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**UNDERSTANDING SCHOOL-BASED SUPPORT PROCESSES FOR LEARNERS  
EXPERIENCING ADHD AS A BARRIER TO LEARNING**

by

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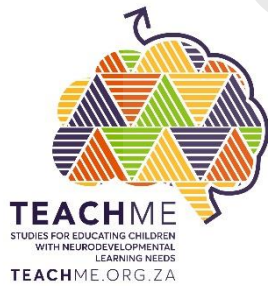
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## EDUCATING LEARNERS WITH NEURODEVELOPMENTAL LEARNING NEEDS

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## **Abstract**

Managing the challenging behaviour that is reflective of ADHD symptoms is a problem faced by teachers all over the world. This study intends to explore and describe the school-based support team's ability to identify and support challenging behaviour that is reflective of the symptoms of ADHD at schools in under-resourced communities.

The display of challenging which behaviour serves as a barrier to effective teaching and learning, is often as a result of undiagnosed and unsupported neurodevelopmental disorders. Unfortunately, not many educators and School Based Support Team (SBST) members have an awareness of challenging behaviour as a barrier to learning. They therefore may not know how to effectively respond to it, resulting in the implementation of harsh, punitive and oftentimes ineffective methods in response to the behaviour

Since the introduction of Education White Paper 6 in South Africa, it is a strongly debated issue whether learners with challenging behaviours could be supported in a mainstream school or if placement into specialised schools should be prioritised. Against this background, the SBST members at a full-service school were interviewed to determine their understanding of ADHD in relation to learner behaviour that they found to be challenging and the processes that they implemented to support learners whose display of challenging behaviour served as a barrier to their learning.

The qualitative research design of the study is located in an interpretive paradigm. Data was collected by conducting interviews, observations and analysing inclusive education policy documents. Data was analysed through open coding and three themes emerged. These themes demonstrated the SBST's ability to identify learning barriers and behaviours that are reflective of ADHD symptoms, highlighted the multifaceted conditions that influenced the SBST's ability to provide effective support to learners whose challenging behaviour serves as a barrier to their learning as well as identifying the support processes currently implemented for learners exhibiting challenging behaviour that is reflective of ADHD symptoms.

The results indicated that the SBST fulfils a pivotal role in the alleviation of learning barriers reflecting ADHD symptoms, by applying the mandated principles of inclusive education within the school. However, the findings of the study also indicate that the teacher participants feel inadequate, inexperienced and under-resourced to support learners' diverse needs. This perception of their abilities is a contributing factor to what they understand as acceptable procedures when supporting learners – highlighting the interrelated nature of teacher competencies and the procedures and processes implemented by the SBST to support learners' needs. The urgent need for comprehensive in-service training and resource allocation is highlighted by the findings of this study, which informs the important recommendations for the

developmental needs of the SBST to enable them to support learners in fulfilling their potential in accordance with principles of the Inclusive Education policy and thereby uphold the constitutional human rights of all learners to quality education.

Keywords:

ADHD, School-Based, Support Processes



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# CHAPTER 1

## CONTEXTUALISATION, PROBLEM AND AIM OF THE STUDY

### 1.1 INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

A significant proportion of learners attending South African schools exhibit behavioural challenges that serve as a barrier to effective teaching and learning (Joubert & Prinsloo, 2009; Mampane, 2006). These challenges are often as a result of diagnosed or undiagnosed neurodevelopmental disorders (Bornman & Donohue, 2014). Unfortunately, not many educators and School Based Support Team (SBST) members are aware of these challenges as barriers, nor do they know how to effectively respond to them, resulting in the implementation of harsh, punitive and oftentimes ineffective methods in response to the behaviour (Joubert & Prinsloo, 2009; Paterson & Perold, 2013). In addition, the under-resourced contexts that characterise many government schools in poverty-stricken communities often leave educators disempowered when confronted with these challenges and unable to adequately respond to the challenges (Lazarus, 2006). The purpose of the study is to identify the SBST members' understanding of the Screening, Identification, Assessment and Support (SIAS) policy (DBE, 2014). The results will be used to develop programmes that will assist educators to implement the policy and provide support to learners experiencing Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) as a barrier to learning. The research reflects on prior research conducted in the field of neurodevelopmental disorders and addressing barriers to learning, with the South African Department of Basic Education's policy on the Screening, Identification, Assessment and Support (SIAS) policy as the founding theoretical framework of the study and Bronfenbrenner's (2005) bioecological framework as the conceptual framework. This chapter also includes the problem statement, the rationale of the study, the research question, the aims and objectives of the study, the research methodology used and ethical considerations.

#### 1.1.1 Background to the study

The end of apartheid in 1994 brought high expectations of radical transformation and growth in the lives of all South Africans, particularly those who were previously oppressed by the apartheid regime (Nortje, 2017). Radical transformation refers to the implementation of policy that will contribute to the building of an equal society

through sustainable inclusive growth (Jamieson, Berry, & Lake, 2017) Unfortunately, this radical transformation did not happen at the speed anticipated and this has left many South Africans living a life of inequality, poverty, lack of access to resources and unemployment (Nortje, 2017). This can also be seen in the residential areas that people live in, as even today they are largely representative of areas designated by the Group Areas Act of 1950 (Booyse, Le Roux, Seroto, & Wolhunter, 2011). This Act, implemented by the apartheid government, aimed at assigning racial groups to different residential areas, thus preventing so-called 'non-whites' from living in areas with a well-developed infrastructure (Booyse et al., 2011).

One such area that is still reminiscent of the past is the central Johannesburg area, where the study took place. This residential area is still largely occupied by coloured and black people and is still characterised by socioeconomic and psychosocial challenges reminiscent of apartheid, which places significant strain on its residents (Bouwer & Mampane, 2011). Coloured South African people were historically defined as people of a mixed racial and ethnic heritage and black South Africans were historically defined as the indigenous Africans that speak a Bantu dialect (Isaacs-Martin & Petrus, 2012). The challenges experienced by the inhabitants of the area include unequal access to resources and opportunities, an inferior education system, limited career opportunities, increasing unemployment, and exposure to below-standard service delivery (Bouwer & Mampane, 2011). The schools in these communities are inundated with challenges related to poor access to resources thus negatively impacting on learning and teaching, where the additional barriers related to neurodevelopmental disorders among children exacerbate the existing difficulties at school (Landsberg, Krüger, & Swart, 2016).

### **1.1.2 Barriers to learning**

The term barriers to learning can be defined as the “difficulties that arise that prevent access to learning and development” (Landsberg et al., 2016, p. 19). These difficulties can occur at legislative and instructional levels (i.e. curriculum-centred barriers), at the learning site (i.e. poor infrastructure), within the learner themselves (i.e. an undiagnosed or diagnosed learning barrier) or the context in which they live (i.e. poverty-stricken communities) (Landsberg et al., 2016).

In relation to the chosen research site it is important to note that, like those in many townships, the school is host to a myriad of challenges that serve as barriers to effective teaching and learning. These challenges include (but are not limited to) the HIV/AIDS pandemic and its effects on learning; language and cultural differences; the underdevelopment that is synonymous to poverty-stricken communities; unemployment; the disintegration of family life; a climate of violence and the various forms of child abuse inflicted on the learners (Bouwer & Mampane, 2011; Dhanaraj, 2016). The presence of these psychosocial challenges increase the difficulty placed on learning and these difficulties are often amplified by the presence of a (diagnosed or undiagnosed) neurodevelopmental disorder (De Wet, 2016; Landsberg et al., 2016). The study focuses on understanding participant teachers' insights into ADHD as a neurodevelopmental disorder and how these participant teachers implement the SIAS policy to support learners with this behavioural challenge.

### **1.1.3 Neurodevelopmental disorders**

Neurodevelopmental disorders are defined by *The Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM-5)* as a group of conditions with an onset in the developmental period (APA, 2013). These disorders are characterised by the presence of developmental deficits that produce impairments to the personal, academic and or occupational functioning of the learner (APA, 2013). Furthermore, these disorders can be identified by the presence of symptoms of excess and or delays in the attainment of developmental milestones (APA, 2013). Neurodevelopmental disorders can be categorised into six categories: Intellectual Disability, Communication Disorders, Autism Spectrum Disorder, Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder, Tic Disorders and Specific Learning Disorder (APA, 2013). This research is based on the DSM-5 descriptions and explanations of ADHD and its related symptoms.

Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder is a neurodevelopmental disorder that is characterised by the presence of a persistent pattern of inattention and/or hyperactivity that interferes with the functioning or development of the individual (APA, 2013). According to the DSM-5, an ADHD with Inattention or ADHD with Hyperactivity and Impulsivity diagnosis can be made if six or more of the symptoms mentioned below are persistently present in more than one context, for at least six months and that the behaviours are inconsistent with the developmental stage of the

individual (APA, 2013). Furthermore, these symptoms must be present before the age of 12 and they must be present in two or more settings. Lastly, clear evidence needs to be provided that the presence of these symptoms interferes with the quality of the social, academic and or occupational functioning of the individual and that they are not exclusively present during the course of schizophrenia or any bout of psychosis.

ADHD Inattention symptoms (APA, 2013):

- Fails to pay close attention to detail/makes careless mistakes
- Difficulty in sustaining attention in tasks or play activities
- Does not seem to listen to instruction or when spoken to directly
- Does not follow through on instructions and fails to complete tasks/duties
- Difficulty organising tasks and activities
- Often avoids and is reluctant to engage in activities that require sustained mental effort
- Often loses things needed for task completion
- Easily distracted by external stimuli
- Often forgetful in daily activities

ADHD Hyperactivity and Impulsivity symptoms (APA, 2013):

- Often fidgets with hands or taps feet
- Leaves seat in situations where remaining seated is expected
- Runs about or climbs in inappropriate situations
- Unable to play or participate in leisure activities quietly
- On the go and acts as if driven by a motor
- Talks excessively
- Blurts out answers before a question has been completed
- Has difficulty waiting their turn
- Often interrupts or intrudes on others

Although this disorder is one that is often characterised as being 'over-diagnosed' and criticised for doctors being overzealous with the prescription of medication to

children diagnosed with it, it is important to note that the diagnosis is largely misunderstood (Mwaba, Toplan, & Roman, 2015). This is largely problematic as the learner suffering from the 'undiagnosed' disorder remains un-supported or assisted and the educator remains overwhelmed by the functional consequences that arise as a result of ADHD (APA, 2013). These consequences include the increased likelihood for the development of Conduct Disorder and or Oppositional Defiance Disorder; social rejection, poorer academic and vocational achievements and elevated levels of interpersonal conflict (APA, 2013). These elevated levels of interpersonal conflict and social rejection can contribute to the display of robust and disruptive behaviours that hinder the effective teaching and learning set out to occur in classrooms (Louw, Kleynhans, & Perold, 2010). The study set out to identify how SBST members can implement the SAIS policy to offer support to learners who experience behavioural challenges as a barrier to learning. The individual project is embedded in the "Appropriate support for learners with neurodevelopmental disorders" project that is conducted by the Department of Educational Psychology at the University of Johannesburg. The main aim of the larger project is to establish how behavioural challenges linked to neurodevelopmental disorders are identified and supported. The information from this research will inform the development of new Short Learning Programmes (SLPs) for learners with ADHD. This study was guided by the South African Department of Basic Education's policy on the Screening, Identification, Assessment and Support (SIAS) (DBE, 2014) of learners with learning barriers. A policy designed to provide South African schools with a framework that standardises the process of screening, identifying, assessing and providing support to all learners who require additional support to improve their participation in learning (DBE, 2014). Social justice and inclusive education provide the theoretical framework of the study, as their values inform the SIAS policy. It is intended that the recommendations that emerge from this collaborative research process will benefit educators and SBST members in other schools. Bronfenbrenner's (2005) bioecological framework was used as the contextual framework guiding this study (Landsberg et al., 2016). This framework will assist researchers to understand how the complex and contextual influences, interactions and interrelationships between the learners and the systems they participate in contribute to their learning experience (Landsberg et al., 2016).



## 1.2 PROBLEM STATEMENT

South African schools and the country's education system are in a transitional phase (Booyse et al., 2011; Landsberg et al., 2016). This phase is aimed at moving education away from the segregated and unjust systems it previously subscribed to, towards a system that supports democratic values and upholds the South African Constitution (Booyse et al., 2011; Nortje, 2017).

It is during this transition process that the Department of Basic Education is paying attention to the educational challenges faced by learners facing barriers to learning by mobilising the necessary resources to support these learners. The development of Education White Paper 6 (DoE, 2001) has become the roadmap for transforming the education system (Nortje, 2017). This policy outlines how the discriminatory processes of the past can be corrected and how the principles of inclusion can be achieved (DoE, 2001). Education White Paper 6 outlines the systematic changes needed in education and puts forward the idea that these changes should be geared towards accommodating and supporting the diverse learning needs of the South African school-going population (Bornman & Donohue, 2014). The inclusive education policy acknowledges that learners are often faced with challenges in the process of learning (DoE, 2001). These challenges can occur in the classroom, at school, at home or as a result of a medical condition. Included in the acknowledged barriers to learning are inappropriate behaviour and poorly developed social skills (DBE, 2014). Because of inadequate educator and/or SBST capacity and training, learners displaying a variety of behavioural challenges are often not identified as those needing remedial support (Nortje, 2017). This is as a result of the various stakeholders in education (which include the educators, SBST; District Based Support Team [DBST] members and learners' parents or caregivers) failing to acknowledge challenging behaviour as a barrier to learning but seeing it rather as an unwanted disruption in classrooms (Mampane, 2016). Although it is true that the challenging behaviours disrupt learning and teaching, stakeholders in education should begin to acknowledge these persistent and pervasive behaviours as barriers to education and provide the necessary support to the learners who display this behaviour (Lazarus, 2006). In doing so, stakeholders will begin to move away from the ordinary isolation and/or detention strategies currently being practised in response to the behaviour and move towards an acknowledgement of the behaviour

as a barrier that needs support and remediation (Moyo & Bayaga, 2014; Mwaba et al., 2015). In pursuing issues related to the acknowledgement of challenging behaviours as a barrier, the study sought to identify how the SBST members can holistically implement the SAIS process and provide support to learners experiencing behavioural challenges as a barrier to their learning. The SIAS policy is a government-implemented policy that is aimed at improving access to quality education for all vulnerable learners in South Africa (DBE, 2014). It is concerned with providing the necessary support to all vulnerable learners and ensuring that learners are able to actively participate in an inclusive and high-quality education system (DBE, 2014).

A gap in this area of study led me to seek answers to critical factors that impact on how the display of challenging behaviour is supported by the SIAS policy for effective learning. Currently many learners displaying challenging behaviours are either instructed to sit outside the classroom or are sent to the school's disciplinarians without exposure to support-oriented interventions aimed at assisting them to overcome these barriers (Chetty & Meyer, 2017; Landsberg et al., 2016). In this study educators and SBST members from the identified primary school were interviewed to gain insight and understand how the SIAS policy can be implemented to offer support to said learners and alleviate the challenges placed on both educator and learner.

### **1.3 RATIONALE FOR THE STUDY**

Lack of discipline and general misbehaviour are two of the major challenges that have plagued the effectiveness of learning and teaching in South African schools (De Wet, 2016; Thaba, 2016). Effective learning and teaching cannot take place in a space of fear or pervasive disruptive behaviour, both of which are characteristics of many South African classrooms that have become common sites of violence and disruptive behaviour (Meyer & Chetty, 2017). However, it is unfortunate that while these challenges remain such prominent issues, very few stakeholders in education either acknowledge them as such or see them as barriers to learning (Chetty & Meyer, 2017; Thaba, 2016).

The rationale of the study stems from my interest in the display of externalising behavioural challenges and how these challenges serve as a barrier to learning (Louw, Kleynhans, & Perold, 2010), as learners diagnosed with ADHD often experience interpersonal problems with their peers, teachers and family members (Louw et al., 2010). Their behaviours can be robust, unpredictable and disruptive and place additional strain on learning and teaching in challenging contexts (Meyer & Chetty, 2017). Throughout my involvement as a school counsellor at a high school in Pretoria and as an active volunteer at various Child & Youth Care Centres (CYCC), I have observed that many learners show behaviours that make it exceptionally difficult for effective teaching and learning to take place, and more often than not these children are sent “out of class” and ushered to either the discipline team or school counsellor (in well-resourced schools), who are then expected to “fix them” before their next class. This is problematic as this is not an inclusive process but rather a process that is based on the medical model, which identifies the individual as the basis of the problem and not the system the individual participates in (Landsberg, 2016). The shortcomings of the frequently applied medical approach have also sparked the researcher’s interest in identifying how the SIAS process can be implemented by SBST members in schools to acknowledge these pervasive and consistent behavioural challenges, as barriers to learning and provide the adequate support for this reality.

