to add more work. They feel as if learners experiencing barriers to learning is not their baby. Their attitude is also supported by their statements of saying "*these learners*" do not belong to mainstream schools. They would say that they do not have time for individual learners since there is a lot to do in their classes.

The DoE (2002:136) concurs with the above finding and indicates that in the past learners used to be labelled as 'slow learners' or 'learners with special educational needs. The document on SIAS policy supports the above statement and maintains that barriers to learning and development may include attitudes (DBE 2014:14). Any attempts by DBST to support schools can be hampered by teachers' attitudes. Participants felt as if teachers are comfortable if they are not monitored because they prefer to teach as they wish. In other words, they teach learners as if they are the same, which means that they do not differentiate the curriculum as it should be, as stated in the policy. In Chapter Two, the literature indicated that, at times, teachers, through inadequate training, use teaching styles which may not meet the needs of some of the learners. For instance, the teacher may teach at a pace which only suits learners who learn very quickly and, alternatively, the pace and style of teaching may limit the initiative and involvement of learners with high levels of ability. RESDBST elaborated on this by saying:

When I come to visit a school some of them may not behave well to such that they view my presence as if I am coming to put

pressure on them whereas it is every teacher's responsibility to support learners. I feel as if they look at me as someone who come to remove them from their comfort zone where they will teach in such a way that *'one size fits all'*.

It can be seen from this excerpt that RESDBST was not happy about the attitude displayed by teachers. She noted that some teachers view DBST visits to schools as if they have come to add more work since they think learners experiencing barriers to learning is not their responsibility, saying *'It's not their baby'*. From her point of view, teachers still label and discriminate against learners who have additional support needs, which is evident when they say *'these learners'*. This is an indication that when DBSTs visit schools to monitor progress in implementation, some teachers do not welcome them in their schools. In addition, according to SNEDBST:

I think educators display such attitude because the trainings and workshops they receive from the department do not equip them enough. The time allocated for these training is too short. Educators are trained three to four hours on a topic meant for a week or two. In other words, they are frustrated because they are not well equipped

Makhalemele (2011:48) corroborates the above finding when he asserts that teacher training programmes conducted by DBSTs do not appear to be adequately addressing teachers' lack of knowledge and skills with regard to identification and support of learners experiencing barriers to learning. Most trainings conducted are theory based not practical. In this regard, SBSTC2 made a clear statement clear:

Previously, some teachers had negative attitude towards the district officials especially those from SNES section. They thought that when they visit schools, they have come to add more pressure and extra work of supporting learners. I think they lack understanding and knowledge.

The above finding is in line with Bantwini and Diko (2011:227) who caution that this handicap, as the officials mentioned, has resulted in some teachers avoiding

implementing policies they did not understand. They also perceived this as the only option teachers had. To either try to do what is expected of them as prescribed by the policies or else revert to their comfort zone. They felt they don't understand not because they resisted the policy but because they could not adequately interpret it. Talmor, Reiter and Feigin (2011:4) also corroborate the above finding and says that the primary condition for successful inclusion is change from negative to positive attitudes of mainstream teachers towards learners experiencing barriers to learning.

SCDBST said that she had a more positive experience:

Most principals and teachers display a positive attitude towards the support I offer. This is because they always show interest in what I tell them. They are willing to learn how to support learners.

In Chapter two, the literature study revealed that when teachers increase their knowledge about barriers to learning, their attitudes improved. EPDBST agreed with SCDBST when she said:

The attitude displayed by principals and teachers is mostly positive because when they refer learners, they really need assistance.

It was noted in Chapter two that despite the negative attitudes displayed by teachers and principals when DBSTs support the implementation of SIAS policy in schools, some teachers are positive. Their willingness to receive support from a DBST is an indication that they embrace diversity in their schools. They are ready to accommodate learners experiencing barriers to learning. The research study conducted by Geldenhuys and Wevers (2013:13) revealed that teachers do not fully understand their roles and responsibilities regarding the SIAS policy. Due to the lack of effective and structured in-service training programmes, they showed negative outcomes on the implementation of IE due to non-compliance with SIAS policy.

The presentations from this study showed that DBSTs do support the implementation of SIAS implementation in schools. However, they also felt that they were not well received by some teachers because of their negative attitudes. However, findings

showed that other teachers welcomed DBST members and were willing to learn more regarding learners experiencing barriers to learning.

The discussion so far indicates that teachers are not ready to implement the policy because they are not adequately trained thus lack the knowledge of the wide range of learner needs. The study found that teachers displayed such attitudes because they are frustrated by overcrowded classes, too much paper work, too few staff, and lack of quality support from DBSTs. It is necessary to determine what factors influence teachers of IE in South Africa. It is believed that by addressing the underlying reasons for negative attitudes among teachers, and by supplying well-planned training that considers the constructs and necessary support needs, positive attitudes regarding IE can be established.

5.6.2. Vastness of district and poor accessibility to schools

The majority of participants cited the vastness of their district as a challenge in supporting schools in the process of SIAS implementation due to the large number of schools under their jurisdiction. When asked about the number of schools they were responsible for, this study found out that participants were unable to support all schools to the best of their ability because of the workload in terms of the number of schools needing to be supported. LSEDBST's concern in this regard was:

The vastness of the district makes it difficult to reach all the schools to render support. The geographical location of the district itself is a major problem. That is why there are gaps in supporting all school in the district. The number of DBST members responsible for SIAS implementation versus that one of the number of schools to be supported in the district is showing a big difference. This was also one of the reasons why implementation is not effective.

The document on conceptual and operational guidelines for the implementation of IE by DBSTs indicates that the size of a province and the vast number of schools falling within a district places the effectiveness of the DBST's support role at risk (DBE, 2009). According to the literature study in Chapter one, Zululand District is approximately 300

kilometres away from the provincial head office which is located in Pietermaritzburg. It is regarded as a deep rural area, and is the largest district in the KwaZulu-Natal province, with more gravel than tarred roads. There are more than 700 schools in this jurisdiction. Therefore, the findings seem to suggest that DBSTs are experiencing difficulty in carrying out their responsibilities due to the geography. In addition, LSEDBST further indicated that:

It was supposed to be seventy-two (72) schools but now I'm working with the whole district which have seven hundred (700) or more schools. It depends on how much the school refers and on the given program.

The findings seem to be in line with the DoE (2005) which acknowledges that in some districts, there has been no meaningful support for some time. This is particularly true in rural and historically disadvantaged areas. It is also noted that even if support is available, it is often fragmented and uncoordinated and it is a huge challenge to unite it into a cohesive practice (DoE, 2005).

SSDBST made a similar point to LSEDBST When she said:

Initially it was supposed to be thirty (30) schools. Because of the shortage of staff where I am working, I then worked in a circuit having about 209 schools. When time went on, I ended up supporting the whole district with around 706 and more schools.

De Winnaar (2013:22) corroborates the above findings and maintains that each DBST member is assigned a certain amount of schools in their district with whom they closely work to implement IE. Based on both LSEDBST and SSDBST's point of view, the vastness of the district makes it difficult for DBSTs to effectively support schools. Participants felt that the vastness of the district affects DBSTs' capacity to visit schools to offer and build support. Both participants seemed to be very concerned about the big number of schools in the district. Participants believed it is the provincial office's responsibility to restructure the district for the successful provision of support in schools. Additionally, SSDBST lamented:

That is why there are challenges in our work because we cannot be able to support all schools effectively.

Bantwini and Diko (211:228) corroborate the above findings and agree that the district officials claim that it is difficult to do justice to all the schools, let alone the whole district, when they are thinly spread. Additionally, SBSTC4 noted:

Probably on quarterly bases. I think our district is too broad but officials do come to assist teachers with curriculum differentiation and other related issues.

From the above excerpts it is clear that the participants felt overloaded by the number of schools under their jurisdiction. From the participants' point of view, it is also noted that there is inequality in workload as far as job distribution is concerned. This seem to suggest that DBST members themselves are not clear regarding their workload regarding schools to be supported in the district. Roberts (2012:35) stated that the landscape of and the role played by school districts and their officials, their capacity to work with schools and more, is a relatively unexplored area in the South African context. On the same vein, SBSTC6 agreed with what was reported by SBSTC4 and further elaborated:

They come once a month but not all team members. The whole team comes only if there are challenges. For example, if we have referred many learners experiencing barriers to learning for assessment. I think there are many other schools which they need to support.

PDCA theory stresses that, to accomplish effective support, each member of a DBST should be assigned to a cluster of schools in a district and act as the cluster level coordinator for SIAS implementation (DCSI) in those schools. They should serve as a support and liaison to schools in the SIAS improvement process, and serve as a key member of the district leadership team. They would have cluster-level accountability

and conduct performance-based support interventions with schools in that cluster (Deming, 1986).

It can be seen from the above presentations that the majority of participants viewed the vastness of the district as a challenge faced by the DBST in terms of ensuring that schools are supported. The literature in Chapter Two revealed that there has been an historical neglect of the subsystems level of the education system and the reasons for disappointing results of the previous school improvement approaches. According to Bantwini and Diko (2011:229) South African school districts play a significant role in many ways, but they lack a legislative framework that spells out their powers and functions.

The literature indicates that the persistent calls over the past decades for a legislated district framework have not yet borne fruit. The participants in this study clearly indicated that their workload impacted their capacity to provide effective support to schools. Partly contributing to this factor was the large number of schools that officials were responsible to provide support for, ranging from 70 to 700. Justice through equal distribution of resources and hours of support and therefore success in providing a better service to all learners experiencing barriers to learning seems to be a utopian dream. The common experience among participants was that the DBST work was characterised by difficulties as members were thinly stretched in their responsibilities.

5.6.3. Monitoring progress in the process of policy implementation

Participants were asked how they monitor the work of teachers and the tools they use during monitoring. The majority indicated that when they visit schools, they check important things such as whether the school has a SBST and whether it is functional or not. They also check if all documents are in place and up-to-date. Participants noted that though they monitor teachers' work, they use different strategies. They confirmed that there is a monitoring tool that they use when they monitor progress in the implementation. This was more of a confirmation of the fact that DBST members do visit schools to monitor teachers' work. RESDBST commented:

When I visit a school for monitoring, I check if they do have SBST and if it is functional or not. If they do, I check if they have minutes of the meetings. I also ask to see the register of all learners being identified as having additional support needs. After having all documents used as evidence of implementation, I assist the SBST where they need support.

In addition, as indicated in the research methodology in Chapter Four, the tool of document review was also used in this study. Participants allowed me access to the school documents which they use during school visits for monitoring such as SNA1 forms, registers of learners with additional support needs, observation books, SBST minutes books etc. The following information was extracted from the SBST minute book of one of the schools visited (School A) dated 19 October 2017. The minutes read thus:

“Each and every teacher need to have observation book to observe everything concerning the learner i.e. late coming of the learner, always going to toilet because there might be some reasons behind”

The above minutes serve as evidence that some teachers try to practice IE in their schools. I was also permitted to access the monitoring tool the DBST used in of one the participating schools. The findings seem to corroborate findings from interviews that DBST monitor the functionality of SBSTs and they have a monitoring tool. The following was extracted from some of the sections in the monitoring tool dated 21 September 2016. The section reads thus:

“Has your school been visited by district personnel in respect of support to learners who experience barriers to learning and IE matters in this period?

Explain the support provided by the officials above

Does the school have school-based support team?

How often does the SBST meet?

How many cases has the school resolved?

Number of cases referred to District?

Number of cases that receive Psychosocial support?

Number of cases receive Psycho-educational support?"

It can be seen from the above list of questions that DBST has a monitoring tool that they use to monitor the progress of the implementation of the policy.

However, it is also noted that not all schools in the district are visited for monitoring purposes. The literature study in Chapter Two revealed that in South Africa there is no monitoring and evaluation of the progress regarding implementation of IE. SBSTC3 on the other hand, said:

We do class visits as SBST and observe how teachers present their lessons. We check the lesson plans, teaching resources, planned activities if they accommodate all learners in class. After class visit, we sit down with the observed teacher and discuss findings. I will then assist where I feel the teacher needs to be developed.

From the above quotation one can see that SBSTC3 believed that managing and monitoring policy implementation involves class visits as well as observing the way in which teachers present their lessons. On the same vein, SBSTC3 agreed with RESDBST that documents related to lesson presentation are checked. In addition, both participants indicated that it is important to have a discussion with the teacher related to the documentation and/or the classes observed. Bantwini and Diko (2011:44) support this approach when they describe the primary functions of districts in South Africa as being two-fold: to support the delivery of curriculum in schools and to monitor and enhance the quality of learning experiences offered to learners. This means that DBSTs need to ensure that they provide adequate support and guidance to SBSTs and that they assist teachers with lesson presentations. As stated by SBSTC5:

As I have mentioned that I do class visits together with other team members. I use a monitoring tool which is from the department. The tool has specific areas which focus on specific areas like curriculum, written work, subject improvement plan.

The literature in Chapter Two indicated that the SBSTs and DBSTs also have to bear in mind that teachers may sometimes contribute to the problem of barriers to learning. This includes considering how the teacher manages the class, how teaching and learning take place in the classroom, and so on (DoE, 2005a:28). Thus, monitoring their performance is crucial. The CHECK stage of the Deming PDCA theory, helps in monitoring the results and reveals whether the implementation of the policy is yielding the results that it should. Participants asserted that they believed that class visits are the best way of monitoring teachers' performance. In confirming this, SBSTC4 said:

I do class visits and check if lessons are planned on daily bases and are aligned with departmental schedules. I also check if the lessons address the diverse needs of all learners in class. Sometimes teachers plan their activities based on the performance of average learners only and disadvantage other learners.

Makhalemele (2011:48) corroborates this finding and cautions that at times teachers, through inadequate training, use activities and teaching styles which may not meet the needs of some of the learners. For instance, the teacher may teach at a pace which only suits learners who learn very quickly. Alternatively, the activities, pace and style of teaching may limit the initiative and involvement of learners with high levels of ability. It is the DBSTs' responsibility to ensure that teachers are adequately trained. Additionally, SBSTC5 further said:

The data collected during class visits and monitoring is used to identify the gaps. It assists us to identify the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats in the implementation of SIAS and in teaching and learning as a whole. The data also inform us where we need to improve our performance.

Deming's PDCA theory corroborates the above finding and advises that the DBST must create a specific plan to include progress monitoring, growth expectations, and timelines to evaluate progress. Professional learning support should be in place to

ensure and monitor that the interventions are implemented with fidelity. Affirming what was said by SBSTC5, ESDBST further asserted:

We use different strategies to monitor the functionality of SBSTs. We look at the documents they use to keep information of learners experiencing barriers to learning. The data collected inform us to fill the gaps and plan for the next development sessions.

In the same vein, participants viewed the importance of monitoring teachers' progress immediately after the development had been conducted. They believed that the information collected during monitoring assists in further development of policies in the province. The finding from this study corroborates Deming's (1986) theoretical framework.

According to the PDCA the purpose of the planning phase is to investigate the current situation, fully understand the nature of any problem to be solved, and develop potential solutions to the problem that will be tested. Deming's theory further asserts that the PDCA focuses on activities that are responsive to education needs and improving learner performance. It refers to a continuous and ongoing effort to achieve measurable improvements in the efficiency, effectiveness, performance, accountability, outcomes, and other indicators of quality in services or processes which achieve equity and improve the education of the learners experiencing barriers to learning. ESDBST stated:

The documents we look at include case registers, minutes of the meetings, observation books etc. We also check assistive devices they have and use for support.

The discussions so far are in line with what was mentioned earlier in the document on the guidelines for DBST which outline their roles and responsibilities not only in terms of the SIAS process but also in terms of verification, decision-making and provisioning, monitoring and tracking of support. Barge (2011:22) confirms that at this stage, the team (DBST) has the responsibility of deciding which intervention(s), whether pre-identified or individualised would be most appropriate for supporting learners. A deep

review of learners, teacher and SBST historical data will guide this decision. The DBST can then create a specific plan to include progress monitoring, growth expectations, and timelines to evaluate progress. Professional learning support will then be in place to ensure and monitor that the interventions are implemented with fidelity.

The discussions so far have indicated that SBSTs and DBSTs are transversal teams responsible for provision of support to teachers and schools. They should work collaboratively to design and monitor the implementation plans. As has been indicated earlier, the district offices are tasked with supporting teaching and learning in schools. Deming's PDCA theory seeks to describe how district offices as education organisations should plan, implement, check or study and act on matters of monitoring the quality of teaching and policy implementation in schools (Deming, 1986).

5.7. ELEMENTS HAMPERING THE PROVISION OF SUPPORT IN SCHOOLS

Any department or institution that works well together, has the most success together. Working with other team members whom you have great work relationship with can actually make work fun, morale is high and leads to better productivity and better results.

Surprisingly, the majority of participants who participated in this study were very frustrated about the way they were treated by other colleagues in their district. They felt that the challenge is mainly that their needs are not met in order for them to fulfil their duties effectively. If the DBSTs are not continuously supported while implementing the IE policies, the vision of the policy may not be realised.

5.7.1. Inequality in provision of support and recognition of work done by DBST

The majority of participants who participated in this study were very frustrated about the conditions they were working under in their district. They felt that the challenge is mainly that their needs are not met sufficiently in order for them to be able to fulfil their duties effectively. During the data generation I noticed that DBST members had a lot to share with me concerning the support and the recognition of their work. They

mentioned that other district officials do not even know what their work is. RESDBST voiced her complaint as follows:

The worse and frustrating thing that hampers the service delivery is that my work is not taken seriously and is undermined by most of the senior management in the district. The support services section is taken as the less critical section. It is not prioritized to such that other sections are offered posts since they are regarded as critical.

In the same vein, RESDBST emphasised:

Senior managers whom I work with do not know even what my work is about. I feel as not taken like any other official in the department. I do not get the support I should be getting from my senior managers. SIAS policy should be everyone's responsibility not specific officials.

Deming's PDCA theory corroborates the above participants' points of view and stresses that in the doing stage the team with all support staff in the district, including curriculum and all stakeholders working within the school system should *implement* the plan and *measure* its performance. In addition, SCDBST agreed with RESDBST's point of view and commented:

Other sections in the district view our section as less important than other. The Special Needs section is also regarded as the only section that is responsible for the implementation of SIAS policy. To such that circuit manager do not even know what we do during school visits.

As mentioned, EWP 6 (2001) advocates the establishment of two types of support structures, namely the SBST and DBST. In KZN, SBSTs are to be established at school level in all schools. The DBST is to operate at two levels within the district: at the circuit level (CBST), and district office level (DBST).

This means that, circuit managers form part of the CBST whose core responsibility is to assist SBSTs to access additional support programmes. The CBST is responsible for ensuring that schools within the circuit are both supported and developed. However, this study found that circuit managers do not understand the work done by DBST members especially in the SNES section. This seems to suggest that management at the SNES section in the province need to conduct an advocacy campaign on the role of SNES staff people in schools. Managers also need to be informed of their roles in schools as far as IE is concerned. They shouldn't focus on curriculum support only and neglect to support those whom the curriculum is intended to serve.

5.7.2. Insufficient tools of trade and inadequate human capital

The majority of participants interviewed shared that their district did not provide sufficient tools of trade to support the implementation of SIAS policy. They indicated that this was one of the challenges that hampers the provisioning of effective support in schools. RESDBST mentioned that:

Being understaffed and the lack of tools of trade also makes our work not having that much impact. One issue is that there are many schools that need to be supported by a smaller number of officials.

Besides the workload issue, the participants also raised the issue of insufficient tools of trade, particularly in the form of policy documents for all the teachers. To my surprise, during my training session observation, I saw that teachers were sharing photocopied SIAS policy documents because there were not enough copies to go around. Three members of the SBST from each school were invited to attend the training, so they had copies to use during the session, but many of the participants had to just listen to the discussion for information. The copies which the facilitators brought to the training were for that day only, and were collected back at the end of the day. Each school received one copy to keep and so needed to generate their own copies for their teachers. In addition, the following from the structured interviews

resonate with views from this notion about insufficient tools of trade. In support of RESDBST's view, SNEDBST commented:

The district is also experiencing a shortage of tools of trade which hampers the smooth running of our work. The workload versus the officials is another thing which hampers my work negatively. I am currently working around seven hundred (700) and more schools instead of working with 80 schools.

Makhalemele (2011:20) supports the above finding and cautions that the availability of resources has a great influence on the provision of support. In Chapter two the literature noted that limited resources impact negatively on support service delivery in schools. The literature further reveals that DBSTs find it difficult to visit schools due to the shortage of transport and district officials. The study has thus shown that the lack of tools of the trade remains a serious impediment to the implementation of policies. It is the DoE's responsibility to ensure that tools of the trade are provided if IE policy is to be effectively implemented. As mentioned earlier in Chapter Two, DBSTs are tasked with supporting all schools, teachers and learners in the district. During the planning stage of the PDCA theory the support teams must identify and plan tools or resources to be used during SIAS process. SCDBST further elaborated on the situation of resources:

There is a shortage of specialists in the section I am working in as well as in schools. Sometimes a case will require a number of different specialists to intervene before it is successful. At school level teachers are experiencing overcrowding there are no remedial education teachers and learning support assistants. The most influential thing to the implementation of SIAS is the lack of human resource.

The above quote seems to be in line with the document analysed on conceptual and operational guidelines for the implementation of IE (DBE, 2010) which states that a pool of specialists with appropriate expertise should be available for the DBSTs' to call upon, and posts for the DBSTs should be created accordingly. In Chapter Two it is

clearly stated that an essential aspect of the implementation of IE is human capital development. However, the majority of participants in this study felt that there is a huge gap in the appointment of specialists in the district. In this regard LSEDBST stated:

I think more officials or posts need to be created. Another thing is that if each member of the DBST can be assigned to a number of schools in the district other than focusing to the whole district, that can reduce workload and improve service delivery.

Geldenhuis and Wevers (2013:16) corroborate the above participant's point of view and caution that a priority for the DoE in regard to effective implementation of IE and SIAS should be the appropriate structuring, staffing and capacitating of the Department for this purpose. As seen from the quotation, a number of posts need to be created in the district. This finding corroborates the findings of the Deputy Minister and the DBE (2015) regarding monitoring and improvement in the districts, that there are a number of vacant posts that need to be filled. KwaZulu-Natal has one of the highest rates of vacant posts in the country.

This seems to suggest that all section heads in districts must ensure that their sections get all vacancies filled with qualified and competent specialists in order to ensure that officials are not overloaded with work. In Chapter Three, it was noted that limited resources impact negatively on support service delivery in schools because DBSTs find it difficult to visit schools due to the shortage of transport and district officials. The study thus has shown that lack of tools of the trade are a serious impediment to the implementation of policies. It is the DoE's responsibility to ensure that tools of the trade are provided if IE policy is to be effectively implemented.

5.7.3. Community participation in learning interactions and activities of learners in and out of school

Community participation results in staff members, learners, parents and community members assuming roles within the school and community as they work together towards a shared vision. Many studies conducted nationally and internationally support the view that engagement of parents in school influences learner performance.

There is continued evidence to support the fact that when parents bridge the gap between home and school, children experience the benefits in their psychological functioning as well as academic achievement. Thus, parents at home are the first teachers and nurturers of children's learning (Masha, 2017:291). The majority of participants viewed community participation in learning interactions and activities of learners as satisfactory. As stated by SBSTC1,

Most parents co-operate when we invite them in school and our learners took part in some of the community projects with the help of teachers. It assists the school in involving community members in issues that may create barriers to learning and affect their children.

Makhalemele (2011:48) supports the above notion and indicates that DBSTs have to look at the broader community and social factors that create barriers to the learning process. As reflected in Chapter Two, Masha (2017:33) identified that schools have a particular responsibility for engaging parents and communities in improving learner performance. The KZNDBE (2012:23) draft document on curriculum management and delivery strategy points out that education is a social phenomenon; thus, parents and community involvement play a vital role in a learner's academic success. In addition, SBSTC2 stated:

Some parents cooperate when they are asked to be involved in their children's scholastic matters. So, I can say there is a huge impact in the process of supporting learners. We cannot deny that there are those parents who always don't see the importance of participating in their children's education matters.

Lebona (2013:72) supports the above finding and suggest that parents have a key role to play in screening, identification, assessment and support of their children for effective decision-making. From the above participant excerpt, it is apparent that even though parents participate in scholastic performance of their children, some do not want to involve themselves in school related matters of their children. This finding

suggests that the team should encourage equity and ensure that all stakeholders' voices are heard in school structures and encourage voluntary participation.

This finding corroborates analysis of the DoE document Conceptual and Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of IE (DoE, 2005) which maintains that it is vitally important to work in partnership with the community to build effective schools. Creation of awareness among all the stakeholders on the plight of learners experiencing barriers to learning is important, as is establishment of collaboration between teachers and parents. Such collaboration will go a long way in changing the negative attitude towards implementation of the IE programme. In affirming the above conception, SBSTC3 noted:

There is a lot that the school is involved in, in support of learners. We have Soul Buddies Club which is a group of learners who work collaboratively with teachers, parents and community to identify vulnerable and needy learners and community members support them based on their needs.

The SIAS policy document agrees that parents are regarded as important role-players in support of IE. The intended paradigm shift is needed not only among teachers, but also among parents and the community as a whole (DBE, 2014:41). The above finding also indicates that the documents which are used to observe patterns in learners' behavioural problems, are indeed being used by teachers. This was verified during the researcher's observation in one SBST and DBST session. The DBST requested to see all documents including vulnerability assessment forms used by teachers in identifying vulnerable learners in their school. The documents indicated that the schools encourage learners with the help of teachers to participate in activities which identify needy and vulnerable learners and community members. SBSTC6 indicated that:

Learners experiencing barriers to learning are being supported and there is a big progress in their scholastic performance. Parents are also invited to be part of learning programmes designed for their children. Some do participate but others make our work difficult.

SIAS policy documents corroborate the above findings and suggest that advocacies and trainings for communities and parents be conducted by governmental departments (DBE, 2014:23). The literature reviewed in Chapter Two pointed out that EWP 6 proposes an integrated community-based model of support-provisioning in relation to the implementation of SIAS (DBE, 2014:18). The study conducted by Masha (2017:29) findings reveal that a school that is accountable to the community reflects local values and customs. It also has indicators of success that are visible and well-communicated to the public which allow parents to choose different schools if they are not satisfied with the service. The development of the school is thus seen as central in the development of the entire community. The discussions so far seem to suggest that the role of parents as partners in their children's learning and school life needs to be supported and upheld.

Masha (2017:29) further indicates that studies that have measured the effect of close parental relationships and support on children's educational attainment have noted that statistically, such children usually obtain high scores in the area of psychosocial and behavioural competence. Therefore, parental involvement is known to be linked with improved behaviour, regular attendance and positive attitudes. In addition, being involved shows the child that the parent cares about his or her education and schooling. That in itself can make children appreciate the importance of education and help them to understand that what they are doing has a purpose.

According to participants there are certain psychosocial barriers which cause major problems in school today, which hamper their work of providing support in schools. One of those barriers is the increase of substance abuse by learners in schools. EPDBST stated:

Some of the elements which hamper my work negatively is the increase of substance abuse in schools. Learners get drugs at home and develop behavioural problems in schools which later affect their school performance. Some communities and parents know about this but they do nothing.

EPDBST elaborates further, claimed that:

There is no collaboration between teachers and parents. Parents are not fully involved in their children's issues. I can say parental involvement is lacking and this leads to a lot of problems in schools which also affect our work.

The policy document on SIAS highlights that parents should be empowered to understand the importance of developing their children's potential. It is also stated that parents need access to information on the kind of support needed by the child and finally, that participation in the SIAS process is compulsory and not a choice (DBE, 2014). EPDBST believed that parents were contributing to the psychosocial barriers experienced by their children. Findings from the data corroborate findings from Chapter 2 which indicated that parents play an important role in the identification and support of their child. This is clearly outlined in the policy on SIAS that parents should take responsibility for the support of their children in the most inclusive setting possible. One of the recurring themes during the data generation stage was views of participants regarding effective SIAS implementation.

5.8. PERCEPTIONS OF SUPPORT TEAMS REGARDING EFFECTIVE SIAS IMPLEMENTATION

This section presents data on how participants perceived effective SIAS implementation in schools. It was argued in Chapter two that districts can and must play a key role in supporting schools. They should ensure that there is a system-wide emphasis on improving performance of learners. Districts provide critical infrastructure support, leadership, and prioritisation underscored by resource allocation. Without district support it is unlikely that successful school-based efforts can be sustained. All district schools should explicitly work towards improving support for SIAS implementation. This section therefore gives an account of what participants' think constitutes effective SIAS implementation in schools.

5.8.1. Stakeholder involvement

When asked what in their opinion constitutes effective SIAS implementation, one of the participants, LESDBST, had this to say:

I think SIAS will be effective if there can be a good advocacy, all stakeholders get involved and their roles well specified. The district officials need advocacy and be well informed of SIAS. The District Director also needs to be capacitated on the process of SIAS. The DD should also be well informed of his role as the chairperson of the DBST.

Deming's PDCA theory supports the above participant's point of view and argues that effectiveness is characterised by a top-down approach and makes vague references to a focus on policy implementation. This theory further states that the most important task in the planning phase is to start building relationships with different stakeholders and establish working teams with a collaborative ethos (Deming, 1986).

In addition, the participant quote is supported by the literature as presented in Chapter Two indicating that the systems for implementation of SIAS must clearly demonstrate the importance of transversal collaboration and the creation of specialists across units. LSEDBST further elaborated:

The District Director also needs to be capacitated on the process of SIAS. The DD should also be well informed of his role as the chairperson of the DBST. We need to make a clear signage about SIAS policy. Stakeholders need to plan together on a platform where there will be sharing of experiences. All sections and stakeholders involved need to voice out their challenges in specific specialization.

In Chapter Two, the literature revealed that the districts are the governing institutions, the "eyes and ears" of the government, and are led by the District Director. Therefore, leadership for the structure must be provided by the senior management of the district

which has the power to designate transversal teams to provide support (DBE, 2014). The literature further states that the DBSTs require clear direction and understanding of their roles as well as support from the DoE and national government (DoE, 2005). On the other hand, the DBE (2015) stresses that all directorates need to see how IE is their business and understand that planning and interventions need to be integrated. Further, EPDBST makes the following point:

The involvement of principal in the policy implementation makes it possible for schools to effectively implement SIAS. If a principal is not fully involved, it means the school cannot implement the policy. This means that principals must ensure that they fully participate and are involved in all SIAS practices and procedures.

The above finding is in line with what was stressed by the document on SIAS policy, that the principal of the institution is responsible for ensuring that the SBST is organised so that it addresses additional support needs of the institution, educators and learners (DBE, 2014). According to SNDBST:

Effective SIAS, implementation means that teachers identify, screen, assess and support learners. SBSTs support teachers in their classes of learners with diverse needs, they sit for meetings and discuss cases if schools refer learners for support. This can be achieved if the school principal as the chairperson of SBST is fully involved and acknowledges IE as important policy in support of barriers to learning. If the principal is not actively involved, the whole school will not be effective. Therefore, principals too need support.

The SIAS document acknowledges that the policy is binding in terms of decision-making around any form of support-provisioning to learners, schools and teachers (DBE, 2014). The above data indicates that all stakeholders in schools need to be fully involved in effective policy implementation. From SNDBST's point of view, effective SIAS implementation means that SBSTs receive support enabling them to ensure that

teachers are supported in order to assist them with the identification and assessment procedures in schools. Likewise, REDBST, went further and elaborated:

The structure of the SBST must be visible with all three portfolios in place. There must be minutes of all portfolio heads. School performance also add to the effectiveness of SIAS implementation. If the school implement SIAS it is seen by its good performance in results because results are evidence that learners get support. This can be achieved if the school adopt and implement the policy. Once all stakeholders involved owns the policy, the culture of the school will automatically change.