## **1.4 RESEARCH QUESTION**

### **1.4.1 Main question**

- How do School Based Support Team (SBST) members understand the SIAS process to identify and support learners who exhibit disruptive behaviour which reflect Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder?

### **1.4.2 Sub-questions**

- What do SBST members understand about Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder and the support required by learners who experience this challenge?
- How do SBST members acknowledge the role of ADHD in the display of pervasive behavioural challenges in the classroom?

## **1.5 RESEARCH AIMS AND OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY**

### **1.5.1 Aims of the study**

- To identify the support rendered to learners with behavioural challenges by SBST members
- To describe and propose guidelines to improve the efficiency of the SBST as a support structure to learners who display symptoms of ADHD

### **1.5.2 Objective of the study**

To determine how the SIAS process can be more effectively implemented by the SBST to support learners exhibiting symptoms of Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder.

## **1.6 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

The right to basic education is a necessity and a fundamental human right, as stipulated by the South African Constitution (1996). An inclusive education system is seen as the vehicle that can actualise this right. Inclusive education is a theoretical framework that boasts the specific objectives of promoting access to quality education for all learners (Mampane, 2016). UNESCO defines inclusion as “a process of addressing and responding to the diversity of needs of all learners through increasing participation in learning, cultures and communities and reducing exclusion within and from education” (UNESCO, 2005). It is by this definition that inclusive education can be understood as a process that is signified by a continuum of support provided within inclusive education systems (UNESCO, 2005). The South African backdrop highlights the necessity for inclusive education to address the injustices of the past, as created by the apartheid regime (Bornman & Donohue, 2014). During apartheid, black South Africans were subjected to Bantu Education, an education system that was instituted to direct black people into the unskilled labour force (Mampane, 2016). Furthermore, schools were segregated in terms of ethnicity, residential area and ability (Mampane, 2016). Schools for white children with barriers to learning were easily accessible, well-funded and adequately resourced. While the schools catering to the needs of black, coloured and Indian learners with barriers to their learning were either uncommon or poorly resourced (Bornman & Donohue, 2014; Mampane, 2016). Having segregated schools for learners with learning

barriers contributed additional challenges to South African society. These challenges include, but are not limited to:

- The high number of children of compulsory school-going age who are out of school or have never enrolled in school due to their learning barrier (DBE, 2014).
- The increasing number of learners in ordinary or special schools who are failing due to their unsupported learning barrier (DBE, 2014).
- The negative and discriminatory attitudes held by members of society around the differently abled (Landsberg et al., 2016; Mampane, 2016).
- A strained government fiscus as the government continues to support the differently abled learners into their adulthood through the provision of grants. This is as a result of the government's inability to provide a quality inclusive education which has hindered their ability to be productive and financially active members of society (Bornman & Donohue, 2014).

These challenges emphasise the importance of having an inclusive education policy, as its implementation is aimed at levelling the playing field for all learners and ensuring that all learners are afforded the opportunity to participate in an inclusive education system (Landsberg et al., 2016).

In its attempts to actualise the above-mentioned goal of inclusive education in South Africa, the then Department of Education introduced Education White Paper 6 (DoE, 2001). Education White Paper 6 was designed and legislated to transform the South African education system (DoE, 2001). This transformation commitment focuses its attention on systematically redressing the past injustices and removing barriers to learning by:

- Implementing a quality and flexible curriculum
- The conversion of special schools into resources centres
- The establishment of full-service schools
- The training and upskilling of educators and education managers to adequately respond to calls for inclusion
- The development of institution and district support structures (DoE, 2001, p. 9-11).

Education White Paper 6 arose from the need for changes to be made in the provision of education and training, thereby ensuring that basic education is responsive and sensitive to a diverse range of learning needs (DoE, 2001). Education White Paper 6 acknowledges that although the current mismatch between learners' needs and the education provided to them is as a result of the apartheid regime (Bornman & Donohue, 2014; DoE, 2001), it is the current government's responsibility to bridge this gap and contribute to the establishment of a caring, humane and inclusive society (DoE, 2001).

The SIAS policy is a government-implemented policy that is aimed at improving access to quality education for all vulnerable learners in South Africa (DBE, 2014). It is a policy that is based on the theories supporting inclusive education and the objectives of Education White Paper 6. It seeks to provide all stakeholders in education with a standardised framework that outlines the procedures involved in the screening, identification, assessment and support of learners who require additional support to enhance their participation in learning (DBE, 2014).

The implementation of the SIAS policy can therefore be understood as the actualisation of Education White Paper 6's objectives on a grassroots level (Nortje, 2017). The policy outlines the processes to be followed when addressing learning barriers throughout the learners' school career (DBE, 2014). The SIAS policy advocates that learners be understood in the context that they participate in and therefore calls for a system shift (DBE, 2014). This shift acknowledges that all learners have the right to receiving quality basic education and support within their local community (DBE, 2014). This is a move away from a system that focused on the external referral of learners with learning barriers (DoE, 2001) to a system that addresses the learning barriers in the learner's immediate context (DBE, 2014).

The primary focus of the policy is to address the learning barriers experienced by all compulsory school-aged learners who have dropped out of school due to their learning barrier and the school-going children who are not progressing through the system as a result of their unsupported learning barrier (DBE, 2014). This policy was chosen for the study as I believe that its successful implementation may assist in the identification and support of learners who exhibit behavioural challenges as a result of their specific learning barrier, namely ADHD. In addition, the successful

implementation of this policy will further contribute to a socially just and equal society that is reflective of the Constitution of South Africa.

According to Dinga (2014), social justice is a political and philosophical concept that advocates for fair and just relations between an individual and their society. This concept holds that all people should have equal access to wealth, health, well-being and opportunity. The actualisation of this philosophical concept requires that the social contract between the individual and its society (the citizen and the state) be steered towards accomplishing the following objectives:

- Ensuring the fair and just distribution of resources
- Ensuring the efficient utilisation of all kinds of resources
- The implementation of principles and policies that are steered towards improving individual welfare
- Managing societal changes and transformations in a consistent manner that will promote and achieve sustainability (Dinga, 2014).

In light of these objectives, the implementation of the SIAS policy can be understood as a vehicle for social justice. The implementation of the policy can contribute to a just society where all school-going learners are provided with the opportunity to participate in a good-quality education system that will respond to their needs irrespective of the individual or systemic barriers to learning they may experience. As a consequence of this policy, the Department of Basic Education hopes to ensure that quality educational resources are distributed to all and that they are used to improve the well-being of both the individual and society.

## **1.7 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

### **1.7.1 Research design**

This study was based on qualitative research conducted within an interpretive research paradigm. Before I discuss the methodology of the study in more detail, it is important to keep in mind the ontology and epistemology of qualitative research and how they affect its methodology.

Ontology refers to the study of the nature and form of reality (Maree et al., 2013). Qualitative researchers understand reality as being subjective and socially constructed (Schulze, 2009). They accept that the researcher cannot be separated



from the research and that the findings obtained from their research is created and not discovered (Maree et al., 2013). Epistemology, on the other hand, focuses on understanding how one comes to know reality (Johnson & Christenson, 2014). Qualitative researchers acknowledge the epistemology of reality by exploring the experiences of others in relation to a particular phenomenon they encounter (Johnson & Christenson, 2014). Qualitative researchers acknowledge the importance of the interactive relationships between the researcher and participants as well as between the participants and their experiences (Johnson & Christenson, 2014), therefore they focus on how reality has been constructed through these interactions and experiences (Maree et al., 2013).

According to Maree et al. (2013, p.51) qualitative research is a “research methodology that is concerned with understanding the processes and the social and cultural contexts which underlie various behavioural patterns”. Qualitative research is mostly interested in answering the ‘why’ questions in research (Maree et al., 2013). Qualitative research typically studies people or systems by interacting with or observing participants in their natural environments (Punch & Oancea, 2011). These observations are then used to obtain a greater understanding of the subjective meanings and interpretations placed on phenomena (Maree et al., 2013). Unlike quantitative research which is concerned with the discovery of general laws, the development of statistically valid samples and the scope of the phenomena, qualitative research focuses on the uniqueness in each situation and on understanding the depth and quality of the phenomena in the context in which it occurs (Maree et al., 2013).

An interpretive research paradigm sets out to understand phenomena through the meanings that people assign to their experiences (Maree et al., 2013). This paradigm focuses on people’s subjective experiences, how they construct their worlds and the interaction in these experiences (Schulze, 2009). In addition, the interpretive researcher aims to analyse the situation, offer a perspective of the situation and ultimately provide insight into the way people make sense of their situation (Maree et al., 2013). Furthermore, the interpretive researcher, working from a social change platform, understands that for authentic change to occur, a collaborative relationship between the researcher and the researched must be formed (Mertens, 2010). This type of research design is therefore appropriate for the



study as the research question asks: “How can the SIAS process be implemented by members of the SBST to identify and support learners who exhibit behavioural challenges as a result of having Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder?” The combination of the research question and the research design provides the researcher with the opportunity to explore the implementation of the SIAS policy by SBST members; it allows the researcher to uncover the meanings the SBST associate with the SIAS policy and the actual lived contexts within which the policy implementation has to occur.

### **1.7.2 Sampling design and size**

Sampling refers to the process used to select a portion of the population study (Maree et al., 2013). This sample group is representative of the population group (Maree et al., 2013). For this study, purposive sampling was used. Purposive sampling refers to the sampling process where participants are selected because they have defining characteristics that make them the holders of the data needed for the study (Maree et al., 2013). This research aims to interview the SBST members and educators at a full-service primary school in Johannesburg, Gauteng. The defining characteristics of the identified school is that it is a full-service school that has a number of learners who experience neurodevelopmental disorders as barriers to learning within a context that shapes the school dynamics.

### **1.7.3 Data collection**

An initial meeting was held with the head of the SBST at the identified school. This meeting focused on providing a holistic explanation of the research study and acquiring consent to conduct the research at the school. Once consent to conduct the study at the school was obtained, a meeting with all the SBST members was held. The purpose of this meeting was to provide potential research participants with a detailed explanation of the nature of the research, to achieve their voluntary participation and to obtain a general sense of interest in the study. A follow-up meeting was held with participants who showed interest and willingness to participate in the study. The purpose of this meeting was to provide participants with a reminder of the aims and objectives of the research; to obtain consent from participants and to answer all the questions participants may have. In addition, this meeting allowed participants and the researcher to schedule up-coming meetings and data collection opportunities.

The scheduled data collection opportunities took place in the form of one-on-one semi-structured interviews. Semi-structured interviews make use of a qualitative data-gathering technique that is aimed at obtaining rich and descriptive data that will assist researchers to understand the participants' constructed reality (Maree et al., 2013). The semi-structured interview requires that participants answer a set of predetermined questions that allow for the probing and clarification of answers (Johnson & Christenson, 2014). Semi-structured interview schedules provide the researcher with the line of inquiry they must explore; it is then the researcher's responsibility to be attentive to the responses given, and to probe and explore them further (Maree et al., 2013).

The rationale for the choice of this data collection method was to allow me the opportunity to develop a deeper understanding of the participants' understanding of the SIAS policy. In addition, the structure of the interview allowed me to probe new lines of inquiry that may emerge while ensuring that participants were not side-tracked by trivial aspects not related to the study (Maree et al., 2013). The data collected was transcribed and formed the primary source of data which was directly received from the participants.

#### **1.7.4 Data analysis**

According to Maree et al. (2013) data analysis refers to the processes and procedures where researchers extract some form of understanding or interpretation from the collected data. Qualitative data analysis is therefore aimed at extracting the meaningful and symbolic content of the data (Punch & Oancea, 2011). For the purposes of this study, the data analysis was concerned with establishing how participants make meaning of the SIAS policy and how the policy can be implemented to support learners displaying behavioural challenges. This was achieved through the implementation of inductive analysis which ensured that the research findings emerged from the significant themes obtained in the raw data (Johnson & Christenson, 2014).

The data analysis process began with the transcribing of the obtained data. Data transcription is the process of transforming qualitative data into written text (Johnson & Christenson, 2014). The researcher listens to or watches a video of the one-on-one interviews conducted and creates a written account of what transpired in the

recordings (Johnson & Christenson, 2014). These transcriptions are written down verbatim as heard in the audio clips. The completion of this process allows for a thematic analysis of the data. Thematic analysis refers to the identification of themes in the research findings (Punch & Oancea, 2011). This thematic analysis uncovered the themes in the data, which were used to develop a short learning programme to support primary school learners with neurodevelopmental disorders as part of the implementation of the SIAS policy at the school.

### **1.7.5 Trustworthiness**

The trustworthiness of the data refers to the way in which data is collected, sorted and classified (Maree et al., 2013). Trustworthiness is comprised of four aspects: credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability.

The credibility of data refers to factors such as the significance of the results and the believability of the results to the participants and the readers (Maree et al., 2013). The value of credibility can be upheld by using external verification audits and member checks. Conducting external verification audits on one's findings includes submitting all documentation to researchers who did not participate in the study and requesting that they assess the conceptual analysis of your study (Punch & Oancea, 2011). Member checks are carried out after the preliminary analysis of the research report thereby giving researchers the opportunity to explain to participants how the collected data was interpreted (Maree et al., 2013). In this process, participants are able to ensure that the researcher's interpretation of the collected data is accurate. Member checks were used by the participants of this study, to cross-check and correct their transcripts and ensure that the information they provided was accurately recorded and understood by the researcher.

Transferability is the extent to which the results obtained can be generalised to other contexts (Maree et al., 2013). To achieve transferability, the specific features of the research must be accurately described to enable researchers to assess if the results can be transferred to other contexts or not (Maree et al., 2013). The results of this research are transferable to other full-service schools that have similar demographics and contextual backgrounds.

Dependability refers to the stability and consistency of the research process over time and under different conditions (Punch & Oancea, 2011). In the researcher's

attempts to strengthen the study's dependability, the researcher should consistently monitor the quality of the recordings, transcriptions and documentation and the observation methods used (Punch & Oancea, 2011). The dependability of this study was upheld by means of an inquiry audit by the research supervisor, who used this audit to examine the process and product of the study.

The confirmability of the study refers to the objectivity of the data and the absence of research errors (Maree et al., 2013). Results are confirmable when they are directly derived from the participants and the research conditions rather than from the subjective opinions of the researcher (Maree et al., 2013). Confirmability is maintained by exposing the data collected to an external researcher, who has not participated in the study and requesting that they assess if the methods and procedures used in the study are described clearly and in sufficient detail to allow for data verification (Maree et al., 2013). Confirmability was achieved by exposing the collected data to my research supervisor, who thoroughly checked the data and collect methods administered to allow for verification of the data.

## **1.8 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS**

According to Christensen and Johnson (2014), research ethics are “the set of principles that are developed to guide and assist researchers in conducting ethical studies” (Johnson & Christenson, 2014, p. 27). The research was conducted according to the ethical requirements of the Health Professions Council of South Africa (HPCSA), as set out in the Health Professions Act (Act no. 56 of 1974) and the ethical requirements of the Ethics Committee at the University of Johannesburg. Throughout the planning of this research, I adhered to the ethical guidelines as stipulated by the above-mentioned ethics structures, to ensure that I continuously protected and upheld the well-being of research participants throughout the research process.

### **1.8.1 Ethical clearance**

Ethical approval was granted by the Ethics Committee of the Faculty of Education for the “Development of a centre for studies on educating children with Neurodevelopmental Disorders” project, which is the umbrella research project that my research falls under. The institutional clearance number obtained is: 2017-023

### **1.8.2 Voluntary informed consent**

The Health Professions Act (1974) states that researchers must acquire “informed consent to research” and “informed consent in recording” (HPCSA, 2016). Informed consent can be defined as agreeing to participate in a study after being informed of its purpose, procedures, risks, benefits and limits to confidentiality (Pillay, 2014). This act provides researchers with the necessary guidelines to follow when obtaining informed consent (HPCSA, 2016). These guidelines specify that the language used must be understandable to the proposed participants, it must clearly explain the nature of the research and that all participants must fully understand that their participation in the research is voluntary. Informed consent from the participants for my study was acquired through the completion of consent forms (HPCSA, 2016; Pillay, 2014). These forms were completed at the introductory research session I had with the participants. In this session, I provided participants with a detailed explanation of the nature of the research, the duration and their voluntary participation in the research. After this session, the participants who had chosen to participate in the research voluntarily completed an informed consent form.