According to RESDBST, visibility of documents and minutes of SBST serve as evidence of effectiveness in implementation of the policy. During my observation I was allowed to access the school IE documents and other training manuals which were used by DBSTs. The availability of documents corroborated what was noted by REDBST. The above finding is corroborated by SBST minutes from School A dated 19 October 2017.

Some participants noted that schools need to be supported as argued in Chapter Two, and that the success of SIAS implementation rests upon the effectiveness of the DBST. This means that the effectiveness of SIAS implementation is also intrinsically linked to support provided in schools (DBE, 2015). In affirming the statement above, SCDBST noted:

What constitutes effective SIAS implementation is seeing school referring cases to DBST for a higher level of support. This can be achieved by ensuring that schools are also supported dealing with cases.

Observations during the data generation stage showed evidence of participating schools referring cases for screening and assessment to the DBST. The literature in Chapter Two revealed that where high-level support at school level cannot be

organised in any practical and cost-effective way, the DBST is the next level to provide additional support. In this regard, SBSTC1 believed that:

This could be achieved only if we can understand that as schools and district support structures, we are tasked to support learners to realize their goals. Without that understanding our goal will not be achieved. We need to work together as teams.

The DBE (2015:52) affirms the above quote and acknowledges that structures need to be in place in which everyone understands that support for schools is multi-faceted and entails management, governance, curriculum, psycho-social and HR planning and development support. In supporting the above statement, PDCA theory stresses that another key step in effective SIAS implementation is to develop a team goal, which serves to provide focus and clarity regarding the team's work. The theory also corroborates the above data by cautioning that effective policy implementation involves a team approach to any problem-solving.

Mavuso (2013:28) states that effectiveness in SIAS implementation can be defined as the output of the schools measured in terms of the average achievement of the learners experiencing barriers to learning at the end of the year. According to participants, involvement of stakeholders means that both DBST and SBST should ensure that they work collaboratively in order to improve the process of IE implementation.

The discussion from the research so far seems to suggest that stakeholder involvement in all processes of implementing IE is vitally important. SBSTs and DBST teams are tasked with providing support to schools and need to ensure that they welcome all stakeholders with interest in education and involve them in school structures and in decision-making. The implementation of EWP 6 is undoubtedly the responsibility of all stakeholders involved in the school as well as the community in which it exists. It is also acknowledged in the literature that teachers play a crucial role in the implementation of EWP 6 which is why most research on inclusion addresses teachers' understanding of and perspectives on this policy (Jacobs, 2015:22).

5.8.2. Teacher empowerment

In implementing change, it is important to start small, empower teachers and to take risks – start small, think big: don't over-plan or over-manage - Fullan (2010).

Teacher empowerment occurs when teachers have a say in school-based decision-making regarding programmes, such as the implementation of SIAS policy (Barge 2011:108). Because of the lack of the specialised knowledge of IE, mainstream school teachers do not feel empowered when implementing IE in their classes and to hold the key to success in learners' learning. If IE is to be implemented effectively, understanding the thoughts and professional needs of the teachers responsible for performing the process is vital. In response to this statement, SBSTC5 said:

We need to be empowered on IE practices and especially SIAS *policy*. Even if other teachers asked about services and programmes we offer in our school in connection with IE, we need to be able to respond to their queries.

Barge (2011:39) concurs with the above finding; he believes that a key piece of teacher empowerment is an understanding of the phenomenon of interest in the implementation of any type of process. The literature in Chapter two seems to corroborate the finding that as key players, teachers should be empowered and developed with adequate training and support to ensure they are able to carry out their role.

Certainly, the role of the classroom teacher is a critical piece of the SIAS puzzle and must be explored in the SIAS process. This is evident in the positive implementation of any new policy or process. The implementation of a policy must not begin at the management level but at the classroom level. Talmor, Reiter and Feigin (2011:4) suggest that another necessary condition for the successful implementation of inclusion is continuous support and empowerment of teachers by others. In this regard, SBSTC1 said:

We have staff development on IE each term. We empower teachers on *matters* related to SIAS procedures and practices. What helps me a lot is that I am a hardworking person by nature. I have done many changes and improvements in the school and in the community. I use my networking skills to empower and improve the staff at school.

In support of the finding above, I observed teacher empowerment in one of the training sessions I attended. From the above excerpt, it is apparent that SBSTC1 believed that it is the support team's role to ensure that teachers are continuously empowered and developed regarding education policies and especially regarding SIAS. The document *Guidelines for Full-Service/ Inclusive Schools (GFIS)* (DoE, 2010) maintains that although some stakeholders seem to know intuitively how to nurture inclusiveness, ongoing professional development is essential. Teacher empowerment has surfaced as a key component when analysing reform initiatives, with the sound argument that empowering teachers is the best place to start in resolving many problems in school today. SBSTC4 further states:

As support team we organise demonstration lessons to support and improve teacher's performance. *Demonstrations* help to improve confidence in teachers. We also organise people from outside to empower the whole staff at school on IE related issues.

The above quote is supported by Barge (2011:39), when he declares that if a teacher does not have a firm grasp of the phenomenon of IE, then there can never be self-assurance or confidence. This is part of empowerment and is necessary in the successful implementation of SIAS. On the other hand, the Georgia Department of Basic Education (2011:23) recommends that team members involved in the implementation plan should be knowledgeable about teacher empowerment and instructional pedagogy. Similarly, SBSTC6 further elaborated and agreed with SBSTC4 and said:

I empower teachers during staff development on quarterly bases. I invite people from outside to develop them. I also motivate them to

be lifelong learners. They also get empowered during workshops and trainings offered by the Department.

SBSTC's point of view was affirmed by the Integrated Strategic Planning Framework for Teacher Education and Development in South Africa document (DBE, 2011) which maintains that teacher empowerment works even better when teachers are provided with positive reinforcement (DBE, 2011). The majority of participants believed that it was their responsibility to ensure that teachers are empowered regarding IE policy. They also perceived their role as networking with other stakeholders in order to improve and develop teachers and improve their teaching practices in an inclusive class. According to the DBE there is a need to ensure that all efforts to address teacher empowerment, school policies, improvement plans, programmes and ethos are developed in a manner that reflects inclusive practices.

5.8.3. Lack of collaboration and complementarity between district support teams

DBST members who participated in this study believed that all officials or sections in the district should work together as a team since everyone is tasked with supporting schools, teachers and learners in one way or another. Most participants believed that it is the national and provincial DBE's responsibility to ensure that all members of the DBST work collaboratively in order to enhance the complementarity of their work with that of the SBSTs. In this regard, EPDBST commented that:

For the enhancement of collaboration and complementarity between all stakeholders involved in SIAS policy implementation, IE should be driven at province. District officials cannot be able to tell district directors to be involved in the implementation of SIAS policy. It is the Provincial Based Support Team (PBST) which is chaired by the Minister of Education's responsibility to ensure that DBSTs are functional. This is not happening as it should be.

The literature in Chapter Two affirms the above finding and acknowledges that the Framework and Management Plan (FMP) states that the provincial education

departments' role is to assist through facilitating projects and ensuring that there is appropriate local support (DoE, 2005b). It is further mentioned that provinces should ensure local buy-in so as to ensure sustainability and deep systemic change. Provincial DBEs can assist by following directives from the National DBE. This role should be viewed against the backdrop of potential lack of effective implementation in particular areas of the programme, for example, the dysfunctionality of the DBSTs. According to Roberts (2011:31) the dysfunction of DBSTs may be caused by a lack of autonomy of provinces by being unable to prioritise the implementation of programmes (DoE, 2006a). In a similar vein, REDBST said:

Planning together as district sections and have one goal can enhance collaboration and *complementarity*. Currently, as Special Needs section or IE we work in silos. The district director should ensure that all sections get together and come up with common activities which needs to be offered in schools. Working together will reduce the repetition of duties by officials which frustrate and confuses teachers. In other words, sections must work as a team for the benefit of learners who have been previously disadvantaged and ignored.

In addition, as indicated in PDCA theory, the purpose of the planning phase is to work together and investigate the current situation in schools. Teams need to fully understand the nature of any problem to be solved, and to develop potential solutions to the problem that can be tested. The findings corroborate Barge (2011:22) who confirms that at this stage, all district teams have the responsibility of deciding which intervention(s) (whether pre-identified or individualised) would be most appropriate for supporting schools, teachers or learners. A deep review of learners, teacher and SBST historical data will guide this decision. SSDBST agrees with REDBST:

I think district support *teams* need to work together collaboratively. The DD need to ensure that support is provided collaboratively. Currently each section in the district is working in silos. Yet we all go to schools to support teachers and learners. When we are in schools, we speak different languages and that confuses teachers. When teachers are not clear of what they need to do, they cannot

support learners who also have additional support needs. The focus on training of all DBST members should start at the district and downwards.

The document on SIAS policy affirms the above finding and acknowledges that the implementation of the policy requires that there are functional transversal DBSTs that are staffed at a maximum level. These teams need to be trained and operate within the framework of the District Development Policy (DBE, 2014:25). In addition, Chapter Two indicates that the DBE is responsible for developing the capacity of all support service providers to provide a holistic and comprehensive support service, including the ability to 'work together' in coordinated and collaborative ways. This involves moving from a currently fragmented, uncoordinated approach to an integrated one that brings together the different role-players to understand and address barriers to learning. Likewise, SBSTC6 said:

District officials themselves do not work together because when curriculum officials come, they do not speak about learners experiencing barriers to learning. All they want is that teachers must concentrate on ATP's. Only to find that there are many learners who will be left *behind* because teachers rush to finish the terms' work. When SNES officials visit, they speak different language, they also tell teachers to consider and plan lessons according to the learners' different needs. That put teachers in dilemma because they do not know who to listen.

Based on the above participant's point of view, principals viewed collaboration among the DBST members as an important factor in the provision of support in schools. Working in silos hardly creates a dilemma for teachers as they are always left no choice but continue teaching learners. The document on GFIS (DBE, 2010) clearly describes the job description of subject advisors at district and provincial level which includes responsibility for ensuring that all learning areas in the curriculum are accessible to all learners, and that they seek help from members of the DBST to assist them in doing this. The job description of specialist support staff (therapists and special needs advisors) at district and provincial level must include the responsibility for

ensuring access to appropriate additional support programmes/services within the framework of the SIAS strategy, for learners who experience barriers to learning and development.

On the other hand, some participants believed that the success of SIAS implementation rests upon the district support teams to own the policy and do justice. According to SSDBST's point of view she felt that support teams are not doing enough to support schools for the benefit of learners experiencing barriers to learning. For IE to be successful it is everyone's responsibility. SNDBST further noted that:

All support teams in a district involved can do justice. SIAS policy needs everyone to take full responsibility and own the policy. I am saying this because IE is seen as if it is for certain group of people. If you mention SIAS policy to colleagues, you are just talking about "nightmare". Even when you talk about learners experiencing barriers to learning they label them as "your learners". Collaboration and complementarity can be enhanced if all section heads can be involved in the planning process. All the directors should ensure that everyone in the district is part of SIAS implementation for the benefit of all learners in schools.

The finding above is in line with the policy document on SIAS which suggests that collaboration entails involving support staff from the district (DBST) that includes all who operate as transversal teams to support schools, to identify and address a wide range of systemic and other barriers and to mentor and guide schools to implement IE in all its dimensions (DBE, 2014). Similarly, SCDBST also believed that:

If all members can work collaboratively and not in isolation, the SIAS policy can be implemented effectively and successfully. This is because each official works and attends to cases on their own without involving other specialists. This makes support being repeated, sometimes not successful.

During the data generation stage, what I observed was that when I visited one of the participating schools for observation, the only district officials I met were from the

curriculum section. That official went to that school to provide support to foundation phase teachers. Knight (2012:32) corroborates the above participant's point of view. He argues that since SIAS is an integrated approach which involves other governmental departments, it is very important to work collaboratively with DBST and adopt the PDCA theory in order to improve the implementation of the policy.

From the above participant's point of view, it is noted that when DBST members visit schools for support, they do not work as a team, something I noticed in my observation. This means that there is a chance of repetition of services delivered by different officials from one district. This also means that it is easy for schools to see that the district officials do not plan their services together and there is no collaboration in what they do in terms of support.

It is clear from the data generated that all sections in the district should work collaboratively towards the successful implementation of policies and for the support of learners experiencing barriers to learning. According to the DBE, one of the DBSTs priority tasks in the planning phase is to start building relationships and establishing working teams with a collaborative ethos. SCDBST suggested that:

I think if members of the DBST including Curriculum, SNES, Governance Examination, Teacher Development etc. can meet at least once a month to discuss and share how each section should form part of SIAS policy implementation. They should also discuss how support be offered to learners with additional support needs. SIAS policy can be effectively implemented in school. Number of learners with barriers to learning can also be minimized.

The above suggestion affirms Deming's theory, which clearly explains that, collectively, DBST is responsible for the implementation of IE and the effective functioning of the SIAS process. In order to ensure that their plan of action happens, the DBST should understand that IE strategies rely on team participation, committed teachers and a process driven by effective SBSTs and supported by a can-do DBST. They also rely on teamwork between different directorates, government departments

and groups that might not have worked together before. ESDBST further elaborated on this:

I feel that SIAS is a good policy that had been made. What I have noticed is that the implementation depends on the interest of the provinces and districts. The policy makers and the department of education did not work collaboratively during the policy making. I also feel that SIAS was not well introduced nationally. And support teams are not all involved. Even in provinces, SIAS is not implemented effectively the way it should be.

Bantwini and Diko (2011:22) corroborate the above quote, pointing out that even though South African districts play a significant role in many ways, they still lack a legislative framework that spells out their powers and functions. In Roberts (2011:34) observations, there has been a historical neglect of the subsystems level of the education system and the disappointing results of previous school improvement approaches. The South African Department of Education (2005) also acknowledges that in some districts, there has been no meaningful support for some time. The findings seem to suggest that DBST structures need to be aligned to the existing structures so that no new structures are set (DBE, 2015:79). In affirming the above notion, SBSTC3 reported that:

There is no link between the district officials' work, different sections function differently from one another but all these people come from one district. I think there is a communication breakdown. The province or the district senior management needs to ensure that schools are provided with one effective support system which entails integrated district support service.

Challenges such as those mentioned above are affirmed by the literature study in Chapter Two, that indicates that all directorates need to recognise how IE is their business (DBE, 2014). This seems to suggest that DBSTs should provide a coordinated professional support service to schools. Therefore, all directorates need to understand that planning and interventions need to be integrated.

The majority of participants in this study affirmed that the enhancement of collaboration and complementarity between DBST and SBST members as people tasked to support SIAS implementation will be determined by the involvement of all stakeholders. This study found that DBST do not work collaboratively as people tasked to provide support in schools. Therefore, findings suggest that the DoE at national and provincial levels should ensure that DBSTs are capacitated on all policies and that their responsibilities should be clearly stated. The findings also suggested that all sections in the district should come together and discuss their area of specialisation so that their challenges regarding support offered in schools is discussed and plans of action are designed. This will ensure team work and the reduction of repetition of services by district officials which at a later stage confuses teachers. To conclude, from the themes that emerged from the presentation and data analysis, a diagram was constructed that summarised the findings (Figure 5.1).

5.9. SUMMARY OF THE FINDINGS AND PRESENTATION OF THE DIAGRAM

The diagram illustrates the themes that emerged from the research study. A summary of findings on the experiences of district-based support team with regard to SIAS implementation in Zululand District is illustrated in Figure 5.1.

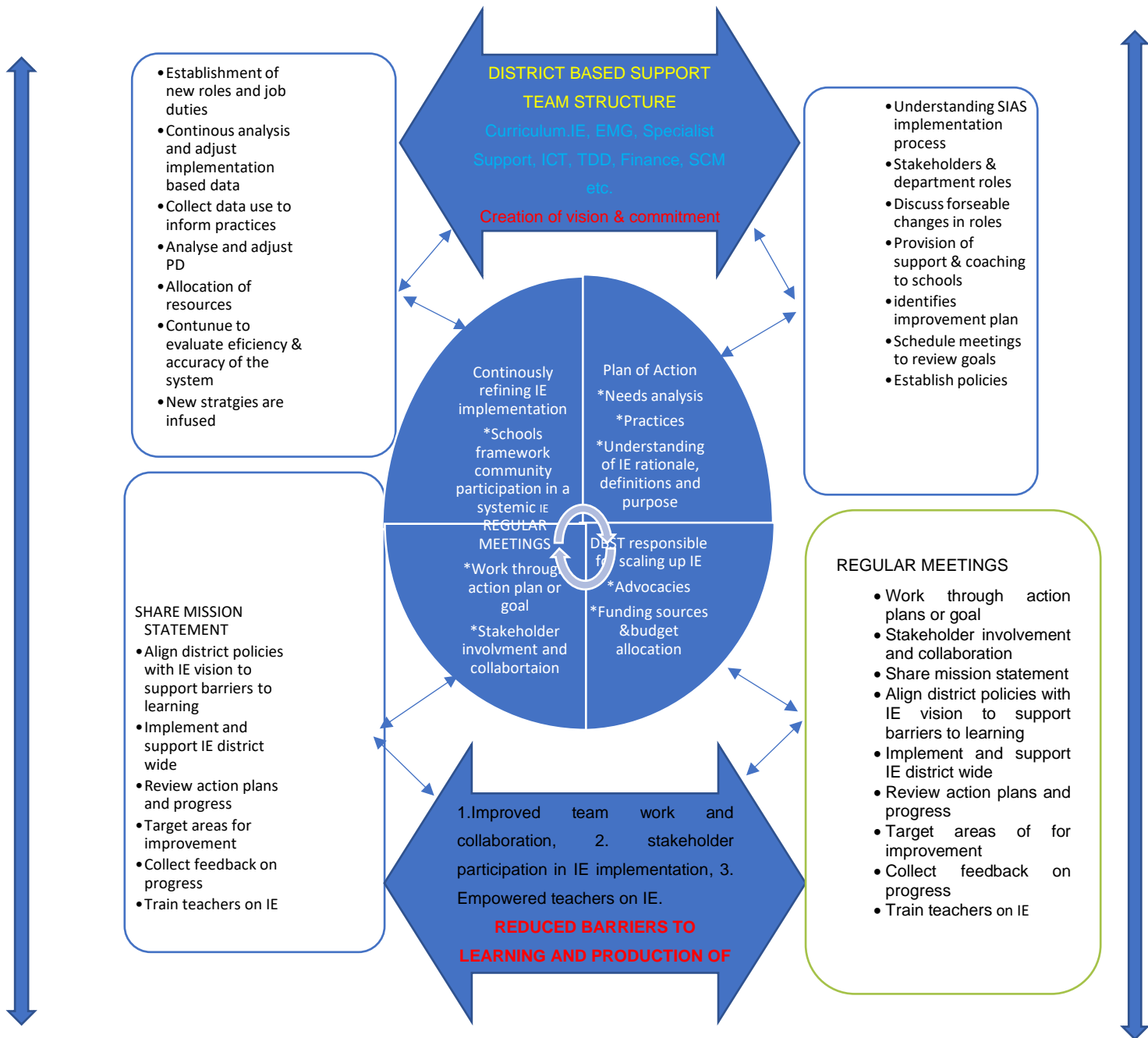


Figure.5.1: Summary of findings

The diagram in Figure 5.1 affirms Deming’s PDCA cycle which is sometimes called a team involved tool (TIT) because it involves as many stakeholders as possible. The PDCA cycle requires a commitment and “continuous conversations with as many stakeholders as possible ... it is a constant process” (Deming,1986). According to this theory a DBST needs to work together as a team. DBSTs need to involve all district stakeholders and have a clear vision and commitment to the IE process. It is evident

from the above diagram that officials at the district level need to inspire, facilitate and monitor growth and improvement, along with holding high standards for everyone promoting the essential components of IE. The significant systemic changes needed to implement IE with integrity requires collaborative problem-solving with colleagues, schools and community members, and commitment of resources and time.

The diagram suggests how the DBSTs should work towards effective IE implementation, particularly the SIAS policy. For the findings in this study, the theory is relevant for the continuous commitment of all district directorates. Inclusive education needs everyone to take the responsibility of support provision in schools. DBSTs need to have one common goal and mission, that of improving access, equity and quality for all learners in schools. However, lack of commitment and team work from stakeholders indicates that there are certain challenges hindering the successful implementation of IE policies as mentioned above.

5.10. CONCLUDING REMARKS

Based on the above presentations, this study found out that: *Firstly*, the DBSTs role is that of supporting schools, teachers and learners for the effective implementation of SIAS policy. They are responsible for the establishment of the SBSTs and ensuring that they are effective by monitoring their functionality. It is their responsibility to capacitate teachers by training and providing them with knowledge and skills in order to be able to deal with the diverse needs of learners in their classes. They need to screen learners with additional support needs. They have to work collaboratively with SBSTs to support schools to implement SIAS policy. This finding corroborates the document on the guidelines for the DBST which outline their roles and responsibilities not only in terms of SIAS processes but also with verification, decision-making and provisioning, monitoring and tracking of support. It was also mentioned that successful support of SIAS also requires the development of teachers' skills to manage diversity in the classroom, as this is assumed by the policy.

Secondly, it is noted that not all stakeholders are fully involved; their involvement plays a crucial role. The DBE needs to advocate DBSTs and SBSTs in order to ensure

stakeholder involvement. The district director needs to chair the DBST if policies are to be effectively implemented. The study found that currently DBSTs are not effective because directors are not fully involved in the implementation of SIAS policy. This suggests that for the policy to be effectively implemented, there must be a top-down approach. The study found that most principals are also not fully involved in the implementation process of SIAS policy. They do not take support seriously if it is not from their immediate supervisors who in this case are their circuit managers. The findings suggest that DBSTs need to empower teachers through trainings and workshops. However, the study found out that DBSTs are experiencing difficulties when comes to information dissemination and the empowerment of teachers because they are inadequately supported by the district.

Thirdly, teachers have attitudes towards the DBST visits to schools and as a result they display unacceptable behaviour. This suggests that teachers are not all ready to implement the policy because they were not adequately trained and lack knowledge of the wide range of learner needs. The study found that teachers displayed such attitudes because they are frustrated by overcrowded classes, too much paper work, lack of staff and lack of quality support from DBST. The study also found out that DBST members felt overloaded by the number of schools they need to support and the vastness of the district which makes it difficult to visit and support all schools. As a result, DBSTs visit and monitor only those schools which are effective and whose SBSTs are functional. However, DBSTs do monitor teachers' progress after trainings have been conducted.

Lastly, the study found out that DBSTs are not adequately supported by the district and not all the district personnel are involved in policy implementation; as a result, officials are not treated equally and fairly. DBSTs cannot execute their duties effectively because they are understaffed and are not provided with the tools of the trade to support schools. This suggests that the DBE needs to employ specialists in the District who will be available whenever schools need them. There is a need to provide tools of the trade if policies are to be implemented effectively. The study also found that there is a lack of stakeholder collaboration which includes parents. This suggests that at a national level, DBE needs to ensure that advocacy happens and

monitoring of policy implementation is undertaken at provincial, district and schools' level.

The findings from this study also indicate that district officials do not plan their support delivery activities when they visit schools. The study indicated that due to the lack of planning together as a team, there is a repetition of services in schools which in turn confuses teachers. The findings suggest that DBST members should sit together as a team and discuss challenges regarding support provided in schools. This will assist the enhancement and collaboration of their (DBST) work. This chapter was devoted to descriptive analysis and interpretation of how the participants perceive their experiences with regard to SIAS policy implementation in schools. In the next (final), chapter, I draw conclusions from the research and make recommendations.

CHAPTER 6: SUMMARY, LIMITATIONS, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER STUDIES

6.1. INTRODUCTORY REMARKS

The previous chapter dealt with presentation, analysis and discussion of themes that emerged from the study. After careful consideration of the data presented in Chapter Five, and the themes that emerged, certain clear lessons have been learned from the study. Based on the findings and themes outlined in the previous chapter and the lessons from the study, pertinent recommendations and implications for further research on IE are discussed.

In this study a qualitative approach was used in order to explore experiences of DBST members with regards to SIAS policy implementation in Zululand District, KwaZulu-Natal. In answering the research question, interviews, documents and observations were used as methods of data generation.

The following were the objectives of the research:

- To explore the experiences of DBSTs with regard to SIAS implementation.
- To describe the ways in which DBST ensure that schools implement SIAS in support of learners experiencing barriers to learning.
- To find out elements hampering the provision of support services in schools.
- To provide guidelines that could be employed by DBSTs to strengthen the support in SIAS implementation.

The findings were pertinent across all sets of data generated. Principals as chairpersons of SBSTs and whose responsibility is to work collaboratively with DBSTs, were also interviewed. The research study enabled the DBST member participants to relate their experiences regarding the implementation of SIAS policy in Zululand District, in KwaZulu-Natal.

6.2. SUMMARY OF THE FINDINGS

Despite the support provided to schools regarding the implementation of SIAS policy, reflections from the findings indicated that there are elements hampering effective and successful implementation. The purpose of this study was to explore the experiences of DBST with regards to SIAS implementation in Zululand District. The relevant literature was reviewed in Chapters Two and Three. In Chapter Four the methodology was discussed and in Chapter Five the data was presented and analysed. The findings from the literature review, interviews, documents and observations are addressed according to the themes identified from the analysis. The DBSTs comprise individuals who are qualified experienced teachers with expertise in the fields of IE, special needs education, learner support, remedial education and psychological services.

Profiles indicated that the majority of the interviewed DBST members had experience of teaching learners in mainstream schools of between 10 and 18 years. They had worked in the district IE directorate for between seven and eight years (see Table 5.1). Between them they had Honours Degrees in teaching and Master's Degrees in either IE, learner support, psychology, remedial education or special needs education. This indicated that they were suitably qualified to be members of the DBST. Furthermore, it is also noted that these officials had been in the education system long before the introduction of IE but upgraded their qualification to meet the demands of the system. This was evidence that the participants were highly qualified to support learners experiencing barriers to learning.

The KZN DoE has been engaged since 2008 in preparing the system for the implementation of the draft policy on SIAS. This entailed expansion of the IE budget to create and fill IE posts at provincial, district and circuit level, appoint learning support teachers, and establishment of transversal district/circuit teams (DBSTs) to support schools and establish SBSTs. It was anticipated that the policy was to be promulgated before the end of 2014 for implementation in 2015. Therefore, structures were put in place in which everyone understood that support for schools should be multi-faceted and entail management, governance, curriculum, psycho-social and HR planning and development support. The structures were established in order to support the

implementation of IE in schools. However, teacher training programmes conducted by district officials did not appear to be adequately addressing teachers' lack of knowledge and skills with regard to identification and support of learners experiencing barriers to learning.

In this study, DBST members were asked about their experiences regarding the implementation of SIAS policy and what their perceptions of it were. They mentioned both successes and challenges, and the majority agreed with one voice that SIAS policy is intended to assess the level and extent of support required in schools and in classrooms to maximise learners' participation in the learning process. According to the DBE (2015:07), EWP 6 makes provision for the implementation of IE by establishing mechanisms for the early identification of learning difficulties using the policy on SIAS and developing the professional capacity of all educators in curriculum development and assessment. Bantwini and Diko (2011:228) also assert that the vision of the DBE is to ensure that all South African people have access to lifelong education and training opportunities that will contribute towards improving the quality of life and building a peaceful, prosperous and democratic society. However, the DBST members who participated in this study believed that SIAS will be effective and successful once all stakeholders are involved and adequate support is provided.

The next section provides a summary of the research questions investigated and makes recommendations. It is important to indicate that the themes and subthemes are highly interrelated and that comments from DBST members and principals could be related to one or more themes. The section also provides a brief summary of the answers to the research questions.

6.3. FUNCTIONS OF DBSTs IN SUPPORTING SIAS IMPLEMENTATION

One of the core purposes of the DBE is to ensure that the whole system is organised in such a way that there is effective delivery of education and support services to all learners who experience barriers to learning and development in both public ordinary as well as public special schools. One argument that continues to surface in the informal discussions among the departmental officials about the status of the DBSTs

is that DBSTs will only be effective once the SIAS strategy is in place. However, the functions of DBSTs are not only confined to the implementation of SIAS, but continue to serve many other tasks, such as facilitating referrals of learners for placement in specialised settings, outside the implementation of SIAS, thus they must remain effective in these tasks as well. DBST members indicated that they understand their role and the value of supporting schools, teachers and learners for the effective implementation of SIAS policy.

DBSTs' role is that of supporting schools, teachers and learners for the effective implementation of SIAS policy. They are responsible for: the establishment of the SBSTs and ensuring that they are effective by monitoring their functionality; capacitating teachers by training and providing them with knowledge and skills in order to be able to deal with the diverse needs of learners in their classes; and, screening of learners with additional support needs. They have to work collaboratively with SBSTs to support schools to implement SIAS policy. The DBE (2015) highlights guidelines for the DBST which outline their roles and responsibilities not only in terms of the SIAS process but also regarding verification, decision-making and provisioning, monitoring and tracking of support. It was also mentioned that the success of support for SIAS is also dependent on the skill development of teachers to manage diversity in the classroom, as this is assumed by the policy.

Findings from this study indicate that when a learner experiences a barrier to learning and development, they are not the only ones that should receive support, because the teacher needs support too. Parent should also be included and advised on how to assist the child at home and work cooperatively with the school. This was also evident during the observations conducted by the researcher when a DBST member was screening and assessing a learner, that the parent and the teacher were also part of the whole process. The DBE (2014:04) guidelines must be used and motivated in the DBST action plan. The guidelines direct the DBST in determining the support package for the learner. It states that the learner has a right to be supported in his/her current school closest to his/her home. It further emphasises that a learner should be supported irrespective of the level of support required.

The South African education system has put in place various support structures and services in the form of district and circuit teams within the education departments. Their role is to provide support to teachers and schools with the ultimate goal of meeting the full range of learners' needs. Unfortunately, in many education districts these teams are not adequately supporting the schools or the teachers. Teachers receive conflicting and confusing messages regarding assessment and support which frustrates their ability to manage the diversity in their classrooms. DBSTs themselves have varied understandings of and perspectives of IE which further exacerbates the situation. Findings indicate that teachers remain unfamiliar with and inexperienced in utilising the strategies that have been developed by the DBE to support the implementation of IE such as SIAS. SIAS is seen as an additional administrative burden and not a useful tool. However, teachers with the proper training, skills, attitude and curriculum support are needed to deliver quality education to all children (DBE, 2010).

The researcher agrees with the statement that all learners experiencing barriers to learners need to be supported wherever they are. This means that parents of learners who have additional support needs should not be burdened by seeking support for their challenged children. It is the responsibility of the schools to ensure that parents work together with schools in support of learners. Teachers too need to be supported since they have many challenges in managing the identified barriers and if this is the case, the DBST is informed for further intervention. Principals who were participants in this study in their capacity of chairpersons of SBSTs indicated that DBSTs do not visit their schools regularly to support the implementation of SIAS policy. Thus, despite the fact that it is the responsibility of DBSTs to offer support to schools, the findings indicated that there is a huge time gap between school visits which does not reflect well on the DBSTs. It was also evident that some schools do not access the district's support holistically.

The discussions above reinforce Deming's PDCA theory that underpins the study. The theory asserts that the purpose of the 'doing' phase is that the support teams implement and manage the improvement of the SIAS policy. They review the action plans of the teachers and SBSTs and use the guidelines for support. They rate the

level of support needed and use the checklist to help determine the how support is to be provided to the learner, teachers and school based on the information available. Careful attention needs to be paid to the planning of the intervention as this assists teams in providing collaborative and effective support to learners and teachers. This section presents and discusses recommendations which are made based on the research questions and findings of this study.