### **1.8.3 Autonomy**

According to the HPCSA (2008, p. 2), the principle of autonomy states that “participants who are capable of deliberation about personal choices should be treated with respect for their capacity of self-determination and should be afforded the opportunity to make an informed decision with regard to their participation in the research”. This principle is upheld when participants are able to understand what they are being asked to do and when they are able to make a reasonable judgement about the effects of their participation on their well-being and they make an unsolicited choice to participate in the research (Punch & Oancea, 2011). The research participants were informed of the rights they can exercise throughout the study (Johnson & Christenson, 2014). These rights include, but are not limited to, voluntary participation and the freedom to withdraw from the study at any time.

### **1.8.4 Privacy, confidentiality and anonymity**

Privacy refers to controlling other people’s access to information about a person (Johnson & Christenson, 2014). To uphold this ethical principle, I ensured that all identifying information (such as the participants’ names or the name of the school) was removed and they were given pseudonyms. It is important to note that complete

anonymity cannot be ensured. Because of the chosen data collection methods used, the identity of the participants could not be kept away from the researcher (Johnson & Christenson, 2014). The study was, however, conducted in a manner that boasts confidentiality, as I made an agreement with the participants that acknowledges that their identity would not be revealed to anyone other than myself and the research supervisor (Johnson & Christenson, 2014). The role of the research supervisor was explained to research participants to ensure that they understood the reasoning behind the supervisor having access to the data. In addition, the data collected was stored safely and access to data requires a password (Punch & Oancea, 2011), thus ensuring that the information was kept safe even after the publication. Lastly, all research participants were informed about the research process and they will be duly informed when the research study is publicised (Hammersley & Traianou, 2012).

#### **1.8.5 Non-maleficence, justice and beneficence**

Christensen and Johnson (2014) define non-maleficence as “doing no harm to others” and beneficence as “acting for the benefits of others” (Johnson & Christenson, 2014, p. 100). These principles were consistently upheld and research participants were well informed about the possible effects of participating in the study. The possibility of the emergence of emotional discomfort during the research process was discussed with participants. Participants were advised of the available professional services in their community that could assist them with processing any discomfort experienced. In addition, all research participants were duly informed about the dates, times and interview processes for the study. These dates were agreed upon by participants according to the school’s calendar and always took place after school, to ensure their participation did not interfere with the functioning of the school. Lastly, all participants were informed of the benefits of their participation in the research. These benefits include assisting the SBST to develop a better understanding of the SIAS policy and how this policy could be implemented to support learners with neurodevelopmental disorders.

#### **1.9 CONCLUSION**

This study is interested in understanding the implemented support processes that are adhered to by SBST members when supporting learners with ADHD. In

introducing the study, chapter 1 has provided an overview with regards to the context and rationale of the study which included the factors affecting the effective implementation of inclusion in South African government schools. Research methods, for example, research design, research questions, data collection, sampling and trustworthiness were outlined. In the next chapter, I will look at literature on inclusive education and the support of learners displaying challenging behaviour as a result of ADHD in schools.

## **1.10 CHAPTER OUTLINE**

The study is divided into five chapters which are summarised as follows:

### Chapter One: Background of the study

This chapter outlines the background of the study, the orientation, rationale, motivation, aims and the research approach for the study.

### Chapter Two: Literature review

This chapter presents an extended literature review related to the topic of the study. The literature review will focus on the critical factors that impact on the implementation of inclusive education through the implementation of the SIAS policy and how it can be used to support learners displaying behavioural challenges as a result of their neurodevelopmental disorder/s.

### Chapter Three: Research methodology and design

This chapter provides a detailed explanation of the research methodology and design that was used in this study. This was achieved by elaborating on the research approach that was used and explaining the methodology and design undertaken during the study.

### Chapter Four: Data analysis and findings

This chapter provides an in-depth analysis of all the data collected throughout the study. All the data collected from the interviews and transcriptions will be presented, documented and discussion will follow.

### Chapter Five: Conclusions and recommendations



This chapter draws conclusions for the finding, with limitations acknowledged. Recommendations based on the findings for improving the functioning of the SBST to render effective support to learners experiencing barriers to learning are suggested.





## CHAPTER 2

### LITERATURE REVIEW

#### 2.1 INTRODUCTION

Challenging behaviour is a significant factor negatively affecting the successful provision of education within the South African public school system (Scarr & Schlosser, 2015). Many learners experience and exhibit challenging behaviours such as disruptive classroom behaviour, fighting and refusing to follow instructions. Although not unique to South African public schools, the occurrence of challenging behaviour is often implicated in the presence of poor infrastructure and educator burnout; a harsh reality in many under-resourced schools (Setlhare, Wood & Meyer; 2016).

Within the classroom, challenging behaviour can be defined as any behaviour that negatively affects learning and teaching by disrupting the teaching and learning process. When expressed, challenging behaviour presents as a threat to the learning, safety and dignity of stakeholders in the learning environment (Meyer & Chetty, 2017). Examples of challenging behaviour in schools include displays of aggression, disobedience, violent peer relations, disruptive and attention-seeking behaviours; all of which can be considered as posing a threat to the physical and or psychological well-being of those in the school environment (Landsberg et al., 2016).

It is unfortunate that irrespective of the severity and the frequency of the challenging behaviour displayed; it remains a phenomenon that is seldom acknowledged as a barrier to learning (Scarr & Schlosser, 2015). Although learners displaying behavioural challenges increase the difficulties in ensuring effective learning and teaching takes place, sadly, the 'perpetrating' learners are not seen as needing support as their actions directly infringe on the rights of the other learners around them (Ballantine, 2015). Rather, these learners are temporarily sent out of the classroom, excluded from learning activities, ushered to the disciplinarians or heads of departments and are expected to return with remorse and changed behaviour (Scarr & Schlosser, 2015; Decaires-Wanger, 2017; Nunan & Shantone, 2018). These interventions are exclusionary and go against the principles of inclusive education. According to UNESCO (2005) the principles that support inclusive education include acknowledging inclusion as a process; ensuring that inclusion is

concerned with the identification and removal of barriers; ensuring that inclusion is centred around the presence, participation and achievement of all learners and lastly inclusion should address the needs of learners who may be at risk of exclusion or underachievement (O'Raw & Winter, 2010). These principles acknowledge that although all learners can learn; they have different learning needs that should be equally valued and adequately supported in their process of teaching and learning (DoE, 2001). This support should be one that moves away from remediating the identified deficits in the individual learner, towards a holistic approach that responds to learner diversity and addresses learner, teacher and school needs (DoE, 2001).

## **2.2 BARRIERS TO LEARNING**

Barriers to learning are defined (Landsberg et al., 2016) as the factors that contribute to a systems' inability to accommodate to the diverse needs learners have and therefore prevent learners from accessing the educational provisions provided to them (Landsberg et al., 2016). According to Bronfenbrenner's (2005) bioecological approach to child development, the development of a child is the result of a network of interactions and systems that directly and indirectly affect the child (Shaffer & Kipp, 2010). Bronfenbrenner's ecological approach to child development organises the contexts of development into five levels of external influence (Eberson & Ferreira, 2012).

The microsystem is the smallest, most intimate and immediate environment that the child occupies (Donald, Lolwana, & Lazarus, 2011). It comprises of the child's family, peer group, teachers, neighbours and the people who have direct contact with the child (Landsberg et al., 2016). The mesosystem encompasses the interaction of the different microsystems in which the child participates. The exosystem relates to the links that exist between two or more settings; the developing child does not actively participate in this setting but is indirectly affected by the setting nonetheless (Donald et al., 2011). The macrosystem is the largest and most distant system, it is composed of the children's cultural patterns, values, dominant beliefs and the political and economic systems that affect their development (Visser & Moleko, 2012). Lastly, the chronosystem is the system that acknowledges the useful dimension of time. This dimension shows the impact of change and consistency in the child's environment (Donald et al., 2011). The chronosystem includes changes in

family structure, parent's employment status as well as the changes in legislation and economic cycles in the society they participate in (Visser & Moleko, 2012).

The bioecological approach to child development, therefore, demonstrates the diversity of interrelated influences on children's development (Ferreria & Ebersson, 2012). These interactions, together with the biological resources and attributes inherent in the child, influence the various contexts the child participates in and in turn influences the child's development, and the barriers to learning the child may experience (Shaffer & Kipp, 2010). These barriers occur in the multiple contexts and systems that learners participate in and stand in the way of effective learning and teaching (Landsberg et al., 2016) These barriers could originate from systemic influences such as parental abuse or neglect, or organic influences resulting from a medical condition (Donald et al., 2011). Burns and Warmbold-Brann (2015) state that to understand the child, the environment that the child lives in must be examined fully, as individual development cannot be validly examined without considering the multilayer environments in which the child functions (Burns & Warmbold-Brann, 2015). For this dissertation, the neurodevelopmental disorder of Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) will be discussed as a barrier to learning (APA, 2013).

### **2.3 NEURODEVELOPMENTAL DISORDERS**

Neurodevelopmental disorders are defined by the DSM-5 as a group of conditions with an onset in the developmental period (APA, 2013). These disorders typically manifest in the early childhood development phase, even before the child enters formal schooling and often persist throughout adulthood (APA, 2013). Neurodevelopmental disorders are characterised by the abnormal development of the central nervous system and result in developmental deficits that produce impairments of the personal, social, academic or occupational functioning (Pitman, 2014). The range of deficits that emerge from the neurodevelopmental disorder varies from very specific limitations in learning or control of executive functioning to global impairments of social skills or intelligence (APA, 2013). Furthermore, these disorders can be identified by the presence of symptoms of excess or delays in the attainment of developmental milestones (APA, 2013). The DSM-5 categories for

neurodevelopmental disorders include ADHD, Autism Spectrum Disorder, Communicative Disorders, Intellectual Developmental Disorders, Motor Disorders and Specific Learning Disorders (APA, 2013). By following the aims and objectives of the study, the study will focus on the behavioural challenges that emerge as a result of an ADHD diagnosis and serve as a barrier to learning.

ADHD is characterised by a chronic and pervasive pattern of developmentally inappropriate levels of inattentiveness, hyperactivity and impulsivity manifesting in early childhood (Doernberg & Hollander, 2016). Individuals with ADHD often show deficits in one or more areas of executive functioning including verbal working memory, emotion regulation, behaviour inhibition, strategy generation and implementation, motivation and self-monitoring (Du Plessis, 2015). According to Hardikar-Sawant & Shroff (2017), children display most of their apparent and difficult-to-manage symptoms in the school setting. At school, children are expected to behave in a socially appropriate manner, actively participate in academic tasks, refrain from causing disruptions and display many of these skills simultaneously (Hardikar-Sawant & Shroff, 2017). Although seemingly straightforward, the above-mentioned expectations are difficult to attain with an ADHD diagnosis (Arrunda, Bigal, & Querido, 2012). ADHD is the most commonly diagnosed childhood disorder that has a South African prevalence of approximately 5% (Du Plessis, 2015). It is characterised by three primary problems of Inattention, Impulsivity and Hyperactivity (APA, 2013). Besides these 'problems' numerous studies have indicated that many children with ADHD are of a normal or even high overall IQ, but they experience great difficulty applying this intelligence, because of the disruptions caused by the three primary problems accompanying the diagnosis (Decaires-Wanger, 2017).

This difficulty is intensified as children with ADHD are more likely to have co-morbid psychiatric disorders that often intensify the challenges the individual experiences (APA, 2013). Co-morbidity with a learning disability can result in poor academic performance, while co-morbidity with conduct problems may increase the likelihood of interpersonal conflict and the participation in violent and/or deviant activities (Doernberg & Hollander, 2016). The ADHD diagnosis is confirmed by a psychologist or a medical practitioner and often the prescribed treatment of choice includes the integration of psychostimulant medication, educational interventions, behaviour modification interventions and changes to the child's diet. (Du Plessis, 2015).

## **2.4 IMPLICATIONS OF ADHD IN THE CLASSROOM**

The educational implications of ADHD are many in terms of general learning. Learners with ADHD do not seem able to focus, concentrate, attend and remain focused on tasks for long periods (Decaires-Wanger, 2017). This results in learners missing out on vital chunks of information that later impact on their comprehension of what was communicated to them. The educational impacts occur on a continuum and vary from subject to subject (Shaughnessy & Waggoner, 2015). Learners with ADHD show better interference control in subjects such as creative arts and woodwork, where they are provided with the opportunity to artistically express themselves and the subject content is not presented in a monotonous way (Shaughnessy & Waggoner, 2015). Whereas subjects such as mathematics and accounting that require intense concentration, freedom from distractibility and high tolerance to frustration, experience interference that contributes to poor academic achievement unless accommodating interventions are introduced (Spaull N. &, 2015).

The results of these educational implications permeate into the other domains of the learner's schooling career. One such permeation is seen in the behaviour displayed at school where learners with ADHD are often disruptive, hyperactive and inattentive (Brown, 2013). This, in conjunction with the learner's poor academic performance, creates a challenge for educators who constantly have to apply modifications or accommodations to achieve compliance and order in the learning environment (Ballantine, 2015). The pervasive and disruptive nature of their behaviour is often accompanied by punishment from educators (Ballantine, 2015). Learners are punished and reprimanded for fidgeting, disrupting others, inappropriately yelling out answers and abruptly walking around in class (Scarr & Schlosser, 2015). Additionally, this constant need to reprimand learners takes time away from actual teaching and learning. While the disruptive behaviour displayed by learners with ADHD reduces the amount of time they have to complete tasks, it can unfortunately serve as another source of punishment as the incomplete task receives a poor grade because the instructions have not been followed (Adamson & Lewis, 2017). The implication of this is that the grades received by learners with ADHD are not always a reflection of their inherent capacity but rather of what they were able to complete in

the presence of interferences originating from the three primary problems related to ADHD (Brown, 2013).

It is important to note that the behavioural implications of an ADHD diagnosis are also affected by the varying moods that children with ADHD experience. These moods are often erratic, changeable and largely influenced by the medication the individual is taking (Decaires-Wanger, 2017). The moods vary from cranky irritability, ecstatic hyperactivity, anger and or sombre moods. Although experiencing a variety of moods is 'normal' and experienced by all people, children with ADHD experience these mood shifts at a greater intensity and often note that they experience these emotions as rushing towards them and that they have no sense of control over them (Du Plessis, 2015). Additionally, children with ADHD have a low tolerance for frustration (Brown, 2013). The results of the reduced tolerance are seen in the children's isolated nature; they do not have many friends or have strained relationships with the limited friends they do have and lastly, they have an increased likelihood to be involved in conflict situations (Hardikar-Sawant & Shroff, 2017). This increased likelihood is explained by their existing challenges with comprehension which may result in their attempts to resolve conflict in a manner that communicates their frustration (Decaires-Wanger, 2017). The erratic nature of their moods can also be interpreted as defiance to comply (Hardikar-Sawant & Shroff, 2017).

Learners with ADHD may understand the rules and instructions given to them but have a difficult time consistently complying with these rules (Ballantine, 2015). Although the failure to comply is not always indicative of malicious intent but is rather as a result of the frontal part of the brain being unable to constrict impulses, it still results in punishment from educators (Ballantine, 2015). Additionally, learners may struggle with appropriately expressing themselves, their emotions and their needs (Decaires-Wanger, 2017). This in conjunction with the low tolerance of frustration, a cranky mood and reduced language comprehension and impulse control, increases the probability for confrontation and conflict (De Boer & Pijl, 2016).

Lastly, it is important to note that children with ADHD may view the world in rigid and inflexible ways resulting in the abrupt and inaccurate formation of conclusions as well as the poor ability to think ahead and consider alternatives (Shaughnessy & Waggoner, 2015). Although these characteristics can often be associated with wilful



personalities in adulthood, in the school setting they are interpreted as being stubborn and disobedient (especially since they have a low tolerance to frustration for the viewpoints of others) (Ballantine, 2015). This perceived stubbornness further impacts the child's ability to effectively co-operate and collaborate with peers, as effective cooperation includes the ability to be attentive, responsible and able to control impulse behaviours, abilities that are notably impacted by the presence of an ADHD diagnosis (De Boer & Pijl, 2016).

## **2.5 HISTORICAL BACKGROUND OF ADHD IN SOUTH AFRICA**

The occurrence of challenging behaviour is not new or unknown to school communities. According to the developmental phases and nature of school-going children, children are prone to purposefully push boundaries and test the rules (Savage & Deault, 2010). When this age-appropriate behaviour is coupled with an undiagnosed neurodevelopmental disorder, and the learner is placed in learning and teaching conditions in the South African context, the challenges are exacerbated (Kendall, Ruane, & Wagner, 2011 ). These conditions intensify the occurrence and severity of behaviour challenges, as often the teacher-to-learner ratio in under-resourced schools is unfairly disproportionate (Ballantine, 2015). This results in educators being incapable of dealing with the myriad of behavioural challenges that emerge in their overcrowded classrooms (Kendall et al., 2011 ). It is in these overcrowded spaces that many educators feel ill-equipped to deal with behavioural challenges as they emerge (Engelbrecht & Nel, 2015). This state of incompetence is often perceived by some educators as being associated with the abolishment of corporal punishment practices and the introduction of inclusive disciplinary procedures (Engelbrecht & Nel, 2016). Although there are procedures and practices in place that are in line with the South African Constitution and uphold the rights of the learners, these are inefficiently applied as many educators have not received the necessary training and re-education on inclusive practices and its implementation as a response to displayed behavioural challenges (Engelbrecht & Nel, 2016).

Additionally, the socio-economic realities that learners in under-resourced schools are subjected to, are those that are characterised by poverty, malnutrition, gang violence, child-headed households and chronic untreated illnesses (Landsberg et al., 2016). These realities increase the difficulties associated with behavioural challenge interventions. For example, a child from a household that is plagued by the presence

of domestic violence and the use of aggression as a method of conflict resolution, may display aggressive behaviour in the classroom because not only because the child may have undiagnosed and untreated ADHD, but because aggressive behaviour might have become learned and normalised from the systems he participated in (Donald et al., 2011). This increases the difficulty in responding to problematic behaviour, as the educator needs to be mindful of the systems that the learner participates in and how these systems may have influenced the learner and ensure that the intervention is inclusive of these realities (Bitta, Abubaka, & Kariuki, 2018).

Another disheartening reality is the historical background of racial injustice that South Africa comes from. Pre-democratic South Africa was characterised by apartheid, a national ideology that called for the separate and unequal development of the different racial groups in South Africa (Bantwini & Letseka, 2016). The legal abolishment of apartheid in 1990, saw South Africans enter the post-apartheid era with newfound empowerment and belief in the transformation agenda that was ingrained in the preamble of the Constitution, which acknowledges the suffering and injustice of the past while conveying the hope for a just, democratic and equal future (Bantwini & Letseka, 2016). The years following the anticipated transition in South Africa were accompanied by the promise of reform with the reformation agenda being the social, economic and political integration of all South Africans especially those who were marginalised under apartheid (Spaull, 2015). Education was then prioritised and seen as an important vehicle in actualising the above-mentioned goals, as the apartheid education system comprised of multiple departments that were racially defined and the quality of education provided to the different divisions varied based on the perceived role of that racial group in the apartheid society. These multiple departments were collapsed and one integrated education department was introduced to be followed by all South African learners attending state schools. In spite of the creation of one department of education, many of the schools continued to function as they had during the apartheid regime; schools that previously catered for white learners remained well-resourced and functional while the dysfunctional and poorly resourced black schools remained disadvantaged (Spaull N. &., 2015). This reality remains and although great strides have been made by the Department of Education and later the Department of Basic Education, South



Africa can be seen as having a divided education system that is a result of a disparate economy (McKay, 2015), where the socio-economic demographic of the school, determines the resources available to the school. Therefore the quality of education available to learners is a direct result of their socio-economic status. .

In contrast to education in the apartheid era, these disparities are no longer created by institutionalised racial segregation but rather they are a result and legacy of the harrowing effects of colonial and apartheid legislation that created the contrasting social classes the learner's parents belong to (McKay, 2015). These effects include the geographical constraints and financial inaccessibility that bar entry into well-resourced schools (Spaull, 2015). This highlights the link between socio-economic status and the quality of education provided, which in turn has a direct correlation on the labour market prospects available to learners when they leave school (Spaull, 2015). This emphasises the point that the quality of education varies within South Africa and that the inferior education system is characterised by inadequacy and inconsistency which disadvantages learners and further propels them into the social standings of their parents (families) irrespective of their potential or educational capabilities (Spaull, 2015).

It is within these dysfunctional schools that poor learner performance is apparent as many of the learners perform significantly below international standards of academic milestones compared to their peers in functional schools (Ramrathan, 2017). The attainment of these milestones in functional schools is achieved as a result of the provision of textbooks to all learners, frequently receiving homework, a large staff, more educated parents, low teacher absenteeism, exposure to pre-school education and greater familiarity with the English language that is obtained through increased communication in it (Ramrathan, 2017).

Additionally problematic to this dual education system is the trajectory of one's entry into the system, as in most cases learners stay in the same system throughout their schooling career. This is because education is a cumulative process, where new learning builds upon knowledge acquired in previous phases (Soudien, 2015). A child who has entered the education system through a dysfunction system will be exposed to a below-average education that will contribute to their developmental delay as basic concepts in early years of schooling are not mastered and the learner

is placed at a perpetual disadvantage as they progress through the system (Spaull & Kotze, 2015).

It is within these same disfunctional education systems that high-dropout rates among children with ADHD are identifiable (Weybright & Caldwell, 2017). Many learners report their poor academic results being caused by their inability to keep up with the pace of learning, the limited remedial interventions at their disposal and their challenges with comprehending subject matter (Kent, Pelman, Molina, Sibeley, & Waschbusch, 2011). It is these realities which result in lower grades and lower overall achievement levels and increase the likelihood of grade retention and potential dropout when retentions occur frequently (Kent et al., 2011). This can be identified in the correlation studies conducted on the number of grade 12 learners who register for their matric exam in comparison to the enrolment cohort of their grade 1 year. Results from these correlation studies indicate that the matric class refers to only the 'best 50%' of learners who remain in the schooling system (Ramrathan, 2017). Kent et al., (2011) acknowledge that the probability of learners, with unsupported barriers to learning dropping out of school, is increased by the learners' high levels of absenteeism. This is problematic because a learner's inconsistent presence at school directly correlates with their exposure to the teaching and learning content presented in the classroom. School attendance that occurs sporadically and inconsistently, will reflect in the learner's school performance and negatively impact on their overall academic results (Weybright & Caldwell, 2017).

It is within these contexts of dysfunction and the disparities of the education system that many learners continue to struggle in their quest to obtain an education. These challenges amplify the challenges experienced by learners in the under-resourced education system who experience barriers to learning (Spaull, 2015). As mentioned above, barriers to learning are defined by Landsberg et al. (2016) as the factors which lead to the inability of the system to accommodate diversity, which leads to the breakdown or prevention of accessing the education provided (Landsberg et al., 2016). The amplification of these challenges is as a result of the inherited backlog, inadequate resource mobilisation and the development of 'special schools' by the apartheid government (Soudien, 2015). Where many special schools catering for black learners were under-resourced, had limited funding and practised a poor curriculum, the educational prospects for learners with barriers to learning or those

with disabilities decreased (Soudien, 2015). Also, the geographical locations of these schools contributed to many school-aged learners with disabilities not attending school (Landsberg et al., 2016).

This, therefore, means that the current dysfunctional schooling system is responsible for the re-introduction of learners with barriers to education to the schooling system (Soudien, 2015), a responsibility that requires funding for its actualisation. Although the current government fiscus spends 17% of its GDP on education, research indicates that the proportion of money currently being spent on an individual black child is still less than what the apartheid government spent on a white learner decades ago (UNICEF, 2017).

The inherited culture of learning and teaching, as well as the lack of resources in many dysfunctional schools, perpetuates the challenges experienced by learners. An apathetic attitude to learning and teaching leave learners with learning barriers that go unidentified and unsupported. This ultimately contributes to the learners' poor performance in school (Spaull, 2015).

It is important to note, that this apathy is also heightened by the lack of resources and support provided to educators in these schools. Unlike in well-resourced, functional and high fee-paying schools, there are no support staff trained in the identification and support of learning barriers (McKay, 2015). Data annually collected by the Department of Basic Education, as part of the Learner Unit Record Information and Tracking System (LURITS), has indicated that the 2018 teacher-to-learner ratio in public schools is 1:33 (Department of Basic Education, 2018). This teacher-to-learner ratio makes it almost impossible to identify individual learner needs and the additional responsibilities placed on the educator make it difficult to offer individual support if the barrier is identified (Spaull, 2015). All of which support the proposed research claim that educators are currently unable to support learners experiencing barriers to learning, with ADHD being the most commonly diagnosed barrier to learning (Ballantine, 2015). According to Kendal (2011), statistics indicate that 5% of the South African school-going population meet the criteria for ADHD and that many learners are not only undiagnosed and unsupported, but their behaviour is recognised as a disciplinary problem within the schooling system (Hardikar-Sawant & Shroff, 2017).

### **2.5.1 Prevalence of ADHD in South Africa**

ADHD is the leading childhood psychiatric disorder affecting 1 in every 20 children belonging to the South African school-aged population (Barkley & Pollion, 2015). Although this 5% prevalence is relatively high, it is inconclusive as many children are never given a formal diagnosis but are often labelled as naughty, disobedient or stupid (Topkin et al., 2015). The inconclusive prevalence rates in under-resourced South African communities can be attributed to a myriad of factors that include:

- The lack of ADHD knowledge in the communities that many learners belong to (Schoeman & Liebenberg, 2017)
- The parental socio-economic status, as one's socio-economic status impacts on one's access to the health care services one is exposed to and the ability of such services to assist with the diagnosis and treatment of ADHD (Landsberg et al., 2016)
- The residential addresses of many of the learners in under-resourced schools is not that of their parents (Bornman & Donohue, 2014). Many learners are often left in the care of a guardian or family member who might not be literate or easily contactable, for purposes of holistic intervention planning (Landsberg et al., 2016).
- Lastly, educator training may serve as a shortfall as some educators are unable to identify the symptoms of ADHD, resulting in the implementation of inappropriate interventions (Ballantine, 2015).

The realities, as mentioned earlier, support the findings of Topkin et al., (2015), which describe the South African classroom as a space that misunderstands and inadequately responds to ADHD. These inadequacies result in learners who experience ADHD as a barrier to learning, being exposed to an exclusionary education system. A system that is described by Florian & Beaton (2017), as a system whereby learners are included in the classroom through their physical presence but excluded from actively participating in the teaching and learning content (Florian & Beaton, 2017). This exclusion is a result of the conditions in which teaching and learning occur. These conditions include the teaching methods, remedial interventions and learning environments, that learning takes place in. All of which are currently not responding to the holistic educational needs of the learner with unidentified and unsupported ADHD and their participation in education is not

one that promotes the activation of their full potential and the goals of inclusive education are not being actualised (Beaton & Florian, 2017).

## **2.6 INCLUSIVE EDUCATION**

It is a matter of grave concern that children with different learning abilities and needs are facing the barriers to learning that they are. In the South African context, these barriers contribute to the exclusion of many learners from the education system (Mampane, 2016). It is because of this very concern that the equal and un-discriminatory provision of education to all learners became a priority to the South African government (Mampane, 2016). This un-discriminatory education has its roots in the nation's founding document, the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa. Section 29 (1) states that everyone has the "right to basic education, including adult education, and to further education which the state through reasonable measures must make progressively available and accessible" (Equal Education Law Centre, 2017). It further states that the state may not discriminate, directly or indirectly, against anyone on one or more grounds, including disability (Equal Education Law Centre, 2017). It is from this founding document and the international regulations that the philosophy of inclusive education was introduced into education. Inclusive education is a democratic reformation policy that is centred on the participation of all children and young people in the same education system and the removal of exclusionary educational practices. The inclusive education philosophy advocates for the introduction of enabling systems, structures and methodologies that meet the needs of all learners irrespective of the various barriers to learning the learner experiences (Mampane, 2016). Inclusive education is a process that is signified by the provision of a continuum of support that occurs within inclusive school systems and responds to the continuum of needs encountered by learners (Equal Education Law Centre, 2017). It is focused on responding to the diversity of learner's needs and the reduction of exclusionary systems within and from education (Mampane, 2016). The adaptation and implementation of inclusive education is therefore a commitment to ensure that learners learn in ways that are accessible and feasible to them (Landsberg et al., 2016). Additionally, the implementation of this philosophy accepts the increased responsibility to effectively teach learners irrespective of their varying learning needs and learning styles (Engelbrecht & Nel, 2015).

The progressive movement towards inclusive education in South Africa is one that is spear-headed by Education White Paper 6 (2001) (hereafter referred to as White Paper 6). White Paper 6 is a ministerial commitment and policy that outlines the provision of education for all learners, including those who are experiencing learning barriers or have dropped out of the schooling system because of their experienced barriers (DoE, 2001). This ministerial commitment acknowledges that learners with barriers to learning experience difficulty gaining access to education and/or achieving the stipulated educational outcomes because of the barriers they experience (DoE, 2001). Furthermore, White Paper 6 acknowledges that it is the responsibility of all stakeholders in education to provide an education that provides support at the intensity needed to overcome the debilitating impacts of the barriers (Mampane, 2016). The need to introduce changes in the provision of education arises from the unequal and segregated educational practices of the apartheid government, the alterations of the inherited system and the creation of a system that is responsive to the diverse range of learners' needs (Mampane, 2016). These learners include all those in mainstream contexts whose educational needs are inadequately accommodated and therefore unsupported (Bornman & Donohue, 2014). (DoE, 2001). This reality contributes to the need to maximise the participation of all learners and the creation of a culture and curriculum of education that minimises the various barriers to learning and upholds learners' constitutional rights. (DoE, 2001)

White Paper 6 boasts the long-term goal of “developing an Inclusive Education and training system that uncovers and addresses barriers to learning and recognises and accommodates diverse learning needs” (DoE, 2001). White Paper 6 acknowledges that changes to mainstream education are required – changes that promote the early identification of all learners and educators who need support and the provision of responsive and appropriate support (DoE, 2001). In light of this goal, the Screening, Identification, Assessment and Support (SIAS) policy was developed. The SIAS is an inclusive education strategy that provides stakeholders in education with the necessary guidelines for actualising inclusive education in South African schools (DBE, 2014). These guidelines are centred on the early identification of learning barriers, the assessments of the barriers, the determination of the nature and level of support required to overcome learning barriers and the provision of said support



(DBE, 2014). The SIAS policy advocates a progressive movement away from the medical approach that was previously administered, an approach that involved the participation of professionals with specialised knowledge and expertise, working independently with the child and with the professionals communicating with one another to complement one another's interventions (Mampane, 2016). It promotes a transdisciplinary collaborative approach towards identification and support where all role-players interactively share their knowledge and expertise to provide the most appropriate support for learners experiencing barriers (Mampane, 2016). The SIAS policy further specifies the protocol, through a set of forms, that must be followed when a learner who experiences barriers to learning has been identified to enable an appropriate decision-making process regarding the most suitable support for the learner (DBE, 2014). As mentioned above, the SIAS policy emphasises collaboration between all role-players. It also promotes the application of a multidimensional assessment battery that acknowledges that because barriers to learning occur at different levels and within different systems (i.e. the individual learner and teacher system, the family system and the system in which the curriculum is developed), all levels must be explored when assessing potential barriers experienced by learners (Equal Education Law Centre, 2017). This approach highlights the importance of a holistic assessment that embodies a socio-ecological and systematic paradigm. Although the SIAS policy was introduced to actualise the goals of White Paper 6, it is also a direct response to the concerning breakdown in learning and teaching that occurs as a result of inability to accurately identify and accommodate learning needs (Bornman & Donohue, 2014). This unfortunate reality aligns with the proposed claim that suggests that educators are unable to adequately support learners who experience behavioural challenges as a result of their ADHD diagnosis, as a barrier to learning (Bornman & Donohue, 2014). These challenges arise from the following factors (Bornman & Donohue, 2014, p.7-8):

- The educator's inability to acknowledge behaviour as a barrier to learning
- The educator's limited knowledge regarding neurodevelopmental disorders and the behavioural manifestations of ADHD
- The direct correlation between this limited knowledge about accurately identifying the learning barrier and applying appropriate support measures in response to the barrier

- The reluctance educators experience in identifying the behavioural outputs of ADHD as a barrier to learning and acknowledging these barriers as not being purposefully conducted.