6.3.1. Roles and responsibilities of DBSTs in supporting of SIAS

It is indicated that teachers do not fully understand their roles and responsibilities regarding the SIAS policy due to the lack of effective and structured in-service training programmes. For this reason, teachers are likely to show negative outcomes on the implementation of IE due to non-compliance with the SIAS policy. Thus, it is the responsibility of the DBSTs to ensure that teachers have a clear definition of what constitutes learning difficulties so that they can identify and assess such learners in their classes.

Recommendations:

1. It is recommended that to support the implementation of IE, specifically SIAS policy, support should be directed to all stakeholders which include learners, teachers and parents. Parents must be well informed of the decisions taken concerning barriers experienced by their children and be part of decision-making. It is suggested that advocacy efforts should be directed to the community regarding barriers to learning and the type of support that is available.
2. To improve the effectiveness and the functionality of SBSTs, principals should be well informed of the IE practices in order to be able to manage SBST functionality and to support teachers if they encounter challenges. If the principal does not have knowledge of IE, the whole school will not be able to practise it. Thus, the researcher recommends that the leadership for the SBSTs be provided by the school principal to ensure that the school becomes inclusive.

3. It is recommended that for teachers to be inclusive teachers, they need development, especially in dealing with diversity in their classes because most teachers did not receive training in teaching learners having diverse needs in their initial training.
4. To support teachers to be inclusive, the researcher recommends that they need to change their mind set and critically reflect on the strategies they use on a daily basis so that they can accommodate individual learners. They must always check the effectiveness of their intervention towards learners and accept them as unique individuals with potential.
5. To ensure that all schools are visited regularly to screen and assess learners, there should be the provision of adequate support. Therefore, the researcher recommends that each member of the DBST should be assigned to a cluster of schools in the district and act as a district level coordinator for SIAS implementation. In this way no school will be left behind because they will be manageable and all learners will be assessed and supported with immediate effect.

6.3.2. Screening, assessment and support for the minimisation of barriers to learning

This study found that there is still a need for capacity building for all education support services providers at district level. This needs to be done in order to improve intervention strategies to learners experiencing barriers to learning. This means that teams need to commit themselves to thinking about how they operate and how they can improve intervention services for diverse needs of learners.

Recommendations:

1. This study found that there is no collaboration among stakeholders and teachers struggle to provide support to learners who have additional support

needs. It is a challenge for teachers to implement IE. It is recommended that principals should ensure that all stakeholders in schools are part and parcel of departmental policy implementation for the benefit of all involved.

2. For SIAS policy to be effectively implemented in schools, all departmental stakeholders which include social workers, health practitioners, South African Police Services, Home Affairs etc. should be made part and parcel of school action plans, decision-making, year plans, meetings, extra-curricular activities and be informed about all school policies. This will assist the schools to access assistance easily. If stakeholders work collaboratively with the school, there are less chances that the school will encounter problems.

6.3.3. Challenges in the professional development or training for teachers

Findings from the study reveal that trainings conducted by DBSTs did not provide teachers with adequate skills to teach in inclusive classrooms. The training observed by the researcher took a formal presentation approach, rather than a practical approach. Teachers expressed their frustrations with the approach as it made them feel insecure.

Recommendation:

1. It is recommended that DBST must ensure that the trainings provided to teachers equip them enough for the daily challenges in their classes. They must improve facilitation strategies to be practical rather than theory based.

6.3.4. Inactive support structures for IE

The study found that the DBSTs are not functional and appear to lack the capacity and expertise necessary to guide SBSTs in the implementation of IE policy. It is noted that if the DBSTs are not functional while implementing this particular policy (SIAS), the vision of IE may not be realised.

Recommendations:

1. Despite the effort made by DBSTs to execute their duties, the researcher recommends that it is the provincial office's responsibility to empower all district stakeholders on IE policy implementation.
2. It is recommended that all support structures (DBST and SBST) be in place and capacitated in such a way that everyone understands that support to schools is multi-faceted and entails management, governance, curriculum, psycho-social and human resource planning and development.

6.4. FINDINGS ON DBST PRACTICES IN ENSURING SIAS IMPLEMENTATION IN SCHOOLS

The research findings revealed that DBSTs encounter some challenges in their effort to implement IE policies. The study found that any attempts by DBSTs to support schools are sometimes hampered by teachers' attitudes. Challenges that influence the implementation of SIAS policy are addressed below.

6.4.1. Teachers' attitudes towards DBSTs visiting their schools

The study found that some teachers have bad attitudes towards the DBST visits to their schools; as a result, they display unacceptable behaviour. It is noted that teachers displayed such attitudes because they are not adequately trained and lack the knowledge, skills and competencies of dealing with a wide range of learner needs. Teachers also lack quality support from the DBST.

Recommendations:

1. It is recommended that the DBSTs ensure that teachers are adequately trained. They should constantly try to develop their practice, using their expertise and networks to find out-of-the-box solutions such as seeking information from other districts and provinces regarding development of positive teacher attitudes.

2. It is crucial that DBST members are themselves highly motivated and supported in order to lead teachers by example in the process of supporting the implementation of IE policies.

6.4.2. Vastness of district and poor accessibility to schools

The literature study in Chapter Two indicated that the relationship between the landscape and the role played by districts and their officials, and their capacity to work with schools and more, is a relatively unexplored area in the South African context. The DBSTs find it difficult to do justice to all the schools, let alone the whole district, because they are thinly spread (Bantwini and Diko, 2011:228). The common belief is that the DBSTs work is characterised by difficulties as they are thinly stretched in their responsibilities.

Findings from interviews with DBSTs and principals confirm that their workload in relation to what is feasible to accomplish at the district level is a major challenge in most districts, impacting their capacity to provide effective support to schools. This study found that partly contributing to this factor is the large number of schools that officials are responsible for in terms of support. Justice and success in providing a better service to all learners experiencing barriers to learning was said to be a utopian dream.

Recommendations:

1. To ensure the successful provision of support in schools, it is recommended that the provincial office restructure the district into smaller more manageable school circuits such as 25 to 30 schools per official.
2. To accomplish effective support, each member of the DBST should be assigned to a cluster of schools in the district and act as a district coordinator for SIAS implementation. The DBST should act as district coordinators who serve as a

support and liaison to schools in the SIAS improvement process, and serve as a key member of the district leadership team.

6.4.3. Monitoring progress in the process of policy implementation

The literature study in Chapter Two revealed that in South Africa there is no monitoring and evaluation of progress regarding the implementation of IE. Findings from this study confirm that monitoring progress in SIAS implementation by DBSTs is inadequate. It is noted that even when monitoring takes place, not all schools in the district are monitored.

Recommendations:

1. It is recommended that DBSTs ensure that they monitor progress in the implementation of SIAS policy. It is noted that monitoring helps to provide the results and reveal whether the implementation of the policy is yielding the results that it should or not.
2. The DBST should create a specific plan to include progress monitoring, growth expectations, and timelines to evaluate progress.
3. Professional learning support should be in place to ensure and monitor that the interventions are implemented with fidelity.
4. The processes of monitoring and evaluation of the implementation of EWP 6 needs to be strengthened. The process of implementing EWP 6 from districts to provincial to national level should be closely monitored and continuous evaluation be conducted for further improvements.

6.5. ELEMENTS HAMPERING THE PROVISION OF SUPPORT IN SCHOOLS FOR THE IMPLEMENTATION OF IE POLICIES

Findings from this study indicated that DBSTs are experiencing frustration and dissatisfaction regarding the conditions in which they are working in their district. They felt that the challenge is mainly that their needs are not met to enable them to fulfil their duties effectively.

It is noted that DBST members are human beings and also have emotions; if their working conditions are not satisfying, they will get frustrated. Further, having bad workplace relationships creates negative energy, which can affect everyone in the team as well as learners who need support. It can also cause employee turnover which may interrupt the whole system. It is recommended that DBST members need to be supported by other team members in the workplace which will lessen their frustration and improve service delivery.

6.5.1. Inequality in provision of support and recognition of work done by DBSTs

This research study found that DBSTs are not receiving support from districts in terms of the work they do in schools. Findings reveal that other district officials do not understand their roles therefore as a result their work is not taken seriously. It was also communicated that other senior managers mentioned that the work done by DBSTs is not critical compared to other work done by subject advisors and circuit managers.

Recommendations:

1. All sections in the district should be part of the DBSTs and work together as a team. District leadership should ensure that support and recognition of duties rendered by support teams is provided on an equitable basis.

2. It is highly recommended that the District Director as the chairperson of the DBST should emphasise the roles and responsibilities of every official in the DBST regarding the implementation of IE.
3. For better outcomes in the implementation of policies, it is recommended that district senior management be capacitated and be on board with IE practices. It is therefore recommended that managers need to be informed of their roles in schools as far as IE is concerned

6.5.2. Insufficient tools of trade and inadequate human capital

Findings from the interviews indicated that two challenges that hamper provisioning of effective support in schools are insufficient tools of the trade and inadequate human capital. The findings in this study revealed that DBSTs find it difficult to support and monitor the implementation of SIAS policy in as noted in Chapter Three, and that limited resources impact negatively on support service delivery in schools.

Recommendations:

1. It is recommended that the provincial DoE ensure that the IE budget provides sufficient tools of the trade in the district.
2. All section heads in districts should ensure that their sections get all vacancies filled with qualified and competent specialists in their sections in order to ensure that officials are not overloaded with work.
3. It is also recommended that for DBSTs to execute their duties effectively, the provincial DoE should consider creating a number of posts in the district.
4. An essential aspect of the implementation of SIAS policy is human capital. It is therefore recommended that further skills be provided to DBSTs to effectively respond to increasing diversity in schools.

6.5.3. Community participation in learning interactions and activities of learners in and out of school

Findings from the study found that some parents contribute to barriers to learning experienced by their children, meaning that sometimes interventions offered by DBSTs are not successful. It is noted that children belong to the community and parents need support from other members of the community. This is clearly emphasised in the policy on SIAS, that parents should be taking responsibility for the support of their children in the most inclusive setting possible. Parents should understand that participation in the SIAS process is compulsory and not a choice.

Recommendations:

1. In order to improve community participation in learning interactions and activities of learners in and out of school, it is recommended that SBSTs under the leadership of principals should work together with parents and staff members in the development of learning programs, policies, improvement plans, values and beliefs.
2. It is recommended that parents, including all members of the community, should work collaboratively to impart values that will develop future responsible citizens of the society. This can be achieved by creating platforms in the community where every stakeholder participates in the alleviation of psychosocial problems which result in negative impacts on the education of children.
3. Parents should be empowered to understand the importance of developing their children's potential. It is recommended that parents need to access information on the kind of support provided to the child.

6.6. FINDINGS ON PERCEPTIONS OF SUPPORT TEAMS REGARDING EFFECTIVE SIAS IMPLEMENTATION

This section gives an account of what support teams think constitutes effective SIAS implementation in schools and how they think effectiveness can be achieved.

6.6.1. Stakeholder involvement

The discussions from this study found that SBST and DBST are tasked with providing support to schools so they need to ensure that they welcome all stakeholders with an interest in education and involve them in school structures and in decision-making. Findings from this study revealed that the functionality and the effectiveness of DBSTs rests upon the adequate and continuous support provided to schools. The implementation of IE policy is undoubtedly the responsibility of all stakeholders involved in the school as well as the community in which it exists. The findings reveal that the enhancement of collaboration and complementarity between DBST and SBST members as people tasked to support SIAS implementation will be determined by the involvement of all stakeholders.

This study found that not all stakeholders are involved. Stakeholder involvement is crucial. The findings reveal that SIAS will be improved if there can be increased advocacy, and all stakeholders get involved and have their roles well specified. The study found that, currently, the DBST is not effective because the district leadership as well as other stakeholders are not fully involved in the implementation of SIAS policy. It is noted that stakeholders that are involved are not doing enough to support schools for the benefit of learners experiencing barriers to learning.

Recommendations:

1. It is recommended that the DBE make advocacies in order to ensure that all stakeholders become involved. It is noted that for the policy to be effectively implemented, there must be a top-down approach.

2. Stakeholder workshops should be planned at province or district level according to the strategy developed in the respective provinces. Facilitators, district section heads, heads of departments, principals, teachers and community representatives should participate in workshops facilitated and monitored by the Provincial Task Team (PTT) and District DBSTs.
3. Stakeholders should be made aware of objectives, practices and programmes for SIAS policy and roles to be played.
4. It is recommended that stakeholders exchange information and experiences on the implementation of the policy programme in order to improve their practices and to address needy areas. This will help them learn new knowledge and acquire new skills.

6.6.2. Teacher empowerment

The research findings reveal that because of the lack of the specialised knowledge of IE, mainstream school teachers do not feel empowered to practise IE in their classes and to hold the key to success to their learners' learning. It is noted that there is a need to ensure that all efforts to address teacher empowerment, school policies, improvement plans, programmes and ethos are developed in a manner that reflects inclusive practices. Findings from this study also indicated that teachers are at the forefront in implementing IE policies, but they have often reported a lack of skills and in-depth knowledge of IE.

It was argued in Chapter Two that teachers have not been adequately empowered on IE and hence they lack confidence in teaching and supporting learners experiencing barriers to learning, especially those with severe learning difficulties. This study thus found that the time of the day in which teacher development is taking place does not allow enough time for teachers to master all the skills needed for managing the diverse needs of learners.

Recommendations:

1. Districts should organise and deliver more professional development for the understanding and implementation of IE. Teachers' have voiced a need for practical-based trainings so they can be carried out in the intended manner. Such trainings would help them know what screening identification assessment and support entails for common learner needs.
2. One recommendation is that the district and school cluster coordinators work together to empower all teachers through an environment that provides a forum for teachers to be heard in the implementation of SIAS and all it entails. Such a forum would allow any teacher to share ideas that might improve SIAS execution. By working together teachers may be transformed by empowerment, no longer going through the motions and doing only what is required, but instead becoming inclusive teachers.
3. Teachers need scheduling training so that time can be used efficiently. It is recommended that a needs assessment survey be administered to teachers and professional development be based on the resulting data.
4. It is recommended that the use of time during the school day must be examined in-depth and the school day restructured if needed. Teachers' ideas in relation to time management must be sought, and administration must work with the teachers to maximise time to its fullest. Outdated teacher development strategies must be replaced with more current, effective strategies.

6.6.3. Lack of collaboration and complementarity between district support teams

Chapter Two described how the DBE is responsible for developing the capacity of all support service providers to provide a holistic and comprehensive support service, including the ability to 'work together' in coordinated and collaborative ways. This

involves moving from a currently fragmented, uncoordinated approach to an integrated one that brings together the different role-players to understand and address barriers to learning. It is noted that even though management of the education districts play a significant role in many ways, they still lack a legislative framework that spells out their powers and functions (Bantwini and Diko (2011:22). A priority task for DBSTs' in the planning phase is to start building relationships and establish working teams with a collaborative ethos. However, this study found that a lack of autonomy by provinces to prioritise the implementation of SIAS Policy as resulted in the dysfunctionality of DBSTs.

In order to ensure that their plan of action happens, the DBSTs should understand that IE strategies rely on parental participation, committed teachers and a process driven by effective SBSTs and supported by a can-do DBST. Their work also relies on teamwork between different directorates, government departments and groups that might not have worked together before. This study found that DBSTs do not work collaboratively with others tasked with providing support in schools.

Recommendations:

1. It is recommended that the district vision provide the DBST with a collaboratively developed descriptive picture of the district's preferred future. The district's mission should be a collaboratively developed description of how the district will achieve its vision. Together the vision and mission should guide DBST and school practices, policies, and goal development, resulting in increased learner performance.
2. The DBE at national and provincial level should ensure that DBSTs are capacitated on all policies and that their responsibilities are clearly stated. DBSTs should be assisted by the DBE to understand the implementation process and the role played by the Department in the process.
3. All sections in the district should work together and discuss their area of specialisation so that their challenges regarding support offered in schools is

discussed and an improvement plan identified. This will ensure team work and the reduction of repetition of services by district officials which at a later stage confuses teachers.