Furthermore, it is important to identify the discrepancies between the proposed support measures suggested by the SIAS policy as well as the current realities in South African schools regarding the support of learning barriers (Engelbrecht & Nel, 2015). The discrepancies can be identified in the inappropriate and pervasive 'remediation' attempts employed by educators in a bid to correct the inappropriate behaviours displayed by learners with ADHD (Engelbrecht & Nel, 2015). These attempts include isolating learners, temporarily removing them from the classroom or the use of excessive punishments. These corrective measures are problematic as they contribute to the learning barrier, as the learners are then further excluded from educational opportunities and the injustices of an exclusionary and discriminatory education system are perpetuated (Engelbrecht & Nel, 2015).

The above-mentioned discrepancies are also as a result of the challenges educators and school management teams experience when applying the SIAS policy. These challenges include:

- The inadequate pre-service and in-service training that teachers are exposed to on the basic skills required to appropriately identify a learning barrier (Grosser & Nel, 2016)
- The abrupt and overly bureaucratic introduction of the SIAS policy in schools, where very little information and training was provided to schools on the implementation of the policy (Bornman & Donohue, 2014)
- The dysfunctional School Based Support Teams in schools and the limited support these teams receive from districts (Engelbrecht & Nel, 2015)
- The attitudes held by the educators who feel that the SIAS policy is a long and drawn-out process that yields very few results and therefore refrain from initiating it. (Ballantine, 2015)
- The administrative requirements that accompany the completion of the process serve as a deterrent to educators and support staff, as they find it time-consuming and distracting from their other responsibilities (Engelbrecht & Nel, 2015).



- The lack of resources within the provincial education departments leave many educators and support staff feeling apathetic regarding the attainment of the recommendations that will be put forth by the completion of the SIAS process (Engelbrecht & Nel, 2016).

## **2.7 CONCLUSION**

This chapter examined the various steps that South Africa has taken towards the development of policy frameworks for an inclusive education system (Equal Education Law Centre, 2017). It acknowledges that although educational policies and constitutional rights exist, the effective implementation of an inclusive education system has not yet been attained. While significant advocacy is underway to advance the rights of learners with learning barriers, the behaviour of learners with ADHD in school settings, has still not been acknowledged as a barrier to learning (Ballantine, 2015), therefore highlighting the inadequate processes in place to identify and support teachers and learners experiencing ADHD as a barrier to learning. Several factors contribute to the barriers to learning that learners experience and the inability of educators to adequately support these barriers (Landsberg et al., 2016). However, evidence indicates that the appropriate application of the SIAS policy will directly influence the reduction of said barriers and increase the learners' participation in learning and teaching. This will ensure that the reformation agenda that is boasted of in the inclusive education philosophy is attained (Equal Education Law Centre, 2017).

## **CHAPTER 3 RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY**

### **3.1 INTRODUCTION**

The primary research goal of this study was to examine the school-based processes that have been implemented to support learners who experience ADHD as a barrier to learning. This chapter provides a detailed explanation of the research methodology and design used in this study. This will be achieved by elaborating on the research approach that will be used and explaining the methodology and design undertaken during the study. The guiding research question in this study was: How do School Based Support Team members understand the SIAS process to identify and support learners who exhibit behavioural challenges as a result of an Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder? A fee paying full-service primary school in Bosmont was chosen for this study. Qualitative interviews were the mode of inquiry in this study, using purposefully selected teachers as the study participants.

In this chapter, the following aspects of the methodology used will be discussed: the research design, the research paradigm, the researcher, the participants, the research instrument and data collection methods, data analysis, data verification and ethical considerations.

### **3.2 RESEARCH DESIGN**

A qualitative research approach was used in this study. According to (Ary, Jacobs, Irvine, & Walker, 2010). Qualitative research is a research methodology that aims to understand and explore the intentionality of behaviours. It is through this understanding that the social and cultural contexts that this behaviour occurs in, is also understood. Qualitative research studies people or systems by interacting with or observing participants in their natural environments (Punch & Oancea, 2011). These observations are used to develop a deeper understanding of the subjective meanings and interpretations placed on phenomena (Maree et al., 2013). Qualitative research focuses on the uniqueness in each situation and on understanding the depth and quality of the phenomena in the context in which it occurs (Maree et al., 2013).

According to Thanh and Thanh (2015, p. 25), the characteristics of qualitative research include:

- Research is carried out in naturalistic settings.
- The researcher asks broad-based questions that are aimed at exploring, interpreting and understanding the meanings individuals ascribe to their social contexts.
- Participants are selected through a non-random form of selection, as the participants pose information that is vital to the research being conducted.
- Data is collected using methods that deliberately bring the researcher into close contact with the participants.
- The researcher prioritises gaining data that describes the experiences of their participants over data that indicates numbers or statistics.

As a result of the naturalistic qualities of qualitative research, the qualitative researcher ensures that the research is conducted in a manner that focuses on the context and respects the humanity of the participant's experiences (Corbin & Strauss, 2008). When conducting research, the qualitative researcher does not predetermine the dependent or independent variable, rather the researcher focuses on the full complexity of the meanings people in that environment have associated with the phenomena being studied (Creswell, 2009). This ensures that the participant's experiences and perceptions are captured through empathetic understanding (Thanh & Thanh, 2015 ). The qualitative research design is fundamentally interpretive and outlines the research paradigm of this study (Thanh & Thanh, 2015).

### **3.3 RESEARCH PARADIGM**

Kuhn, as cited in Orman (2016, p. 49), defines a paradigm as “the entire constellation of beliefs, values, and techniques, shared by the members of a given community”. Castellan (2010) agrees that paradigms are the network of shared assumptions and conceptions of how members of a given community look at reality. This view acknowledges paradigms not as a theory, but as a way of thinking that can lead to theory development (Castellan, 2010). Paradigms reflect different ideas about reality (ontology) and how this knowledge of reality is gained (epistemology) (Castellan, 2010). In this study, I have chosen an interpretive paradigm; a paradigm that is specific and relevant to qualitative research and the topic of this study.

I chose this paradigm as a result of the beliefs that I hold which acknowledge that reality is subjective and that each person creates their reality as they interact with the

environment they participate in and the people in this environment (Maree et al., 2013). It was through my active participation on a School Based Support Team (SBST) at an under-resourced mainstream high school in Pretoria, that I began to develop my knowledge base about the support learners displaying behavioural challenges as a result of ADHD received from the SBST. In gaining this knowledge about the realities surrounding SBST support for learners with learning barriers, I decided on the topic of my research and the methods of inquiry that I would follow. Although the research site and the school that I currently work at are not the same, these methods of enquiry enabled me to interact with the participants of my study, gain more knowledge about their realities and use this knowledge to interpret the SBST members' experiences as they support learners whose behavioural challenges serve as a barrier to their learning (Maree et al., 2013). This is consistent with Thanh and Thanh's (2015) views on the researcher's ability to discover and understand participants realities, where they acknowledge that the researcher's background and experiences shape how they discover and understand their participant's realities (Thanh & Thanh, 2015 ).

The interpretive research paradigm further acknowledges that the researcher brings human interpretation to the environment and the people involved (Vine, 2009), thus supporting the notion that suggests that human experiences and environments are constructed by the people who participate in it (Vine, 2009). This is further explained by Creswell (2009), who acknowledges that because reality is not a singular experience but a collection of experiences that are shaped by human encounters and social contexts, reality is best studied within the socio-historic contexts in which it occurs and is studied in a manner that reconciles the subjective interpretations of all the various participants in that environment (Thanh & Thanh, 2015 ) Therefore, the manner in which the lived realities of the SBST members have been captured is descriptive and attempts to communicate these realities in a manner that conveys their voices and views (Maree et al., 2013). As the researcher in this study, I attempted to understand the support SBST members provide learners exhibiting behavioural challenges as a result of ADHD. The information collected was used to develop themes that best describe how learners experiencing ADHD as a learning barrier, are supported.

Lastly, the interpretative paradigm was chosen as the research paradigm because of its relevance to inclusive education, the theory underpinning this research. This theoretical framework encourages the researcher to acknowledge the importance of fulfilling the principles of inclusive education in schools (DoE, 2001). These principles necessitate that education should be delivered in a manner that supports and represents the diverse and unique needs of all learners and ensures that all learners are afforded the same opportunity to participate in an education system that addresses injustice and removes barriers to learning (DoE, 2001). This theoretical framework encouraged the researcher to acknowledge the behavioural manifestations of ADHD as a barrier to learning and focus on how this barrier is supported by the SBST at a primary school in Bosmont, Johannesburg.

### **3.4 THE RESEARCHER**

According to Henning, Van Rensburg and Smit (2004), the researcher, throughout the research process, becomes a co-creator of meaning, who seeks to view the world through the perceptions and experiences of participants (Henning et al., 2004). In doing so, the researcher seeks and accepts multiple perspectives and versions of reality (Henning et al., 2004). The researcher is personally involved, trusting and empathetically understanding in the process of data collection and lastly, the researcher uses the gathered data to understand the subjective realities that participants experience and the meanings associated with these experiences (Maree, et al., 2013). To achieve this understanding, the researcher encourages the collection of data from various sources, in an attempt to strive for validity (Maree, 2013). Furthermore, the qualitative researcher is one who does not stand above or outside the research participants (Mertens, 2010). Rather the qualitative researcher is engaged in activities that seek to discern the meanings that participants associate with their specific social contexts and researched phenomena (Thanh & Thanh, 2015).

For this study, the data was collected by conducting interviews and utilising policy documents. As mentioned above, I, as the researcher, also used my beliefs and personal background to influence the reality being studied (Creswell, 2009). I relied on my observations, intuition and judgement to understand the realities that the SBST members experienced. My experience as a school counsellor and as an SBST

member influenced the interaction and information exchange between myself and the research participants.

### **3.5 THE PARTICIPANTS**

(Bailey, Hennik, & Hutter, 2011)state that because the purpose of qualitative research is to gain a detailed understanding of a certain phenomenon and the context that the phenomenon occurs in, it is important that the researcher identifies participants with specific characteristics that will best inform the research topic. These participants should be chosen deliberately and flexibly. The deliberate identification of these participants is because these participants have rich information relating to the study and the research issues. The flexibility of the identification affords researchers the flexibility in refining the types of participants selected during data collection instead of confining the researcher to a rigid recruitment procedure from the onset (Bailey et al., 2011).

For this study, I selected the SBST of a full-service primary school in Bosmont, Johannesburg as my main source of information. I applied for the necessary permission required as I needed access to the school to conduct interviews for this research study. Their participation in the study was important because it would assist in developing an understanding of the support that learners who display behavioural challenges as a result of ADHD receive from the SBST and how this support assists in addressing this learning barrier. I based my selection on the premise that these participants would be able to supply information-rich data due to their explicit and implicit experiences serving on the school's SBST, their knowledge and skills and their influence in supporting learners displaying challenging behaviour as a result of ADHD.

I chose that particular school because it was one of the schools identified by the University of Johannesburg's Studies on Educating children with Neuro-developmental Differences project, as a school that is inconsistently applying the SIAS policy. Furthermore, this school was chosen because of its recent classification as a full-service school. According to White Paper 6, full-service schools are schools that have been converted from mainstream schools into schools that are equipped and supported to provide for the full range of learning needs (DoE, 2001). Full services schools are inclusive and welcoming of all learners in terms of their

cultures, policies and practices (DoE, 2001). These schools increase participation and reduce exclusion by providing support to all learners to develop their full potential irrespective of their background, culture, abilities or disabilities, their gender or race (DoE, 2001). The school admits learners following the departmental admission policy, a policy that aims to be inclusive and accommodating to the diverse needs of all learners and not to discriminate based on race, gender, language or social class (DoE, 2001).

To prevent having to conduct a complete census of the whole teaching population, purposeful sampling procedures were employed. These procedures focus on collecting a small representative group of a larger population (Mertens, 2010). The purposefully chosen sample provides in-depth information that can be used to understand how learners experiencing ADHD as a barrier to learning are supported in the school system (Mertens, 2010). The participants were teachers who served as members of the SBST. These teachers have experience in teaching and have taught learners with ADHD. The language of learning and teaching at the school is English and the majority of participants said that they had a high proficiency in English and could accurately comprehend the research questions.

The characteristics of the school and the participants:

- The school is a full-service primary school.
  - The school has a functioning School Based Support Team.
  - The school has a full-time learning support educator.
  - The incidences involving the display of challenging behaviour that is as a result of ADHD and serves as a barrier to learning are reported to the SBST.
- The Foundation Phase educators (Grades 1–3)
  - The educators have specialised in early childhood development.
  - Their focus is on teaching children the foundations of reading, writing, and literacy.
  - They teach the children their classes all the subjects in the curriculum in the same classroom.
  - Two Foundation Phase educators were interviewed.



- Teacher 1 was a veteran educator, who had taught in the phase for more than 13 years. The other Foundation Phase teacher (Teacher 5) was a relatively new educator who has only been teaching for two years and is placed at the school as a Funza Lushka Bursary<sup>1</sup> recipient.
- The Intermediate Phase educators (Grades 4–6)
  - The educators focus on the expansion of the language and mathematical skills taught in the Foundation Phase and introduce Natural Sciences and Technology, Social Sciences and Life Skills (Creative Arts, Physical Education and Personal and Social Well-being) to the learners' curriculum.
  - They teach specific subjects within the prescribed curriculum.
  - Two Intermediate Phase educators were interviewed.
    - Teacher 2 was a new teacher who recently joined the field of education after leaving the corporate environment to pursue her passions. She completed her Post-Graduate Certificate in Education and has an accompanying Journalism Degree. She teaches English at the school.
    - Teacher 4 is a teacher who has been at the school for the past eight years. She was also a Funza Lushka bursary recipient who has been placed at the school since her teaching practice. Teacher 4 teaches Mathematics and Natural Science.
- The Senior Phase educators (Grade 7)
  - The educators expand the skills taught in the previous two phases. They promote the social-emotional, physical and intellectual development of learners and prepare them for their high school education careers.
  - One Senior Phase educator was interviewed.
    - Teacher 3 was a Senior Phase teacher who taught English at the school. She used to be the English HOD and voluntarily stepped down from the position due to the strenuous

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<sup>1</sup> The Department of Basic Education offers a teaching bursary aimed at promoting teaching as a profession. Recipients of the bursary are required to teach at a public school for the same number of years that they received the bursary.

administrative demands that accompany the position and the perception that these demands took away from the actual teaching she was able to do.

### **3.6 RESEARCH INSTRUMENT**

As mentioned above, the purpose of the study was to identify the capacity of the SBST to identify learners who display challenging behavior, possibly as a result of ADHD. This outlined purpose, therefore, affirms that the most knowledgeable participants were chosen to participate in the study (Maree et al., 2013). The research instrument was narrative in structure; that is, words were used instead of numbers (Mertens, 2010). In keeping with the narrative nature of the study, semi-structured interviews were chosen as the most basic data collection method, with document analysis as an additional research instrument. According to Maree et al. (2013), the semi-structured interview refers to an interview that is conducted with a predetermined schedule (Maree et al., 2013). This schedule of questions is flexible as the researcher can expand questions and probe participants for more information if necessary (Maree et al., 2013). The researcher's responsibility is to explore the responses given by participants and use these responses as an opportunity to gather rich and descriptive data that reflects the participant's reality (Morehouse, 2011). A tape recorder was used to record the interviews and notes were taken during the interviews.

#### **3.6.1 Procedures**

Before collecting any data for this study, I had to receive ethical clearance from the University of Johannesburg and the Gauteng Department of Basic Education (Addendum 1) to be able to conduct the research. Furthermore, a full-service primary school in Gauteng was telephonically contacted to confirm their agreement to participate in the research. After receiving consent from the Deputy Principal and head of the SBST (Addendum 4), appointments were made with the different participants and written, informed consent was obtained (Addendum 4). The data from this research study provided insight into the support given to learners experiencing challenging behaviours as a barrier to their learning.

#### **3.6.2 Data collection**

The following methods were used to collect data:

| <b>Data collection method</b> | <b>Data source</b>   |
|-------------------------------|--|
| Interviews                    | Interviews held with the School Based Support Team of the school   |
| Documents                     | SIAS Policy (DBE, 2014)<br>Education White Paper 6 (DoE, 2001)   |
| Researcher's notes            | Throughout the research process, I kept notes of my reflections on the research process and the qualitative observations recorded throughout the interviews. |

### **3.6.3 Interviews**

The data collection method used was interviewing. According to Henning et al. (2004, p. 52), the interview aims to “bring to our attention what the individual thinks, feels and does and what they have to say about it in an interview, thus giving us their subjective reality in a ‘formatted’ discussion”. Aligning with the main aim of the interview as stated by Henning, the purpose of these interviews was to identify the support already provided for learners displaying behavioural challenges as a result of ADHD and to identify how this support correlates with the support that is proposed by the SIAS policy. By doing so, I was able to obtain a more descriptive understanding of the perceived role of the SBST in supporting learners experiencing behavioural challenges as a barrier to learning and the actual support these learners received.

The group interviews served as the main method of data collection. The semi-structured nature of these interviews allowed for a free flow of information and ensured that the researcher was able to ask follow-up questions based on the participant's responses (Morehouse, 2011). None of the questions had to be rephrased or translated during the interviews. The questions for the SBST members were based on the kind of support they provided to learners who experience challenging behaviour as a barrier to their learning.

These interviews were conducted on the school premises, at a time convenient to the SBST and the school timetable. The interviews started with a brief introduction to the research process and purpose. Then the participants were given the opportunity to ask questions before the interviews started and then we moved onto the actual interviews and ended with another question and clarity-seeking opportunity for the

participants and a debriefing of the interview session (Mertens, 2010). The questions were adapted and expanded on as the need arose, ensuring that all aspects were covered. Only one of the participants requested to respond to interview questions in Afrikaans, and due to my proficiency in the Afrikaans language, I conducted the interview without a translator and conducted the translations myself.

### 3.6.4 Researcher's notes

Creswell (2004) describes field notes as the notes recorded by the researcher that are used to create and expand the holistic nature of the data collected. These notes should include written descriptions of the participants, activities and setting. These notes are secondary to the interview and they add to the qualitative value of the data collected. The field notes and table of observations can be seen in Addendum 5.

**Table 1. Example of condensed table of field observations**

| Participant | Professional | Friendly | Open to conversation | Uncomfortable | Anxious | Relaxed | Appreciates formal structures in the school system | Prefers a more informal structure in the school system | Difficulty articulating | Ease of articulation |
|-------------|--------------|----------|----------------------|---------------|---------|---------|--|--|-------------------------|----------------------|
| TP1         | X            |          | X                    |               |         | X       | X  | X  |                         | X                    |
| TP2         | X            | X        | X                    |               |         | X       | X  |  |                         | X                    |
| TP3         |              |          | X                    |               | X       |         | X  |  |                         | X                    |
| TP4         | X            | X        | X                    |               |         | X       |  | X  |                         | X                    |
| TP5         | X            | X        | X                    |               | X       |         | X  |  | X                       |                      |

(Source: Gouws, 2012)

### **3.7 DATA ANALYSIS**

Bailey et al. (2011) define analysis as a process of immersion in data. This immersion is characterised by the researcher's identification and interpretation of the research participant's experiences. It is within this process that the researcher can remain close to the data and adequately form an evidence-based understanding of the research issues. The process of qualitative data analysis is often described as "a science and an art" (Castellan, 2010, p.7). This description stems from the structured and 'scientific' process of data analysis the researcher is expected to follow to ensure that their analysis results in evidence-based interpretations of data (Castellan, 2010). While the artistic description that accompanies qualitative data analysis refers to the interpretative nature of the analysis, whereby researchers should understand, explain and interpret human experiences in a manner that accurately reflects the participant's lived experiences (Castellan, 2010). The integration of the 'scientific' and 'creative' aspects is crucial throughout data analysis and the balance of both aspects are needed to conduct good quality analysis (Castellan, 2010). Without the 'scientific' component, data analysis would lack process, technique and rigour whereas the absence of the 'creative' component would result in an analysis that lacks interpretive meaning and prevents empirical theory development (Bailey et al., 2011).

The section that follows describes in detail how the data was analysed.

#### **3.7.1 Preparing the data for analysis**

According to Bailey et al. (2011), the preparation of data analysis involves three main tasks: producing a verbatim transcript of the interviews conducted, translating the transcripts if necessary and removing all identifiers from transcripts to maintain participant anonymity. These tasks were all conducted in my research processes. All the interviews were designed and conducted to cover the same content that was aimed at answering the research question. Each interview was recorded with a tape recorder and the interviews were all typed and transcribed into English. The only interview that was translated in the transcriptions was the one that was conducted in Afrikaans with Teacher 5.

#### **3.7.2 Coding of the data**

Creswell (2005) defines coding as the process of segmenting and labelling text to form descriptions and broad themes in the data. The overarching objective of the

coding process is twofold. First, coding ensures that the researcher identifies the range of issues that are raised in the data and that the researcher understands the meanings that participants attach to these issues (Creswell, 2005). Secondly, the coding process allows the researcher to index their data set, increasing the ease of locating the data where a particular issue is raised (Bailey et al., 2011). I used open coding to code the data. Open coding is a process where inductive reasoning is used to allocate different codes to different units of meaning. In this inductive process, the data is broken up into discrete parts, which will further be divided into concepts and categories (Creswell, 2005). The coding and labelling of meaning (also known as identifying themes) should be flexible and be acknowledged as a holistic part of the data collection process. (See Table 2.)



### 3.7.3 Colour-coding of interviews

**Table 2 Example of the colour-coded interview**

|   |   |
|---|---|
| <p><b>Participant 3</b></p> <p>Behavioural manifestation of ADHD</p> <p>Definition = forgetful</p>  | <p>The ADHD child is so disorganised that it disrupts everything in my classroom. They <b>can't seem to sit still</b>, they <b>bother the children next to</b> them because they <b>fidget with things on their table</b>, they <b>take things that aren't theirs</b> – causing <b>unnecessary conflict</b>, they <b>shout at each other</b> and they never can fully participate in the class because either they <b>are being naughty</b> or they don't <b>have their stuff at school, needed to complete the tasks</b>.</p>  |
| <p><b>Participant 1</b></p> <p>Definition</p> <p>Behavioural manifestation</p> <p>Context</p> <p>Educator response to behavioural problems</p> <p>Educator perception</p> | <p>ADHD <b>makes it very difficult to teach</b>. The boy children <b>are very aggressive</b> and agitated with each other, which could be because of <b>the limited physical space they have among each other</b>, but <b>they fight a lot</b>. They <b>interrupt me when I talk</b>, which makes me mad because this is very rude behaviour and it would never have been accepted in my day. They walk around without my permission, which is another thing <b>I don't understand about this unruly generation, why do they not ask?</b> These children just do as they please</p> |
| <p><b>Interviewer</b></p>   | <p>Is there anything else you would like to add to that question?</p>   |
| <p><b>Participant 1</b></p> <p>Behavioural manifestation</p> <p>Educator perception</p> <p>Definition</p>   | <p>They also <b>disturb other children around them</b>. They make it <b>impossible to do group teaching</b>, as the group with the child with ADHD will take the longest to complete the task. The <b>child distracts the other children</b>. What I have also seen in these groups is that the ADHD child is not always the child that is a struggler. The <b>child with ADHD can be brilliant in certain aspects of their life</b> – that is why I don't believe in Ritalin.</p>  |

The second step in analysing data is the process of moving from codes to categories. Categories begin to show the themes that could be constructed from the data and it invokes the broader context that the researcher is operating within. Lastly, the process of categorisation into themes takes shape. With this done, the relationship between the different themes and categories is recognised and the final list of themes is established. This final list of themes was then used as the core answers to the proposed research question. (See Table 3.)



**Table 3 Codes and code descriptions**

| Colour | Code  |  |
|--------|---|--|
| Blue   | Educator understanding and knowledge of learning barriers and ADHD  |  |
| Orange | Challenging behaviour that arises and serves as a barrier to learning   |  |
| Green  | Contextual factors that influence the teacher's ability to provide support to learners displaying challenging behaviour as a result of ADHD |  |
| Grey   | Educator responses to challenging behaviour displayed by learners   |  |
| Red    | Recommendations for how support can be provided to learners with an identified learning barrier   | Significant blockages that prevent the adequate provision of support to learners with an identified learning barrier |
| Pink   | Frequently experienced emotions by educators  |  |
| Yellow | Systemic challenges that negatively impact the education system and provision of high quality, inclusive education                          |  |
| Brown  | Shortcomings in educator competencies, abilities, and training  |  |

### 3.8 DATA VERIFICATION

In qualitative research, quality assurance and data verification can be addressed by paying attention to the following criteria, all aimed at increasing the trustworthiness of the data collected (Shenton, 2004). These criteria include credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability. Although the replication of qualitative research is not possible, as repeating the same research will not result in the same results, qualitative researchers must still ensure that their researched phenomena are explained in a manner that is congruent with the reality of the research participants (Ary et al., 2010).

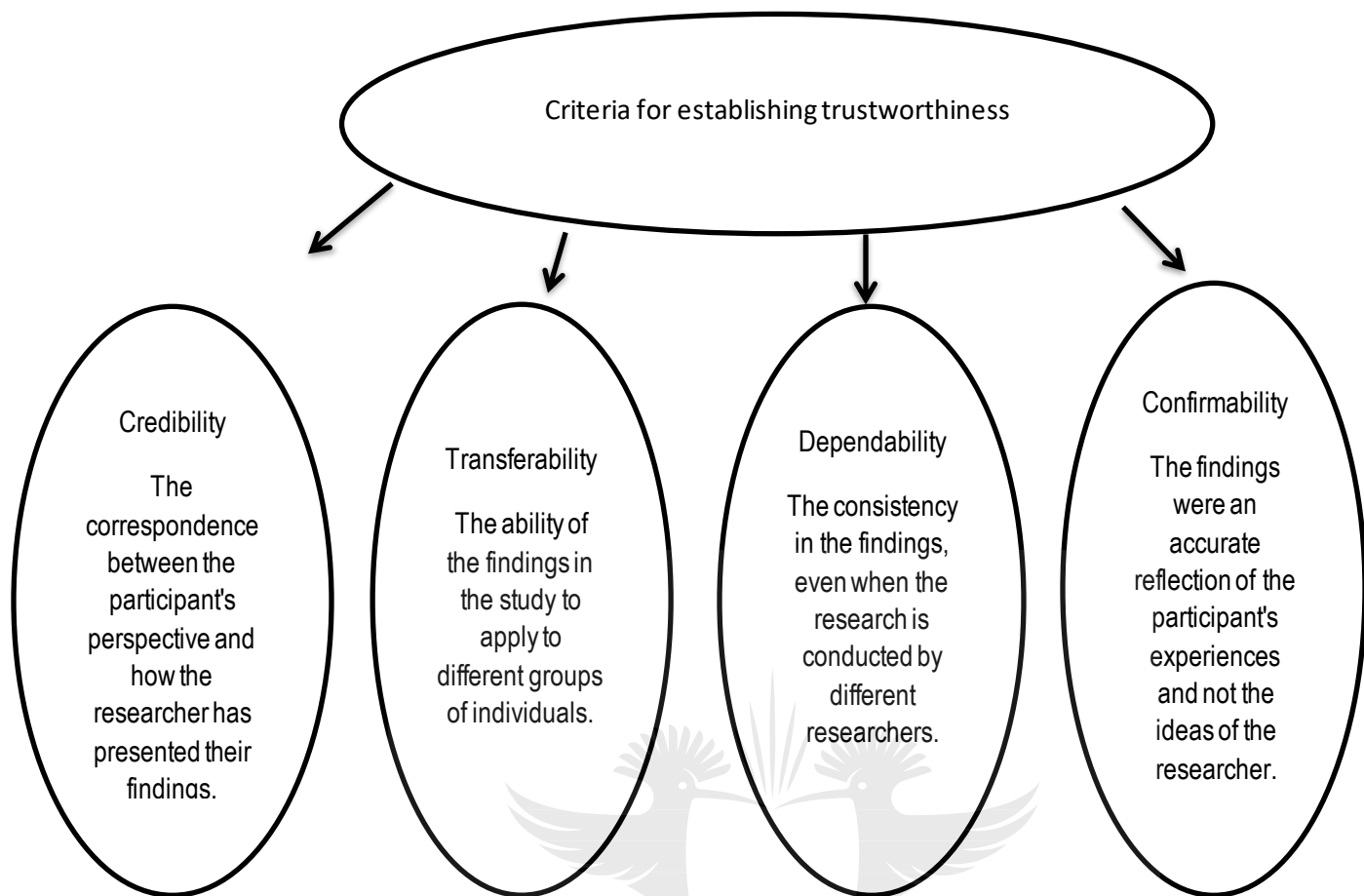


Figure 1 *Data verification diagram*

### 3.8.1 Credibility

Research credibility refers to the confidence in the 'truth' of the findings (Shenton, 2004). This 'truth' refers to the assurance that the reader is given about the truth value of the research (Creswell, 2005). It ensures that there is a direct link between the participant's perspectives and the meanings associated with their experiences and how these perspectives have been interpreted and presented by the researcher (Creswell, 2005). To uphold the criteria of credibility, all collected data was accurately transcribed to ensure that an accurate reflection of participant perspectives was recorded. These recordings and transcripts were made available to my supervisor, who confirmed the accuracy of the transcriptions and identified thematic codes. Additionally, the triangulation of the data obtained further served as a means of ensuring credibility. Creswell (2005) states that triangulation is the process of corroborating evidence from different individuals, types of data or methods of data collection in descriptions and themes in qualitative research. Triangulation ensures that information is collected from a pool of individuals and

methods, reducing the risk of systemic bias and chance associations (Maree et al., 2013). In this study, triangulation was upheld by the use of various data collection methods namely, interviews, the researcher's field notes and the prescribed inclusive education policy documents.

### **3.8.2 Transferability**

Transferability refers to the degree to which the findings of a qualitative study can be applied or generalised to other contexts or other groups (Shenton, 2004). Although the goal of the qualitative researcher is not to achieve generalisability in findings, the qualitative researcher has the responsibility to provide rich, detailed and thick descriptions of the context in which the data was collected so as to allow potential readers the ability to make necessary comparisons and judgements about the similarity and transferability of the findings (Ary et al. 2010). The transferability of a set of findings to another context depends on the similarity between the study contexts and the other contexts (Patton, 2002).

To promote the transferability of my research findings, I purposefully chose five research participants, all serving as members of the SBST, so that I could conduct in-depth inquiries into their experience and understanding of the support learners displaying challenging behaviour as a result of ADHD should receive. I also chose a school whose context reflects the realities of many government schools in the province.

### **3.8.3 Dependability**

The dependability of a study is achieved when findings are consistent (Creswell, 2005). Consistency can be determined by the same research being repeated in the same context, with the same participants and where the same results can be obtained (Creswell, 2005). To ensure dependability, the code-recode strategy and triangulation of the data were conducted. This triangulation included the use of multiple data sources (interviews, field notes and inclusive education documents). The researcher used a code-recode strategy by coding the data, leaving the analysis for some time and then revisiting the data and coding it again. The researcher then compared the two sets of coded materials (Ary et al., 2010). The results were

compared to identify whether both sets of coded material were coded the same way (Ary et al., 2010).

### **3.8.4 Confirmability**

Confirmability refers to the extent to which the research is free of bias in the procedures conducted and the interpretation of the data collected (Patton, 2002). Qualitative researchers acknowledge that unlike quantitative research, that can strive for absolute objectivity, the data the qualitative researcher collects and the conclusions they draw should be confirmed by others investigating the same situation (Patton, 2002). Thus, confirmability refers to the objectivity of the research study and whether the findings reflect the participants real and correct experiences (Ary et al., 2010). In upholding the principle of confirmability, Patton (2002) states that the researcher must consider their predispositions when working within the research process. The strategies used to promote conformability in my research study were those of triangulation and reflexivity. Reflexivity refers to the use of self-reflection to recognise one's own biases and to actively seek them out (Ary et al., 2010). As the researcher, I was aware of the possible biases and limitations I held in this study, which will be outlined in the discussion section of the dissertation.