6.7. GUIDELINES FOR THE IMPLEMENTATION OF SIAS POLICY BY DBSTs

This section presents and discusses the guidelines which arise from the themes presented in Chapter Five. The critical role of the DBE is to develop education policies that are later filtered to schools through the Provincial DBEs (SASA, 1996) and to provide a broad management framework for support (DoE, 2005). South Africa is made up of nine provinces, with each comprising a provincial DoE. These provincial departments are intended to decentralise education in the country, thus promoting efficiency in the management of all educational activities and issues. Among their many roles, these departments are tasked with implementing new policies and managing the collaboration between districts within their provinces. They are tasked with coordination and implementation of a national framework of support, in relation to provincial needs (DoE, 2005). Each province consists of a number of districts that vary depending on the size of the province. The districts are the governing institutions, the “eyes and ears” of the government, and are led by the District Director. It is evident that the South African national and provincial DBEs have successfully formulated educational policies but their implementation has been unsatisfactory. The gap between policy formulation and implementation can be regarded as the primary reason for the failure of transformation in education. This research study suggests the following guidelines on how DBSTs can implement IE policies which include SIAS in KwaZulu-Natal province, thus improving the provision of support in schools:

- i) There is a need for a decrease in the number of schools that each district official has to support. For example, instead of supporting schools in the whole district with 700 and more schools, each official should have 30 to 40 schools. This is viewed as an ideal and reasonable number of schools to support as the officials will be able to assist several of the currently struggling schools. This will improve their working relationship with schools and so improve the schools’ understanding and implementation of IE policy.

Such a move will also enable officials to visit schools and have conversations with teachers that will lead to resolving some of the issues and challenges teachers are currently experiencing with regard to SIAS policy.

- ii) Adequate tools of the trade should be available, and human capital such as qualified and experienced IE specialists should be recruited and all vacant posts filled. Policy documents provide guidance regarding the challenges teachers are confronted with and the provincial DoE should provide enough policy documents so that each teacher has a copy of their own which would eliminate excuses from those teachers who say they have not read them because they do not have a copy.
- iii) Teacher trainings should be more practical-based rather than theory-based, and should involve demonstration lessons for teachers. This can be achieved by continuously providing site visits by DBST members. This will assist teachers in gaining confidence and improving their skills in teaching in inclusive classes.
- iv) There is a need for collaboration and team work among all district sections. When team members share their respective areas of expertise, a true multi-disciplinary support can be achieved. Collaboration and communication among the DBSTs are essential to assure clear assignment of roles.
- v) Stakeholder involvement in the implementation of SIAS policy is crucial. This is important because DBSTs should aim to provide holistic and comprehensive support to teachers and learners experiencing barriers to learning. A holistic approach, which acknowledges that all barriers to learning and development are complex, requires multiple perspectives on the challenges faced and the possible solutions.
- vi) Stakeholders should engage with the full range of expertise available to understand and solve barriers to learning. Practically, this means that

stakeholders need to talk and listen to one another; identify what can and needs to be done collaboratively; and identify what each person needs to do to contribute to the whole.

- vii) The national DBE should support the DBSTs at district level through building the capacity of the provincial coordinators; by so doing it will assist in strengthening the communication and support they render to DBSTs. The support and communication provided by the province needs to be strengthened.
- viii) The provincial DoE should provide guidance and build the capacity of district leadership regarding their specific roles in IE policy implementation and the support they should provide to DBSTs.
- ix) Implementation of IE should be recognised and valued at all levels of the national DoE. This will help implementers (which in this instance are DBSTs) to execute their duties willingly if they are acknowledged as being important and if their support needs are met.
- x) Collaboration between DBSTs and SBSTs is essential for the complementarity of support provided to schools, teachers and learners in the implementation of IE policies including SIAS.
- xi) Community participation in the learning activities of learners experiencing barriers to learning is crucial. This can be achieved by involving parents and community members in activities including decision-making and development of school action plans. This can reduce barriers to learning and improve performance.

6.8. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

Based on the findings of this study, it is apparent that there is a gap between policy and implementation. This study found that policy-makers were not in touch with the

reality of educational conditions in schools. It is evident that DBSTs experience difficulties with the implementation of SIAS policy and this has a negative impact. The DBST forms a key component in the successful implementation of an IE support system. SIAS policy gives an overview of the role functions of DBST with regard to the implementation of the SIAS process as a measure to establish such a support system. The policy is for all support staff in the district working within the school system. It is binding in terms of decision-making around any form of support-provisioning to learners, schools and teachers. Since the implementation of SIAS policy by DBSTs is still at its early stages in South African schools, the researcher found that there is little literature published on the topic. Therefore, there is a necessity for further research on the support of SIAS implementation by DBSTs. Recommendations for further research are as follows:

- i) Collaboration between stakeholders to enhance the effective implementation of IE policies especially SIAS policy.
- ii) The role of Circuit Managers in supporting the implementation of IE.
- iii) Teachers' perceptions regarding the support provided by DBSTs with regard to implementation of IE.
- iv) A comparative study between KwaZulu-Natal and other South African provinces regarding mechanisms for successful implementation of IE policies.
- v) The roles of the different support structures and their collaboration in empowering teachers in the development of inclusive schools.
- vi) Mechanisms by which the tension between support and control can be resolved.
- vii) Governmental departments and their role in the successful implementation of IE policies.

- viii) Teacher involvement in the decision-making process, particularly when it comes to the support of learners who experience barriers to learning.
- ix) A framework for the development of coordinated district support focusing on the core business of support in schools.

6.9. STRENGTHS AND LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

The main aim of the study was to investigate the experiences of DBST members regarding the implementation of SIAS policy in Zululand District, KwaZulu-Natal. The main limitations of the study include the following:

- The scope of the study was narrow due to the sample size. Although case study research is mostly characterised by a small sample size, an increase in the sample size would possibly have promoted the transferability of the research findings.
- This study entailed eliciting the viewpoints of district officials who are members of the DBST regarding the implementation of SIAS policy in primary schools and as such, and only the viewpoints of these participants were included in this study.
- Furthermore, this study focused on the implementation of IE in primary schools in the Zululand District. Thus, secondary schools were not part of the study and the findings can therefore not be generalised to all schools.
- A further limitation of this study involves the researcher, who works as a departmental official. Although the researcher tried to be unbiased and ethically responsible, not trying to influence the outcomes, participants may not have answered freely and openly to the questions.

- SIAS is a new IE policy so the literature that deals with DBST experiences regarding its implementation was limited.
- KwaZulu-Natal is divided into 12 districts but the study was only conducted in one district. This does not allow the researcher to generalise the experiences of the DBSTs to other districts or provinces.

6.10. CONCLUDING REMARKS

This study set out to explore the experiences of DBST members regarding the implementation of SIAS policy in Zululand District in KwaZulu-Natal. It further sought to establish guidelines that can be employed to effectively implement SIAS policy in schools of the said district. A qualitative research approach and a case study design was adopted to investigate the phenomenon of SIAS policy through an interview, observation and document analysis process with DBST members and principals of the selected schools. The research adhered strictly to ethical principles and was evaluated for trustworthiness.

If the district under discussion values support for learners experiencing barriers to learning through access, quality and justice, drastic changes will have to be made. The complexity of such changes is that they will also affect policies not only at the local district level but higher up in the educational hierarchy too. The way a district is comprised, its functions and roles, its leadership and management the way their vision operates, its limitations and its possibilities are pivotal to successful SIAS implementation. The critical function of DBSTs cannot be overlooked anymore. This study found that there are still some elements hampering the implementation of IE policies on the district level, including issues such as inadequate support by the district leadership, insufficient tools of the trade and human capital, a big number of schools being supported by a small number of officials, lack of stakeholder collaboration between the support teams as well as teachers' inadequate knowledge and skills regarding IE particularly the SIAS policy.

I believe that denial of the current crisis confronted by the district in terms of shortage of human capacity is a recipe for disaster. Resolving that crisis requires urgent attention being paid to the identified areas of concern. These include the filling of vacant positions, correction of the district officials' school ratio, provision of adequate support by leadership and management, and stakeholder collaboration. Taking these steps will change the current realities which are slowing down the implementation process. It is evident that IE policies, including SIAS, are not valued as critical in overcoming barriers to learning and development. These policies are regarded as an extra burden and an addition to the curriculum. Many district officials view IE as somebody else's responsibility rather than everyone in the district's responsibility. All these assumptions impact negatively on the process of implementation.

Lastly, this study suggests that more research focusing on support services at district level and the appropriate mandates should be undertaken. This will help unearth all the issues requiring immediate attention in order to correct the crisis of inadequate provisioning of support that confronts IE in South African schools. This study acknowledges that the data used may not be sufficient to draw general conclusions regarding the conditions of all the districts in the country. Nonetheless, it provides a window for viewing how one district is surviving during this education transformation era, and other districts may gain some insight as a result into their own circumstances.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A: Ethical clearance letter UNISA



UNISA COLLEGE OF EDUCATION ETHICS REVIEW COMMITTEE

Date: 2017/10/18

Dear Mrs Zulu

Decision: Ethics Approval from 2017/10/18 to 2022/10/18

Ref: **2017/10/18/33659842/24/MC**
Name: Mrs PD Zulu
Student: 33659842

Researcher:
Name: Mrs PD Zulu
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Supervisor:
Name: Prof FD Mahlo
Email: mahlofd@unisa.ac.za
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Title of research:
Experiences of District based Support Team with regards to screening identification assessment and support policy implementation in Zululand district, KwaZulu natal

Qualification: D Ed in Inclusive Education

Thank you for the application for research ethics clearance by the UNISA College of Education Ethics Review Committee for the above mentioned research. Ethics approval is granted for the period 2017/10/18 to 2022/10/18.

*The **low/medium/high risk** application was reviewed by the Ethics Review Committee on 2017/10/18 in compliance with the UNISA Policy on Research Ethics and the Standard Operating Procedure on Research Ethics Risk Assessment.*



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The proposed research may now commence with the provisions that:

1. The researcher(s) will ensure that the research project adheres to the values and principles expressed in the UNISA Policy on Research Ethics.
2. Any adverse circumstance arising in the undertaking of the research project that is relevant to the ethicality of the study should be communicated in writing to the UNISA College of Education Ethics Review Committee.
3. The researcher(s) will conduct the study according to the methods and procedures set out in the approved application.
4. Any changes that can affect the study-related risks for the research participants, particularly in terms of assurances made with regards to the protection of participants' privacy and the confidentiality of the data, should be reported to the Committee in writing.
5. The researcher will ensure that the research project adheres to any applicable national legislation, professional codes of conduct, institutional guidelines and scientific standards relevant to the specific field of study. Adherence to the following South African legislation is important, if applicable: Protection of Personal Information Act, no 4 of 2013; Children's act no 38 of 2005 and the National Health Act, no 61 of 2003.
6. Only de-identified research data may be used for secondary research purposes in future on condition that the research objectives are similar to those of the original research. Secondary use of identifiable human research data requires additional ethics clearance.
7. No field work activities may continue after the expiry date 2022/10/18. Submission of a completed research ethics progress report will constitute an application for renewal of Ethics Research Committee approval.

Note:

The reference number 2017/10/18/33659842/24/MC should be clearly indicated on all forms of communication with the intended research participants, as well as with the Committee.

Kind regards,



Dr M Claassens
CHAIRPERSON: CEDU RERC
mcdtc@netactive.co.za



Prof V McKay
EXECUTIVE DEAN

Approved - decision template – updated 16 Feb 2017

University of South Africa
Preller Street, Muckleneuk Ridge, City of Tshwane
PO Box 392 UNISA 0003 South Africa
Telephone: +27 12 429 3111 Facsimile: +27 12 429 4150
www.unisa.ac.za

APPENDIX B: Application for permission to conduct research in KZN DoE institutions



education

Department:
Education
PROVINCE OF KWAZULU-NATAL

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

1. Applicants Details

Title: Prof / Dr / Rev / Mr / **Mrs** / Miss / Ms

Surname: Zulu

Name(s) Of Applicant(s):

Phindile Doreen

Email:

zphindile22@yahoo.com

Tel No:

0358310229/42

Cell:

██████████

Fax:

0358310422

Postal Address:

62 Kommissie Street

Vryheid, 3100

Proposed Research Title: Experiences of District Based Support Team with regards to Screening, Identification, Assessment and Support implementation in Zululand District, KwaZulu Natal.

Yes/No

2. Have you applied for permission to conduct this research or any other? research within the KZNDoE institutions? If "yes", please state reference Number:

N/A

Yes/No

3. Is the proposed research part of a tertiary qualification? If "yes"

Name of tertiary institution: University of South Africa

Faculty and or School: Department of Inclusive Education

Qualification: Doctor of Philosophy

Name of Supervisor: Professor FD Mahlo

Supervisors Signature: -----

If "no", state purpose of research: N/A

4. Briefly state the Research Background:

Education White Paper 6 (DoE, 2001) describes the support at district level as central part of the overall strengthening of education support services in South Africa. The Department also set out to implement in an incremental way the main elements of an IE system of which National policy on Screening, Identification, Assessment and Support (SIAS) is one. The SIAS like other key strategies of the policy aims to respond to the needs of all learners in the country, particularly those who are vulnerable and most likely to be marginalised and excluded. The aim of this research is to investigate the experiences of district-based support team (DBST) with regard to screening, identification, assessment and support implementation in Zululand district, KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa. The study is undertaken for the fulfilment of the Doctor of Philosophy in Education. In an effort to understand the DBST experiences of implementing SIAS policy, a qualitative research approach will be adopted in which a case study design will be employed. This small-scale qualitative study will be conducted in Zululand district. Eight district officials and five school-based support team members (principals) will be purposively and conveniently identified for the study. The study will employ interpretive design as research paradigm. Data will be generated through document review and analysis and also through semi-structured interviews. Content analysis will be used to analyse the data. Theoretically, the study is framed by William Edwards Deming' PDCA Cycle: Plan, Do, Check, Act. Pilot testing will also be done preferably with people (district officials and principals of selected schools) who share the same characteristics as the actual participants of the study community but who live outside the study community.

5. What is the main research question(s)?

The problem investigated in this study is the experiences of DBSTs with regard to SIAS implementation? The specific research question formulated to answer this research problem is as follows:

What are the DBSTs experiences with regard to SIAS implementation?

The following sub-questions are posed to investigate the study further:

- What are the experiences of DBST in SIAS implementation?
- How do DBST ensure that schools implement SIAS in support of learners experiencing barriers to learning?

- Which elements that hamper the provision of support services in schools?
- What guidelines that could be employed by DBSTs to ensure effective support in SIAS implementation?

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

In an effort to understand the DBST experiences of implementing SIAS policy, a qualitative research approach will be adopted in which a case study design will be employed. This small-scale qualitative study will be conducted in Zululand district. Ten district officials will be purposively and conveniently identified for the study. The study will employ interpretive research paradigm. Data will be generated through document review and analysis and also through semi-structured interviews. Content analysis will be used to analyse the data. The researcher will select participants who will be able to provide the requisite information, be prepared to participate in the research and willing to share the information. DBST members who are currently employed under sub-directorate of IE in the district and who have qualifications in Special Needs Education, Educational Psychology, School Social Worker, Speech Therapists, Remedial Education, School Counsellors as well as Learning Support Educators and who have been supporting schools and SBSTs since 2011. Five School-Based Support Team members especially the chairpersons of the team i.e. the principals of Full-service schools who also have been in the schools the same year as the DBST will also be selected to participate in the study

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

The investigation into this study is important because findings will help to address some challenges which DBST experience when implementing IE policy in Zululand. It is also envisaged that the findings of this study will inform further development of IE policy as well as revisiting the plan for the implementation of SIAS. The study is important because the researcher would like to add a value and contribute to knowledge base in IE in SA. To come up with a framework of support that could be provided to DBST.