### **3.9 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS**

Strict adherence to ethical standards and processes is imperative to all research processes. The ethical considerations in this study are associated with the guiding practices of the Health Professions Council of South Africa as well as those that are mandated by the South African Council of Educators.

The first ethical consideration that was adhered to was that of obtaining approval from the institutions involved: the University of Johannesburg and the Gauteng Department of Education. The study went through the Ethical Clearance Committee of the University of Johannesburg and the Gauteng Department of Education's Research Coordination Committee, where the researcher was granted permission to conduct this study. The institutional clearance number is 2017-023.

It is from these approvals that consent was obtained from the full-service primary school in Bosmont that was selected for this research study. The selected school was contacted and permission was granted. Informed consent needed to be obtained from the research participants before the research could commence.

Informed consent emphasises and upholds the principle of autonomy the participants have throughout the research process. This principle is one that advocates that all participants have the right to information regarding the study: they have the right to be able to make informed decisions about their participation in the study and the potential consequences of their participation. Participants should be well informed about the nature of their involvement, their right to withdraw from the study at any time and should not be intimidated into participating in the research. This process was presented to the participants in the form of consent forms that were pre-approved by the Ethical Clearance Committee of the University of Johannesburg.

The third ethical consideration in this study is that of confidentiality. In upholding confidentiality, the researcher is responsible for ensuring that all efforts to protect the participant's right to privacy are upheld. The researcher is responsible for ensuring that the source and content of the information shared by the participant are not disclosed without the expressed permission of the participant. In doing so, the researcher had to inform the participants about the possible disclosure and the process in which this would take place. Researchers are responsible for taking the appropriate precautions to protect the confidentiality of the participants and the data. The provision of codes (i.e. TP1 allocated for Teacher Participant 1) was allocated to all participants to uphold their right to privacy. The selected school's name was never mentioned throughout the study and it was given a code of S1 or referred to as a "full-service primary school in Bosmont". The audio data was stored on my computer and access to audio recordings required a password. Lastly, all raw data was handled professionally and all the codes mentioned above were implemented throughout the study.

### **3.10 CONCLUSION**

This chapter provided an overview of the interpretive research paradigm that was chosen for the study. This paradigm focuses on gaining meaning and understanding of the lived experiences of the participants. The research design used in this study was qualitative and attempted to make sense of the support that children displaying challenging behaviour as a result of ADHD are provided with by the SBST. The teachers serving on the SBST were the participants of the study and interviews and the researcher's field notes were the main methods of data collection. The data collected was then coded and analysed. From the various identified codes, three

themes emerged which will be discussed in the next chapter. Validity and reliability were primarily achieved as the teachers who participated in the research are real teachers with experience and were well informed on the actual functions of the SBST due to their participation on the team. Lastly, the ethical security of all participants was considered throughout the research process and these considerations have been described in this chapter.



## **CHAPTER 4**

### **DATA ANALYSIS AND PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS**

#### **4.1 INTRODUCTION**

This study aimed at exploring the nature of support provided to learners exhibiting behavioural challenges which reflect ADHD symptoms at a full-service primary school. Chapter 3 discussed the research methodology and design used in this study. This chapter presents and discusses the findings of the study in the form of themes. These themes were formulated from the information that was received from the interviews held with the SBST members. Interviews that were focused on identifying the teachers' understanding of the support provided to learners exhibiting behavioural challenges which reflect ADHD symptoms in a township context.

This chapter will present the data collected according to the themes and sub-themes identified during the process of qualitative content analysis. Within the theme discussion, quotations from the interviewed teacher participants have been presented to provide evidence of the identified themes. The themes and sub-themes will be discussed and integrated with existing literature to answer the proposed research questions.

In this section, reference is made to different interview transcripts, Education White Paper 6 (DoE, 2001)) as well as the Policy on Screening, Identification Assessment and Support (SIAS) (DBE, 2014). Abbreviations are used to refer to the document from which the conversation was taken. The numbers indicated in the discussion refer to the line from which the quotation was taken, from the transcribed interviews. (See Table 4.)



**Table 4. Teacher participant information**

| Teacher | Gender | Qualifications  | Grades taught                          | Teaching experience | Role in school   | Subjects taught                    |
|---------|--------|---|--|---------------------|--|------------------------------------|
| T1      | F      | BEd   | 1–3                                    | 25 years            | Teacher<br>Grade Head  | Foundation<br>Phase<br>subjects    |
| T2      | F      | BCom<br>Accounting<br>and Financial<br>Management<br>PGCE | 4–6                                    | 2 years             | Teacher<br>SBST member   | English<br>EMS                     |
| T3      | F      | BEd   | 4–6<br>English<br>7 Social<br>Sciences | 17 years            | Teacher<br>SBST member<br>Used to be<br>English HOD            | English<br>Social<br>Sciences      |
| T4      | F      | BEd   | 4–6<br>Maths<br>7 Natural<br>Sciences  | 7 years             | Teacher<br>SBST member<br>History and<br>Social Science<br>HOD | Mathematics<br>Natural<br>Sciences |
| T5      | F      | BA<br>Psychology<br>BEd                                   | R–1                                    | 2 years             | Teacher  | Foundation<br>Phase<br>subjects    |

This study is rich because of how the sample was selected (Maree, 2012). The purposive sampling process used to identify the teacher participants allowed me to discover, understand and gain insight from the information shared by the teacher participants (Thanh & Thanh, 2015). This sample was comprised of teacher participants of different ages, with varying qualifications and who occupied different roles at the school. The all-female teacher participant group was a result of attrition. Aronson, Bankhead, and Nunan (2017) define attrition as the result of teacher participants abruptly discontinuing their participation in the study, before the conclusion of the study. The loss in teacher participants resulted in a change in the characteristics of the group as well as the diversity of information obtained from the teacher participants (Aronson, Bankhead, & Nunan, 2017). Two male SBST members who had initially committed to participating in the study, discontinued their participation during the process. The one teacher was the Mathematics HOD, who attributed his discontinuation to a clash in commitments. While the other SBST member was the school's Learner Support Educator, who resigned from the school during the data collection process.

Lastly, the sample showed a good distribution in the teacher participants' years of experience and subjects of expertise. This helped me to gain insight into the skills and knowledge of newly qualified and more experienced teachers.

## 4.2 DATA-ANALYSIS PROCESS

According to Henning et al. (2004), the meaning is created when themes can be identified to describe the research topic. This meaning-creation process is one that consists of four steps, namely open coding, moving from codes to categories, formulating themes and discussing these themes (Thanh & Thanh, 2015)).

After open coding was conducted, I used colour to effectively illustrate the coding process. These colours increased the ease with which I was able to identify patterns in the data. I then used these patterns for the organisation and discrimination of the various categories the data could be segmented into. It was from these categories that themes were identified. Furthermore, the colour-coding allowed me to identify the necessary links between the themes and sub-themes as they occurred and I was able to see patterns in the raw data (Henning et al. 2004).

An example of this can be seen in Table 5.

**Table 5 Example of data analysis**

|      | Step 1 & 2  | Step 3   | Step 4  |
|------|---|--|---|
| Ref. | Patterns  | Sub-themes   | Themes  |
| 10.  | Yes, I have, and it was very similar to what ma'am (Teacher 1) has said. From my experience, I have probably taught one or two learners with Attention Deficit Disorder and it affects learners concentration span, their attention span is weak, they can't focus for very long on one thing, and their mind seems to have a million other things. This is especially with the boy children, they are very busy and active and it is extremely difficult to teach them and still have to teach | Teacher's knowledge and understanding of ADHD and how it manifests itself in classroom<br><br>Teacher's feelings regarding teaching children with ADHD | Identification and understanding of the challenging behaviour that is a result of ADHD as a learning barrier: |

|  |  |  |
|--|--|--|
| <p>an entire class. It is exhausting! The children with ADD disrupt the entire learning process.</p> <p>I know some learners who have been on medication, where I have fortunately seen a difference once the child goes on medication but there are side effects to this. But because the medication is up to the parents, they manage that process. But irrespective of whether the child is on medication or not, it is very hard to teach a child with ADD, especially in this context. A context that is supposed to be mainstream but we have lots of children with barriers and these barriers affect the entire class – because your attention is focused on that learner and this extended focus takes away from teaching and explaining to the other learners.</p> | <p>Recommended methods of support</p> <p>Resource constraints that influence teacher's ability to support learners with ADHD</p> | <p>Support provided for learners exhibiting challenging behaviour as a result of ADHD:</p> <p>The environmental conditions that influence the teacher's ability to provide adequate support for learners with ADHD</p> |
|--|--|--|

Here it is necessary to refer to the data analysis process that was followed in this study, a process that consists of the following steps: Step 1 which was the open-coding process, which was not included in the table above, was intended to assist in obtaining a global impression of the content (Bailey et al., 2011). It is from this process that I progressed to Step 2, where I was able to establish patterns within the raw data collected (Bailey et al., 2011). This then evolved into sub-themes, which formed part of Step 3 (Creswell, 2005). Step 4 comprised the organisation of the identified sub-themes into cluster themes, thus making the process of discussing the findings more logical (Creswell, 2005).

With this process completed, themes and sub-themes were identified and will be discussed throughout this chapter. A summary of these themes and sub-themes is provided in Table 6 and will be expanded on in the discussion that follows.

**Table 6 Themes and sub-themes**

| <b>Theme</b>   | <b>Sub-theme</b>   |
|--|--|
| <b>1. Identification and understanding of the challenging behaviour that is a result of ADHD as a learning barrier:</b>        | 1.1 Teachers' understanding of learning barriers, ADHD and challenging behaviour.<br>1.2 Teachers' knowledge of the behavioural manifestation of ADHD in the classroom   |
| <b>2. The environmental conditions that influence the teacher's ability to provide adequate support for learners with ADHD</b> | 2.1 Teacher competencies<br>2.2 Resource constraints<br>2.3 Learner characteristics<br>2.4 Emotional strain experienced by teachers when supporting learners with ADHD   |
| <b>3. Support provided for learners exhibiting challenging behaviour as a result of ADHD:</b>                                  | 3.1 Current support available to learners exhibiting challenging behaviour as a result of ADHD<br>3.2 Recommended support to learners exhibiting challenging behaviour as a result of ADHD<br>3.3 Obstacles preventing the provision of adequate support |

### **4.3 FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION**

The findings will be discussed according to the three themes identified during the data analysis process of the teacher participants responses. (See Table 6.)

In response to the research question: **How do School Based Support Team members understand the SIAS process to identify and support learners who exhibit behavioural challenges as a result of an Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder?** These three themes reflect the experiences of the teacher participants (SBST members) involved in this study on the support offered to learners exhibiting challenging behaviour as a result of ADHD.

The quotes mentioned in the thematic discussion are extracts from Appendix \*: Interview Transcripts.

### **4.3.1 Identification and understanding of the challenging behaviour that is a result of ADHD as a learning barrier**

#### **4.3.1.1 Teachers' understanding of learning barriers, ADHD and challenging behaviour.**

The SBST members who participated in this study indicated that the behaviour displayed by children with ADHD poses a challenge to learning and teaching in their classrooms. This behaviour creates a shift in the classroom atmosphere and leads to other problems in the classroom.

It was clear that challenging behaviour as a result of ADHD was a pressing topic for the teacher participants. The teacher participants overtly discussed their challenges with learners whose behaviour reflected ADHD symptoms and displayed non-verbal signs of tension towards the realities in their classrooms. The teacher participants found it easy to identify the behaviour that reflects ADHD symptoms.

*“Children with it are very disorganised, they are absent-minded, have very bad behaviour and [are] very disorganised. These children are difficult to teach and make it difficult to teach the other children in the class.” (S.11 TP3)*

This perception was supported by several other teachers:

*“It creates a nightmare situation. A situation where you don't want to go back there and teach, because, in our big classes of 45/50, one child with ADD causes havoc to the entire class. They are loud, disruptive, and inattentive, easily get into fights with other children and just consume all of my energy.” (S.18 TP2)*

*“The ADHD child is so disorganised that it disrupts everything in my classroom. They can't seem to sit still, they bother the children next to them because they fidget with things on their table, they take things that aren't theirs – causing unnecessary conflict, they shout at each other and they never can fully participate in the class because either they are being naughty or they don't have their stuff at school needed to complete the tasks.” (S.19 TP1)*

*“ADHD makes it very difficult to teach. The boy children are very aggressive and agitated with each other, which could be because of the limited physical*

*space they have among each other, but they fight a lot. They interrupt me when I talk, which makes me mad because this is very rude behaviour and it would never had been accepted in my day. They walk around without my permission, which is another thing I don't understand about this unruly generation, why do they not ask? These children just do as they please.” (S. 20 TP1)*

These statements show how the SBST members identify behaviour that could be indicative of ADHD as a barrier to learning and teaching in the classroom.

#### **4.3.1.2 Teachers' knowledge of the behavioural manifestation of ADHD in the classroom**

The teachers were clear that the behaviour displayed negatively impacted the productivity of the class, the classroom management and the individual learner with ADHD's ability to fully participate in the curriculum. Some of the effects of the identified behaviour can be seen in the teacher participants' responses below:

*“They are distracted and distract the other children.” (S.8 TP1)*

*“The children with ADHD disrupt the entire learning process.” (S.10 TP2)*

*“These children are difficult to teach and make it difficult to teach the other children in the class.” (S.11 TP3)*

These statements from the teacher participants clearly show that challenges posed by the behaviour of learners with ADHD are time-consuming and stand in the way of effective teaching and learning. This, in turn, contributes to the learner's ability to achieve the educational objectives of the curriculum. These challenges all demand that the classroom teacher maintain control over their overcrowded class, responding to the needs of the learner displaying challenging behaviour and simultaneously ensuring that all learners are participating in the curriculum and classroom activities (Topkin et al., 2015). The learner's inability to engage with the learning content effectively results in the learner's poor academic results, which are not an accurate reflection of their abilities; rather they are a reflection of a barrier to learning (Shaughnessy & Waggoner, 2015).

The poor academic results that often serve as an implication of ADHD were not acknowledged by any of the teacher participants as inaccurate reflections of the learner's academic results. However, the teacher participants acknowledged that some learners with ADHD can pose above average intelligence but due to the environment they are placed in, their intelligence is not stimulated. This lack of stimulation is acknowledged by a teacher participant as a contributing factor to the challenging behaviour displayed by learners with ADHD.

*“These children can have high IQs but because they are not in a stimulating environment, they don't get stimulating work to do. The lack of stimulation leads to them getting bored and then after that, they begin to cause havoc in my class because they are bored and not properly stimulated. So what happens is that I get annoyed with him and punish him because not only am I not trained to stimulate that child but also because I have a big class that I need to focus on as well.” (S.24 TP1)*

The abovementioned section provides insight into the teacher's knowledge and understanding of ADHD and how the challenging behaviour displayed by learners with ADHD serves as a barrier to their learning.

#### **4.3.2 The environmental conditions that influence the SBST's ability to provide adequate support for learners with ADHD**

As mentioned in Chapter 2 the South African education system is one that has been transformed legislatively from the exclusionary Bantu education system that was synonymous of the apartheid regime towards an inclusive education system that characterises the South African democracy. This legislative transformation has not yet been able to transform all the environmental conditions that learning and teaching occur in. These conditions influence the SBST's ability to provide adequate support for learners with ADHD. The teacher participants have identified the following environmental conditions as the most prominent obstacles in the provision of adequate support: teacher competencies, resource constrain, learner characteristics and emotional strain.



#### 4.3.2.1 Teacher competencies

Many teachers feel ill-equipped and incompetent to adequately respond to the educational needs of learners with ADHD (Hardikar-Sewant, Shroff & Prabhudesai,2017). When talking to the teacher participants, it became clear that the SBST members at Bontle Primary School<sup>2</sup> held the same sentiments. The SBST members were well aware of the educational needs of learners with ADHD and firmly believed that they were unable to adequately respond to these needs.