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

1. Saluse District office
2. Hlelolwethu Full-service school
3. Mfudumalo Full-service school
4. Langazelela Full-service school
5. Phindelela Full-service school
6. Sizinzile Full-service school

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

1. Interview schedule
2. Document review template
3. Observation sheet

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

Research permission will be requested from the Research Ethics committee of the College of Education of the University of South Africa (UNISA) and from the KwaZulu-Natal Department of Education as well as from the Zululand District office and selected Full-Service schools. Research participants will be consulted regarding the aims of the research and its methodology. They will also be informed about the nature of the study and be given the choice of either participating or withdrawing from participating. Participants must agree voluntarily to participate without any form of coercion, and their agreement must be based on full and open information. Officials from the district (DBSTs) and principals from FSS (SBSTs) will be anonymous and each participant will be given a consent form to sign. The consent form will further outline their rights in terms of their participation in the research.

3. Procedure to maintain confidentiality (if applicable):

All personal data will be secured or concealed and made public only behind a shield of anonymity. Subsequent to the use of human subjects in the study and in consideration of their vulnerability, safe guard to protect the identities will be prioritises and confidentiality will be assured as the primary safeguard against unwanted exposure.

4. **Questions or issues with the potential to be intrusive, upsetting or incriminating to participants (if applicable):** NONE

5. **Additional support available to participants in the event of disturbance resulting from intrusive questions or issues (if applicable):** NONE

6. Research Timelines: Activity Time Frame

Data collection and analysis

September/ October 2017

Presentation and discussion of findings

November/December 2017

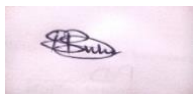
Findings, Conclusion and Recommendations of the study

January/March 2018

7. Declaration

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

I, Zulu Phindile Doreen, declare that the above information is true and correct



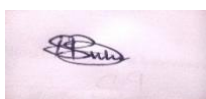
Signature of Applicant

Date: 16. 08. 2017

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

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

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



Signature of Applicant(s)

Date: 16.08.2017

APPENDIX C: Permission letter: KZN DoE



education

Department:
Education
PROVINCE OF KWAZULU-NATAL

Enquiries: Phindile Duma

Tel: 033 392 1041

Ref.:2/4/8/1339

Ms PD Zulu
62 Kommissie Street
Vryheid
3100

Dear Ms Zulu

PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH IN THE KZN DoE INSTITUTIONS

Your application to conduct research entitled: **“EXPERIENCES OF DISTRICT BASED SUPPORT TEAM WITH REGARDS TO SCREENING, IDENTIFICATION, ASSESSMENT AND SUPPORT IMPLEMENTATION IN ZULULAND DISTRICT, KWAZULU-NATAL”**, in the KwaZulu-Natal Department of Education Institutions has been approved. The conditions of the approval are as follows:

1. The researcher will make all the arrangements concerning the research and interviews.
2. The researcher must ensure that Educator and learning programmes are not interrupted.
3. Interviews are not conducted during the time of writing examinations in schools.
4. Learners, Educators, Schools and Institutions are not identifiable in any way from the results of the research.
5. A copy of this letter is submitted to District Managers, Principals and Heads of Institutions where the Intended research and interviews are to be conducted
6. The period of investigation is limited to the period from 11 September 2017 to 09 July 2020.
7. Your research and interviews will be limited to the schools you have proposed and approved by the Head of Department. Please note that Principals, Educators, Departmental Officials and Learners are under no obligation to participate or assist you in your investigation.
8. Should you wish to extend the period of your survey at the school(s), please contact Miss Connie Kehologile at the contact numbers below
9. Upon completion of the research, a brief summary of the findings, recommendations or a full report/dissertation/thesis must be submitted to the research office of the Department. Please address it to The Office of the HOD, Private Bag X9137, Pietermaritzburg, 3200.
10. Please note that your research and interviews will be limited to schools and institutions in KwaZulu-Natal Department of Education. Zululand District

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Dr. EV Nzama'.

Dr. EV Nzama
Head of Department: Education

Date: 13 September 2017

APPENDIX C



Date: 21 September

2017

The District Director

0349899870
District
Corner South and West
Vryheid, 3100

Telephone:

Zululand

Dumisani.Ndlovu@kzndoe.gov.za

Dear Sir/Madam

REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH AT ZULULAND EDUCATION DISTRICT OFFICES

I, Zulu Phindile Doreen am doing research under supervision of FD Mahlo, a Professor in the Department of Inclusive Education towards a Doctor of Philosophy at the University of South Africa. I have funding from the University's Directorate of Student Funding Postgraduate for the duration of the research and for the purpose of completing my degree. I hereby request permission to conduct a study entitled: **Experiences of District Based Support Team with regards to Screening Identification Assessment and Support policy implementation in Zululand district, KwaZulu-Natal** in your office.

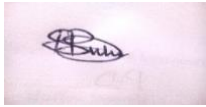
The aim of this study is to find out the experiences of DBSTs with regards to SIAS policy implementation in Zululand Districts, KwaZulu Natal. Your district has been selected because it has the biggest number of schools in the KwaZulu Natal Province and with the highest number of learners with the majority coming from the disadvantaged families and are vulnerable. Participants will be DBST members who are currently employed under sub-directorate of Special Needs Education Services who have been supporting schools since 2011. SBST members especially the chairpersons i.e. the principals who also have been in the schools the same year. Participants will be interviewed by the researcher in English and this will take not more than one hour. Interviews will be audio taped with consent of the participants and be transcribed after which the tapes will be stored by the researcher for a period of five years in a locked filing cabinet in the department offices. A copy of the transcription will be returned to the participants to ensure that no misunderstandings occurred. Be assured that the principle of confidentiality, anonymity and privacy will be adhered to. Documents that DBST use when rendering support in schools include: Screening Identification Assessment and Support policy, Curriculum Differentiation, Education for All, Education White Paper 6, DBST monitoring and Assessment tools, Vulnerability Assessment forms, Support Needs Assessment 1&2 forms, Learner observation books, Concession Manuals, school based assessment tools of district officials (DBST) will be analysed. Documents which principals (SBST) use include registers of learners who have additional support needs, minute books, vulnerability assessment forms and case-registers will also be analysed. Case registers will be analysed in to ensure that the support given is according to what the documents used by DBST suggest. The data from the documentary analysis will be recorded on the document analysis tool.

The benefits of this study are that the findings will inform further development of an IE policy model for the implementation of the SIAS Policy in KwaZulu Natal. I would also like to provide the guidelines that could be employed by DBSTs to strengthen the implementation of SIAS policy in schools. There are no potential risks that are involved in the study and no reimbursement or any incentives for participation in the research.

Thanking you in advance

Yours sincerely

Zulu PD

A small, square image showing a handwritten signature in black ink on a light-colored background. The signature is stylized and appears to be 'Zulu PD'.

Learning Support Education Specialist

Zphindile22@yahoo.com

A solid black rectangular redaction mark covering a portion of the text.

APPENDIX D: Letter requesting permission to conduct research: Schools



05 October 2017

The Principal

Dear Sir/ Madam

REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH AT..... SCHOOL

Title: Experiences of District Based Support Team with regards to Screening Identification Assessment and Support policy implementation in Zululand district, KwaZulu-Natal

I, Zulu Phindile Doreen am doing research under supervision of FD Mahlo, a Professor in the Department of Inclusive Education towards a Doctor of Philosophy at the University of South Africa. I have funding from the University's Directorate of Student Funding Postgraduate for the duration of the research and for the purpose of completing my degree. I hereby request permission to conduct a study entitled: Experiences of District Based Support Team with regards to Screening Identification Assessment and Support policy implementation in Zululand district, KwaZulu-Natal in your school.

The aim of this study is to find out the challenges experienced by DBSTs with regards to SIAS policy implementation in schools. Your school has been selected because it has been supported by the district for the benefit of learners experiencing barriers to learning since 2011. Participants will be DBST members who are currently employed under sub-directorate of Special Needs Education Services in the district and who have been supporting your school since 2011. School-Based Support Team members especially the chairpersons i.e. the principals who also have been in schools the same year. Participants will be interviewed by the researcher in English and this will take not more than one hour. Interviews will be audio taped with consent of the participants and be transcribed after which the tapes will be stored by the researcher for a period of five years in a locked filing cabinet in the department offices.

A copy of the transcription will be returned to the participants to ensure that no misunderstandings occurred. Be assured that the principle of confidentiality, anonymity and privacy will be adhered to. I have already requested permission from the Provincial Department of Education and in the District.

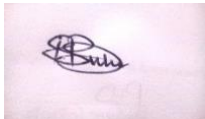
The benefits of this study are that findings may help to address some challenges which DBST experience when implementing IE policy in Zululand. It is also envisaged that the findings of this study may inform further development of IE policy as well as revisiting the plan for the implementation of SIAS policy and I would like to provide guidelines that could be employed by DBSTs to ensure effective implementation of SIAS policy in schools. There are no potential risks that are involved and there will be no reimbursement or any incentives for participation in the research.

Thanking you in advance

Yours sincerely

Zulu P.D

Learning Support Education Specialist



Tel : [REDACTED]

APPENDIX E: Letter requesting participation in the study



PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET

Title: Experiences of District Based Support Team with regards to Screening Identification Assessment and Support policy implementation in Zululand district, KwaZulu-Natal

Date: 05 October 2017

DEAR PROSPECTIVE PARTICIPANT

My name is Zulu P.D and I am doing research under the supervision of FD Mahlo, a Professor in the Department of Inclusive Education towards a Doctor of Philosophy at the University of South Africa. I have funding from the University's Directorate of Student Funding Postgraduate for the duration of the research and for the purpose of completing my degree. I am inviting you to participate in a study entitled: Experiences of District Based Support Team with regards to Screening Identification Assessment and Support policy implementation in Zululand district, KwaZulu-Natal'

The objectives of the research are:

- To find out the roles and responsibilities of DBST in SIAS implementation
- To describe the ways in which DBST ensure that schools implement SIAS in support of learners experiencing barriers to learning.
- To find out elements hampering the provision of support services in schools.
- To provide guidelines that could be employed by DBSTs to strengthen the effective support in SIAS implementation

You are invited to participate in this research because you are a specialist and currently employed under the sub-directorate of Special Needs Education Services which work with schools in support of learners experiencing barriers to learning and development in the district. I obtained your contact details from the SNES office. Ten DBST members will participate of which four of them will form part of pilot study. Data will be collected by means of semi structured interviews, observations and documents pertaining to the support rendered will be collected and analyzed.

The following interview questions will be posed to investigate the study further:

- What are the experiences of DBST in SIAS implementation?
- How do DBST ensure that schools implement SIAS in support of learners experiencing barriers to learning?
- Which elements hampering the provision of support services in schools?
- What guidelines could be employed by DBSTs to strengthen the effective support in SIAS implementation

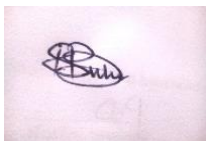
The interviews may take not more than one hour, they will be audio taped and later be transcribed after which the tapes will be stored by the researcher for a period of five years in a locked filing cabinet in the department offices. A copy of the transcription will be returned to the participants to ensure that no misunderstandings occurred. Be assured that the principle of confidentiality, anonymity and privacy will be adhered to.

Participating in this study is voluntarily and you are under no obligation to consent to participation. If you do decide to take part, you will be given this information sheet to keep and be asked to sign a written consent form. You are free to withdraw at any time and without giving a reason. You will not incur any costs and you will be informed regarding the progress of the research, and will be given feedback in writing once the research has been completed. All the information and data generated through this study will be available by the province, district, circuit, the schools and the participants.

If you would like to be informed of the final research findings, please contact me on [REDACTED] or email zphindile22@yahoo.com. Should you have concerns about the way in which the research has been conducted, you may contact my supervisor on [REDACTED] or email mahlofd@unisa.ac.za.

Thank you for taking time to read this information sheet and for participating in this study.

Thank you



Zulu P.D

APPENDIX F: Consent Form: Parent



CONSENT FORM

CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH STUDY

I _____ confirm that the person asking my consent to take part in this research has told me about the nature, procedure, potential benefits and anticipated inconvenience of participation. I have read and understood the study as explained in the information sheet. I have sufficient opportunity to ask questions and am prepared to participate in the study. I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time without penalty. I am aware that findings of this study will be processed into a research report, journal publications and/or conference proceedings, but that my participation will be kept confidential unless otherwise specified.

I agree to the recording of the semi structured interview and I have signed a copy of the informed consent agreement.

Participant Name & Surname (please print) _____

Participant Signature

Date

Researcher's Name & Surname (please print) _____

Researcher's Signature

Date

APPENDIX G: Consent Form: Child



A LETTER REQUESTING PARENTAL CONSENT FOR MINORS TO PARTICIPATE IN A RESEARCH PROJECT

Dear Parent

Your child is invited to participate in a study entitled: An exploration of the implementation of Screening, Identification, Assessment and Support policy in the Zululand District, KwaZulu Natal.

I am undertaking this study as part of my doctoral research at the University of South Africa. The purpose of the study is to explore the experiences of DBSTs with regards to SIAS policy implementation in Zululand District, KwaZulu Natal and the possible benefits of the study are the improvement the experiences of DBSTs with regards to SIAS policy implementation in Zululand District. I am asking permission to include your child in this study because he/she has been identified as having additional support need. I expect to have two other children participating in the study.

If you allow your child to participate, I shall request him/her to be observed when District Based Support Team conduct screening and assessment for the purpose of providing additional support that the child needs. Any information that is obtained in connection with this study and can be identified with your child will remain confidential and will only be disclosed with your permission. His/her responses will not be linked to his/her name or your name or the school's name in any written or verbal report based on this study. Such a report will be used for research purposes only.

There are no foreseeable risks to your child by participating in the study. Your child will receive no direct benefit from participating in the study; however, the possible benefits to education are that the findings may inform further development of IE policy as well as revisiting the plan for the implementation of SIAS policy and I would like to provide the guidelines that could be employed by DBSTs to ensure effective implementation of SIAS policy in schools. Neither your child nor you will receive any type of payment for participating in this study.

Your child's participation in this study is voluntary. Your child may decline to participate or to withdraw from participation at any time. Withdrawal or refusal to participate will not affect him/her in any way. Similarly, you can agree to allow your child to be in the study now and change your mind later without any penalty.

The study will take place during regular classroom activities with the prior approval of the school and your child's teacher. However, if you do not want your child to participate, an alternative activity will be available. A request for permission to observe another child will be in place.

In addition to your permission, your child must agree to participate in the study and you and your child will also be asked to sign the assent form which accompanies this letter. If your child does not wish to participate in the study, he or she will not be included and there will be no penalty. The information gathered from the study and your child's participation in the study will be stored securely on a password locked computer in my locked office for five years after the study. Thereafter, records will be erased.

The benefits of this study are the further development of IE policy as well as revisiting the plan for the implementation of SIAS policy for the benefit of learners experiencing barriers to learning. There are no potential risks that are foreseeable to your child by participating in the study. There will be no reimbursement or any incentives for participation in the research.

If you have questions about this study please ask me or my study supervisor, Prof Mahlo FD Department of Inclusive Education, College of Education, University of South Africa. My contact number is 0822612521 and my e-mail is zphindile22@yahoo.com. The e-mail of my supervisor is mahlofd@unisa.ac.za. Permission for the study has already been given by principals of the participating schools and the Ethics Committee of the College of Education, UNISA.

You are deciding about allowing your child to participate in this study. Your signature below indicates that you have read the information provided above and have decided to allow him or her to participate in the study. You may keep a copy of this letter.

Sincerely

Name of child: _____

_____	_____	_____
Parent/guardian's name (print)	Parent/guardian's signature:	Date:
_____	_____	_____
Researcher's name (print)	Researcher's signature	Date:
_____	_____	_____
Supervisor's name (print)	Supervisor's signature	Date

APPENDIX H: Assent Letter



A LETTER REQUESTING ASSENT FROM LEARNERS IN A PRIMARY SCHOOL TO PARTICIPATE IN A RESEARCH PROJECT

Dear learner,

Date_____



My name is Phindile D Zulu and would like to ask you if I can come and observe you when the officials from the district (DBST) visit your school to screen and assess you based on the additional support that you need. I am trying to learn more about how children do assessment activities and when screening is taking place.

If you say YES to do this, I will come and observe you when you are with district official doing screening and assessment activities as well as when you play on the playground. I will also ask your parents if you can take part. If you do not want to take part, it will also be fine with me. Remember, you can say yes or you can say no and no one will be upset if you don't want to take part or even if you change your mind later and want to stop. You can ask any questions that you have now. If you have a question later that you didn't think of now, ask me next time I visit your school.

Please speak to mommy or daddy about taking part before you sign this letter. Signing your name at the bottom means that you agree to be in this study. A copy of this letter will be given to your parents.

Regards

Zulu PD

Your Name	Yes, I will take part 	No, I don't want to take part 
Name of the researcher		
Date		
Witness		

APPENDIX I: Interview Schedule: DBST



SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW SCHEDULE: DBST

Researcher : Phindile Doreen Zulu

Topic : Experiences of District Based Support Team with regard to Screening Identification Assessment and Support implementation in Zululand district, KwaZulu-Natal

Promoter : Prof F.D Mahlo

Participant:

Date:

Time:

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

1. What are the experiences of DBST in SIAS implementation?
2. How do DBST ensure that schools implement SIAS in support of learners experiencing barriers to learning?
3. Which elements that hamper the provision of support services in schools?
4. What guidelines could be employed by DBSTs to strengthen the effective support in SIAS implementation?
5. Is there anything you would like to add which was not asked by a researcher?

APPENDIX J: Example of Interview

EXAMPLE OF INTERVIEW

SECTION A: BIOGRAPHIC INFORMATION

1. Male or Female _____

2. What is your qualification?

3. How long have you been a teacher? (Probe: How many years did you serve as teacher at school?)

4. How many years have you been serving as Psychologist/ Speech Therapist/ School Social Worker/
Remedial Adviser/School Counsellor/ Learning Support Educator?

5. What do you find interesting about your job?

6. What challenges do you often encounter in your job?

SECTION B

DISTRICT BASED SUPPORT TEAM'S ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES IN SUPPORTING SIAS IMPLEMENTATION IN SCHOOLS

1. What do you regard as your job as DBST member (Probe: What do you understand support mean?)

2. How many schools are you responsible for in your district?

3. How often do you visit each school?

4. Describe what you do when you visit a school to support SIAS implementation? (Probe: Why?)

5. What are your visits mainly about?

6. What in your opinion constitutes effective SIAS implementation? (Probe: Why? How do you think this can be achieved?).

7. How does your support address the issue of 'effective' SIAS implementation?

8. How do you think your support assists in the enhancement of SIAS implementation in schools? (Probe: Why?).

9. Describe the attitude displayed by (a) Principals and (b) teachers when you visit schools for the support. (Probe: Why do you think they display such an attitude?).

10. How often do you have sessions with SBSTs? (Probe: Why?).

11. Describe what you normally do when you have sessions with SBSTs. (Probe: Why?).

12. How does your work complement SBSTs' work of supporting teachers and learners in schools? (Probe: What gaps have you noticed? How can this be improved?).

13 Explain what you think can assist to enhance collaboration and complementarity between Psychologist, Speech Therapist, Remedial Advisor, School Social Worker, School Councillor, Learning Support Educators (DBST) and SBSTs as people tasked to support SIAS implementation? (Probe: Why?).

14. How do you assess the impact of your support to schools (Probe: How you recognise change in effectiveness? What indicators that show you that your support really had an impact?)

SECTION C: SUPPORT AND MONITORING

1. Describe how do you support teachers to develop themselves with IE practices in schools?

2. How often do you conduct trainings for SBSTs, and teachers? (Probe: What trainings do you conduct and how long does the trainings take?)

3. Describe what you normally do when you conduct trainings and what documents and tools do you conducting the trainings?

4. How do you monitor the work done by teachers in the process of supporting learners experiencing barriers to learning? (Probe: What data do you collect during monitoring visits? How do you use that data?).

5. What tools do you use to monitor the work of teachers they do to support learners? (Probe: How are your tools assisting you in monitoring the work of teachers?).

6. What in your opinion positively affects your work as DBST member? (Probe: Why do you think this negatively affects your work?).

7. What in your opinion are the factors that affect your work negatively as DBST member? (Probe: Why do you think this negatively affects your work?).

8. What in your opinion are the elements which hamper the provisioning of support service in schools? (Probe: What do you think this can be improved?).

6. Do you have anything else that you would like to share with me regarding your work as Psychologist, Speech Therapist, Remedial Advisor, School Social Worker, School Councillor, Learning Support Educators (DBST)?

APPENDIX K: Analysis of transcriptions: DBST

SECTION A: BIOGRAPHIC INFORMATION

1. Male or Female: Female

2. How long have you been a teacher? (Probe: How many years did you serve as a teacher at school?)

15 years

3. How many years have you been serving as a Psychologist/Speech Therapist/School Social Worker/Remedial Adviser/School Counsellor/Learning Support Educator?

7 years

4. What do you find interesting about your job?

Working with learners and supporting them

5. What challenges do you often encounter in your job?

The most challenge I encounter in my job is that teachers do not take care of learners who have social and psychosocial problems. You find that in an enrolment of 1000 learners only one teacher tries to support learners with problems.

SECTION B:

DISTRICT BASED SUPPORT TEAM'S ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES IN SUPPORTING SIAS IMPLEMENTATION IN SCHOOLS

1. What do you regard as your job as DBST member? (Probe: What Do you understand support means?)

Being a member of DBST means I must support teachers and learners who have additional needs. Support means that if a learner is having a problem there must be an intervention that is given.

2. How many schools are you responsible for in your district?

I am responsible for 90 schools.

3. How often do you visit each school?

Previously I used to visit schools anytime to render support. But after training and workshops have been conducted for teachers on early identification and support, I now visit schools which have referred cases to me.

4. Describe what you want to do when you visit a school to support SIAS implementation? (Probe: Why?)

During my school visits I train teachers on guidelines on psychosocial issues. I assess learners who have been identified and referred to me.

5. What are your visits mainly about?

Screening and assessment of learners with psychosocial barrier and provide counselling especially to those who have been abused.

6.What in your opinion constitutes effective SIAS implementation? (Probe: Why/How do you think this can be achieved?)

What constitutes effective SIAS implementation is seeing school referring cases. This can be achieved by ensuring that schools are supported on how to deal with cases.

7.How does your support address the issue of 'effective' SIAS implementation?

The kind of support offered to schools ensures that all teachers are well informed and equipped with policy practices and procedures.

8.How do you think your support assists in the enhancement of SIAS implementation in schools?

My supports a lot because after visiting the school to attend the cases referred, I then conduct a workshop for all teachers in that particular schools and assist them on how they deal with other cases at school level. Schools begin to identify learners who are having social problems and deal with those problems at their level, but if the problem is severe schools refer them to the district.

9.Describe the attitude displayed by (a) Principals and (b) teachers when you visit schools for the support. (Probe: Why do you think they display such an attitude?)

Most principals and teachers display a positive attitude towards the support I offer. This is because they always show interest in what I tell them. They are willing to learn how to support learners.

10.How often do you have sessions with SBSTs? (Probe: Why?)

Usually we meet quarterly but if there re urgent cases that need urgent attention, meeting or sessions with that SBST is continuous until issues are in place.

11.Describe what you normally do when you have sessions with SBSTs. (Probe: Why?)

We discuss referrals that need urgent attention, train members on guidelines on support. Assist them to deal with different cases.

12. How does your work complement SBSTs work of supporting teachers and earners in SIAS? (Probe: What gaps have you noticed? How can this be improved?)

The work done by the SBST of supporting teachers and learners' compliment that of DBST because after SBST has done everything to support learners and feel the support is not successful. The DBST then take over the gaps because the teachers are sometimes unable to identify the exact problem.

13.Explain what you think can assist to enhance collaboration and complementarity between Psychologist, Speech Therapist, Remedial Advisor, School Social Worker, School Councillor, Learning Support Educators (DBST) AND SBST members as people tasked to support SIAS implementation? (Probe: Why?)

If a member can work collaboratively and not in, the SIAS policy can be implemented effectively and successfully. This is because each official work and attend cases on their own without involving other specialists. This makes support being repeated, sometimes not successful.

14.How do you assess the impact of your support to schools (Probe: How you recognise change in effectiveness? What indicators show you that your support really had an impact?)

The support I give to schools has a positive impact to schools. The number of cases referred by the schools decrease which shows that schools can be able to identify and provide support to learners and teachers.

SECTION C:
SUPPORT AND MONITORING

1. Describe how you support teachers to develop themselves with IE practices in schools.

I offer trainings and workshops on issues related IE and also motivate them to enrol or upgrade their qualification.

2. How do you monitor the work done by teachers in the process of supporting learners experiencing barriers to learning? (Probe: What data do you collect during monitoring visits? How do you use that data?)

After training the teachers I monitor the progress of their work. We have a monitoring tool that is designed to monitor psychosocial activities that are happening in schools. The data collected is submitted to the head office for further developments.

3. What tools do you use to monitor the work of teachers they do to support learners? (Probe: How are your tools assisting you in monitoring the work of teachers?)

Monitoring tools designed for psychosocial activities. The tools assist in ensuring that teachers do implement the policy as stated in the policy document. The tools also help us to track the improvement in policy implementation.

4. What in your opinion positively affects your work as DBST member? (Probe: Why do you think this negatively affects your work?)

What I see as positive in my work as DBST member is that some schools are beginning to understand and implement IE practices.

5. What in your opinion are the elements which hampers your work negatively as DBST member? (Probe: Why do you think this negatively affects your work?)

Other sections in the district view our section as less important than other. The special needs sections also regarded as the only section that is responsible for the implementation of SIAS policy. To such that circuit manager do not even know what we do during school visits.

5. Do you have anything else that you would like to share with me regarding your work as Psychologist, Speech Therapist, Remedial Advisor, School Social Worker, School Councillor, Learning Support Educators (DBST)?

I think if all members of the DBST including curriculum, SNES Governance Examination Teachers Development etc can meet at least once a month to discuss and share how each section should be part of SIAS policy implementation and how should support be offered to learners with additional support needs. SIAS policy can be effectively implemented in school. Number of learners with barriers of learning can also be minimized.

APPENDIX M: Example of Observation tool

Teacher Training Program Observation Tool

Program:
 Facilitators:
 Topic:

Date:
 Venue:
 Observer:

PROGRAM IMPLEMENTATION

CONTENT

	Clearly Evident	Somewhat Evident	Not Evident	N/A
Content taught matches proposed content				
Course content matches expressed objectives				
There is an appropriate balance of theory and practice				
Comments				

INSTRUCTION

DELIEVERY AND INTERACTION	Clearly Evident	Somewhat Evident	Not Evident	N/A
The language of instruction used is appropriate for the course and the participants.				
Instructional strategies are appropriate for and meet the needs of the participants.				
The facilitators use a variety means of instruction not just lecture.				
There are periodic checks for understanding				
Comments				

ACTIVITIES

	Clearly Evident	Somewhat Evident	Not Evident	N/A
Activities foster understanding of course content and pedagogical skill development				
Participants experience learning activities they are expected to provide their learners.				
A variety of activities address participant's learning needs, style, and cultural ways of learning				
Activities incorporate a range of learning and interaction configurations: individual and small group collaboration.				
Participants are given opportunity to do some type of demonstration teaching				
Comments				

<u>COMMUNUCATION</u>	Clearly Evident	Somewhat Evident	Not Evident	N/A
Communication in the venue is effective, clear and comprehensible				
Participants 'input is elicited, valued and seriously considered.				
Interactions are varied among participants and between the facilitators and participants.				
Comments:				

MATERIALS & TECHNOLOGY

<u>Materials</u>	Clearly Evident	Somewhat Evident	Not Evident	N/A
Materials are current, appropriate and relevant				
Materials are aligned to objectives and content of the training				
Materials are well-organized.				
Comments:				

<u>Technology</u>	Clearly Evident	Somewhat Evident	Not Evident	N/A
Technology is readily available.				
Technology used facilitates instruction and learning.				
Comments				

ASSESSMENT

	Clearly Evident	Somewhat Evident	Not Evident	N/A
There is clear and consistent alignment of assessment with program and course goals and objectives as stated in program template.				
Participants have opportunities to demonstrate their newly gained knowledge and skills through a variety of assessment tools.				
Participants are encouraged to assess their own progress.				
Comments:				

LEARNING/TRAINING ENVIRONMENT

	Clearly Evident	Somewhat Evident	Not Evident	N/A
The training venue/facility is conducive to learning for teachers.				
The training venue/facility accommodates the variety of learning activities				
The training venue/facility is adequately furnished with necessary equipment and materials.				
The program gives a sense of a friendly cohesive learning community				
Comments:				

PROGRAM MANAGEMENT

	Clearly Evident	Somewhat Evident	Not Evident	N/A
Time is managed effectively				
Activities flow smoothly and in a logical sequence				
Comments:				

PROGRAM ADMINISTRATION

<u>Administration</u>	Clearly Evident	Somewhat Evident	Not Evident	N/A
The program director is at the venue and actively involved in the program				
There is adequate support staff to ensure the success of the program				
Comments:				

CURRICULUM ALIGNMENT WITH DEPARTMENTAL STANDARTS

	Clearly Evident	Somewhat Evident	Not Evident	N/A
The documents provided illustrate that the curriculum is Standard, theory and departmental based.				
The program is aligned with the template				
Comments:				

PROGRAM FACILITY AND DISTRICT SUPPORT

	Clearly Evident	Somewhat Evident	Not Evident	N/A
The facilities are clean, safe, comfortable and conducive to learning.				
Comments:				

Summative Comments:

APPENDIX N

DOCUMENT ANALYSIS TOOL

Focus Area	Support Activity	Monitoring Activity
School visit		
Workshops		
Cluster Training		
On-site support visit		
One -on- one support		
Case Registers		
SBST files		
General Comments:		

APPENDIX O: Turnitin Certificate



Experiences of District Based Support Team with regards to screening identification assessment and support implementation in Zululand District. KwaZulu-Natal

ORIGINALITY REPORT



PRIMARY SOURCES

- 1** uir.unisa.ac.za
Internet Source
 - 2** www.thutong.doe.gov.za
Internet Source
 - 3** www.saaled.org.za
Internet Source
 - 4** Submitted to University of Zululand
Student Paper
 - 5** Submitted to University of South Africa
Student Paper
 - 6** Submitted to University of KwaZulu-Natal
Student Paper
-

APPENDIX P: Editing certificate

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EDITING CERTIFICATE

Re: PHINDILE DOREEN ZULU

UNISA doctoral thesis: EXPERIENCES OF DISTRICT BASED SUPPORT TEAM WITH REGARDS TO SCREENING, IDENTIFICATION, ASSESSMENT AND SUPPORT POLICY IMPLEMENTATION IN ZULULAND DISTRICT, KWAZULU-NATAL

I confirm that I have edited this thesis for clarity, language and layout. I edited the references for layout but not for accuracy. I am a freelance editor specialising in proofreading and editing academic documents. I returned the document to the author with track changes so correct implementation of the changes in the text and references is the responsibility of the author. My original tertiary degree which I obtained at the University of Cape Town was a B.A. with English as a major and I went on to complete an H.D.E. (P.G.) Sec. with English as my teaching subject. I obtained a distinction for my M.Tech. dissertation in the Department of Homeopathy at Technikon Natal in 1999 (now the Durban University of Technology). During my 13 years as a part-time lecturer in the Department of Homoeopathy at the Durban University of Technology I supervised numerous Master's degree dissertations.

Dr Richard Steele
27 January 2019
per email