*“Well, it’s difficult because I don’t know what to do. I try to give them some more attention because that is all that I feel capable of doing because like ma’am said – we are not trained to respond to their needs the way they should be responded to. On top of that, we don’t have the resources and even though we are qualified teachers, we are not all trained in remedial.” (S.30 TP2)*

*“So I think it is very difficult to support these children because one we are not qualified to do the support they need, we are not psychologists, and all I am is a teacher.” (S 87 TP4)*

These statements correlate with the teacher’s ability to support learners whose challenging behaviour as a result of ADHD serves as a barrier to their learning. Consistent with Smith’s (2017) findings that suggest that teachers feel that their training inadequately prepared them to provide the support required for a learner with ADHD. The teacher participants in the study also noted that together with feeling incompetent to respond to the learners needs, they also felt that the provision of such support happens outside of their scope of practice. Their opinion is that it is more fitting to the scope of practice of a remedial therapist or a learning support educator. Lastly, the majority of the teacher participants indicated that the demands placed on them to complete the curriculum and all its accompanying assessments served as a greater obstacle in their ability to adequately provide support to learners displaying challenging behaviour as a result of ADHD. These conditions are consistent with the findings of Bantwini and Letseka (2016) that were aimed at understanding the implementation challenges faced by teachers when having to implement the new policies and curriculum objectives in their classrooms. Their

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<sup>2</sup> Pseudonym for the school’s name

study concluded that the curriculum and policy changes left teachers fraught with implementation hurdles as these plans lacked feasible implementation plans (Bantwini & Letseka, 2016).

#### 4.3.2.2 Resource constraints

Bontle Primary School was established in 1966 and currently operates as a fee-paying school. It was initially designed to cater for the educational needs of the community that it served. At the time, it was a predominately coloured community, segregated in accordance with the Group Areas Act of 1950. Although the school embraced the educational reform and transformation as introduced by the new constitution in 1996, it is still largely occupied by coloured and black learners from the immediate Bosmont area as well as other surrounding townships. The school is hampered by resource constraints such as poor infrastructure, large class sizes that are accompanied by an incomprehensible learner-to-teacher ratio as well as a perceived lack of support from the district office and the Gauteng Department of Education overseeing the functioning of the school.

The teacher participants openly expressed how these realities are hurdles in their ability to provide adequate support for learners displaying challenging behaviour as a result of ADHD:

*“How we respond to these children and what the internationalists that we compete with, don’t have the same contexts. 1:15 is not the same as 1:45/50.”*  
(S.26 TP3)

*“I have to be honest, it is extremely difficult and I think the big thing is in the classes we have, where we have 45/50 learners per class it is very difficult to make the time to support and give special attention to one child. And also remember in a class with 45, means there is a likelihood of more than one of them and just the fact that there is so many children in a class feels like all the kids have ADHD. So I think it really is very difficult to support these children because one we are not qualified to do the support they need, we are not psychologists, and all I am is a teacher. So as the teacher my support starts and ends at me constantly shouting their name out, so they can regain their concentration and focus on me.”* (S. 87 TP4)

*“What we also do sometimes is when we have parents that can’t necessarily afford to get assistance for their children, we then refer them to the district. But that has its problems. Our districts are overworked, which means that a lot of times nothing happens for the children we identify as experiencing ADHD as a barrier to their learning or any other barrier to learning in fact, nothing ever happens. The problem is that at the end of the day, the child is the one that suffers.” (S. 93 TP4)*

*“So far because we don’t have any support measures we can apply as a school, we rely on the parents for their inputs and support. Because the reality is that the support we expect from the district is seldom fulfilled as we are still waiting now and nothing is being done to help the poor children.” (S105 TP5)*

Although these statements portray and communicate the teacher's frustration with the dysfunctional systems they are working in, it additionally highlights how difficult it is to support a learner and their individual needs in the under-resourced classroom. These realities are not unique to Bontle Primary School; Wilkinson (2015) found that 80% of South African schools cannot provide learners with the necessary skills they require and adequately respond to their needs. It is within these schools that the lack of resources and access to social services negatively affects the quality of the learner's education and the learner's ability to actively participate in the teaching and learning content (Nortjie, 2017).

#### **4.3.2.3 Learner characteristics**

According to Nortjie (2017), approximately 63% of South African children are currently living in poverty. This affects various aspects of their lives, including their physical, emotional and mental development. This harsh reality also permeates into the children’s access to education, as this access is limited due to various factors such as living in impoverished homes, parental illiteracy as well as the effects of social ills, such as drug abuse, on family life (Landsberg et al., 2016).

These harrowing realities are mentioned by teachers as being further contributors to the hurdles they experience when trying to support learners.

*“Yes, also it is the economic situation in our country. The norm [is] no longer two parents in the house, now it's mostly one. The mother has to go out and*

*work and by the time she gets home, the day is over and all she can do is make supper and put her child to bed. So there is not much interaction and conversation between mother and child. Mother is tired! That's one of the problems, the situations in some of these families. Oh yes, then we come to the gogos! The gogo has to take control of her grandchildren. Money becomes a problem because she needs to pay R800 for transport; granny has to feed the children when granny should be sitting, reading and knitting her old age away. I had a situation where one of my learner's mothers was on drugs; granny had to take care of the children. These parents or gogos don't know how to cope, we need to get assistance for those parents.” (S 58 TP1)*

*“We have to say that ‘these are the children that we suspect to have ADHD and other barriers’, to contact the parents thereafter, try to explain to them exactly what the situation is. Because like I said in one of the previous questions, in the schools that we are at; where the parents don't necessarily have a lot of money and might not know a lot about barriers to learning, your recommendation for the child to get tested by psychologists suggests to them that you think their child is crazy.” (S90 TP4)*

It is clear that there is a link between the learner's socio-economic status and the holistic standard of education the learner is exposed to. Literature supports the teachers' statements as Dirks (2013) established that many South African learners have limited and strained access to education as a result of the socio-economic challenges they are exposed to (Dirks, 2013). These socio-economic challenges increase the difficulties experienced by the teachers responsible for completing curriculum expectations while simultaneously supporting learners with learning barriers.

#### **4.3.2.4 Emotional strain experienced by teachers when supporting learners with ADHD**

The challenging behaviour that is displayed by learners with ADHD results in the development of behavioural patterns that occur regularly and make it virtually impossible for the teacher to teach properly. Landsberg et al. (2016) report that this behaviour reduces the teacher's ability to pay necessary attention to the foundational reasons behind the learner's challenging behaviour, the teacher's ability to support

the learner as well as to ensure that the learner is benefiting from the learning material. While simultaneously trying to respond to the learning needs of all the other learners in their classroom. This pandemonium often results in many teachers feeling discouraged by the loss of control in their classrooms, they lose their enthusiasm and motivation and as a result, the learning and support process is negatively hampered.

The research teacher participants openly expressed how their emotions directly influence the support they provide to learners with ADHD.

*“So what happens is that I get annoyed with him and punish him because not only am I not trained to stimulate that child but also because I have a big class that I need to focus on as well. On top of that, I don’t have the resources to help that child even if I wanted to. What that means is that we are not clued up, not resourceful and no one teaching more than 45 children at a time will have time to pay attention to one or two children with ADHD.” (S25. TP1)*

*“I think that it is that the child never finishes anything. So it takes a lot of effort on your side as the teacher to get them to finish their work, which also means that you are getting into fights with them on the regular. They are often staring out the window, asking very weird and inappropriate questions (all of which irritate you as the teacher because it distracts the entire class).” (S85. TP4)*

These statements echo the findings of Engelbrecht et al., (2016) who in their research study found that although South African education has made significant quantitative strides in the provision of inclusive education, the qualitative analysis of this inclusive education is one that does not translate into the full involvement of all learners with the learning material. This reality can be seen in the emotions conveyed by the teachers, who acknowledge that although they are teaching in a full-service school that has a clear mandate of inclusivity, they often ignore and inappropriately respond to the learner's needs. Furthermore, the teachers expressed that these inappropriate responses are not committed with malicious intent, rather it is the teacher's attempt at self-preservation. The teachers note that because they do not know what to do or which door to knock on, it is a much safer exercise to punish the children for their overtly challenging behaviour and not invest time and effort in responding to the root issue that is causing the behaviour. Their experience

correlates with the findings by Gilmour and Wehby (2019) that suggest that the behavioural challenges displayed by learners experiencing barriers to learning are associated with teacher burnout, as the teachers report a constant feeling of being overwhelmed when teaching children exhibiting challenging behaviour.

#### **4.3.3 Support provided for learners exhibiting challenging behaviour as a result of ADHD**

As one of the most publicised conditions affecting children over the past two decades, ADHD increasingly accounts for disruptive behaviour in classrooms. This behaviour presents itself through the symptoms of inattention, impulsivity and hyperactivity that become more evident in the classroom, placing the teacher in a unique position to identify, refer and support the learners. Often, the teachers are the immediate source of intervention the learner is exposed to (Amod, Kern, Seabi, & Vorster, 2015). This places added pressure on the teacher to ensure that all learners are actively participating in class and that the curriculum is covered, while also ensuring that teaching is inclusive of all learners and their learning needs. (Nel & Grosser, 2016). The following section discusses the current support provided to learners exhibiting challenging behaviour as a result of ADHD while identifying the recommended support the learner should be receiving as well as the obstacles faced by the SBST in supporting learners with ADHD.

##### **4.3.3.1 Current support available to learners exhibiting challenging behaviour as a result of ADHD**

The South African Schools Act (SASA) of 1996 is one of the most important pieces of post-apartheid legislation (Soudien, 2019). This Act aimed to put in place the critical elements required for building an education system that mirrored the ideals of the South African Constitution (Soudien, 2019). In doing so, it sought to standardise the curricula, governance and financing platforms from which individual schools could achieve specific outcomes related to the way all learners learn and what they learn. The South African Schools Act and the Education White Paper 6 (DoE, 2001) (a ministerial commitment and policy that outlines the provision of education for all learners, including those experiencing barriers to their learning), explicitly mandate all schools to maximise the participation of all learners in the culture and curricular of education and minimise their barriers to learning (DoE, 2001). However, the current culture in South African public schools is one that focuses on the disciplining of what



is deemed as 'bad behaviour' and gathering evidence for extreme repercussions such as suspensions and expulsion recommendations (Soudien, 2019). The term suspension refers to the denial of school attendance for a specific amount of time that could be up to ten days whereas an expulsion refers to the permanent removal of a student from the school by the Department of Basic Education (Noltemeyer & Ward, 2015). The definitions of these terms both indicate the exclusion of the learner from teaching and learning, a notion that is opposed in Education White Paper 6 (DoE, 2001) as well as the South African Schools Act. Some of the research teacher participants acknowledged suspensions and expulsion as one of the current methods of support when responding to the challenging behaviour displayed by a learner with ADHD. However, the teacher participants did not acknowledge kicking a child out of class and instructing them to sit outside, as a form of suspension. This form of in-school suspension was acknowledged by Teacher 4 as her method of regulating her emotions and ensuring that she could continue teaching "those that want to be taught".

*"Not at all, ma'am. I have only been teaching for a few years and I haven't been on this SBST thing for a long time, but I do know we have never (in my time) referred a child for intervention for behavioural challenges, let alone ADHD challenges. All we do is punish them by suspending or recommending expulsion for them."* (S.58 TP2)

*"I think we kind of give each other support as to what we can do to respond to the challenges that the children give us. We speak about what has worked in the past and what people think we should try, but the paperwork is a bit of a drag and we don't really have time to meet consistently, so our ability to support is also limited."*

*Oh yes, we discuss how we can support the children who have been suspended because they were naughty and how we must make sure they catch up on the work they missed. But I think that's about it, I can't think of any other ways we actually support them."* (S.38 TP2)

In keeping with the identified theme of the currently administered support methods by the SBST that are misaligned with the mandate of inclusive education that all



schools need to conform to, is that of teachers turning a blind eye and ignoring the underlying learning needs of the learners displaying challenging behaviour.

*“I think the amount of paperwork that is involved with supporting these learners the way we should be, stands in [the] way. This paperwork scares teachers and means that I turn a blind eye, keep punishing and keep shouting even though I know that that child needs something else. And by doing all that paperwork to get support, it is like punishment ... so I don't blame teachers that don't do anything and just ignore the child and their bad behaviour. And worst of all, once the teacher's tiredness gets the better of her and you can't reach all your deadlines, you will always find the quickest shortcut and take it. You look past the child and keep doing your job for the other 43/44 that aren't causing havoc in your class because of their ADHD.” (S.31 TP3)*

*“But I won't lie, I try my hardest to avoid anything that has to do with additional paperwork ... I have enough marking as is.” (S.44 TP2)*

*“As a new teacher and a young teacher coming in at a different time ... I am quite demotivated in this career because I honestly don't know what I can do to help children and make the change that is needed. So all I do now is come in, teach, do my job and leave. So I kind of just ignore all the other factors, the socio-economic factors, the children's struggles, their barriers ... all the things I can't change – I ignore and go home. So to answer your question, I don't know what can be done with what we have because I am currently doing nothing with what I have.” (S.59 TP2)*

These statements by the teachers are consistent with findings by Amod et al. (2015) who found that due to the misconceptions and limited education teachers have regarding ADHD, their proposed interventions when responding to learner's needs are often inappropriate and non-responsive to the learners' needs. Ignoring the learner and their challenges is an inappropriate response that does not result in the learners' desired behavioural change nor does it promote the mandate of inclusive education (Amod et al., 2015).

Lastly, the research teacher participants all referred to the Learning Support Educator (LSE) as one of the current support structures available to learners with

ADHD. The LSE is employed to ensure that learners with mild learning difficulties achieve maximum proficiency with their curriculum (Engelbrecht et al., 2015). It is likely that under-resourced schools, such as Bontle Primary School, will have one LSE to cater for the needs of the entire school population. The learning support teacher provides help for pupils who have fallen behind the rest of their class. These children are expected only to need extra help for a short period. The learners are taken out of the mainstream classes for certain periods of the day and work is done on areas of specific learning difficulties in the skill areas of reading, writing, spelling, language and mathematics (Engelbrecht et al., 2015). Individual education plans must be drawn up for these learners and their progress must be monitored by the learning support teacher weekly (Engelbrecht et al., 2015). This is borne out by this comment made by Teacher Participant 4:

*“It is extremely difficult. I don’t even know how to support these children and their challenging behaviour. So what we would do is sometimes to ask the LSE guy to take them out of the class and let them write tests and assessments in smaller groups, with the potential of reducing the distractions they are exposed to and the interruptions they cause themselves.” (S.107 TP4)*

#### **4.3.3.2 Recommended support to learners exhibiting challenging behaviour as a result of ADHD**

Children spend most of their time in classrooms and other school settings. It is in these settings that they are expected to follow rules, actively participate in academic activities and behave in a manner that meets the organisational, cultural and social expectations (Topkin et al., 2015). The work of the teacher is much more demanding when some learners in their classrooms have ADHD and display ADHD-related symptoms that present as a challenge to the behavioural expectations set out for all learners (Shaughnessy & Waggoner, 2015). Because of the amount of time spent with the learners, teachers are not only a valuable source of information concerning referral and the diagnosis of the disorder. They also play a major role in creating an environment that is conducive to the academic, social and emotional success of the learner with ADHD in their classrooms (Topkin et al., 2015). The next section will discuss the teacher participants recommended support to learners exhibiting challenging behaviour as a result of ADHD:

#### 4.3.3.2.1. Referral and admission to remedial schools

As mentioned in the sub-theme on teacher competency, many teachers feel ill-equipped to respond to the needs of learners with ADHD. The teachers acknowledge the competencies required to respond to the needs of learners with ADHD as occurring outside of their scope of practice and directly aligned to the scope of practice of a remedial teacher. In keeping with this notion, the teacher participants recommended referring learners displaying challenging behaviour as a result of ADHD to remedial schools as a means of supporting the learners. According to Education White Paper 6, a remedial school is a school for learners who have mild to moderate support needs which prevent them from coping adequately in a mainstream school environment (DoE, 2001). A remedial school should be equipped to provide a supportive, non-competitive environment where pupils can regain lost confidence and work to the best of their abilities and potential (Bornman, 2017). Classes are small, allowing the necessary time for individual attention and monitoring by the teachers so that learners advance steadily, build self-esteem and can actively participate in the curriculum (Bantwini & Letseka, 2016).

*“I think they are just like any learner with a barrier, they need to be put into a context where they can grow their skills and their strengths, and mainstream is not the context for that.” (S. 23 TP2)*

*“I agree with you, Ma'am. These children show this unruly and uncontrollable behaviour in our classes because they are not in the right space. These children can have high IQs but because they are not in a stimulating environment, they don't get stimulating work to do. The lack of stimulation leads to them getting bored and then after that, they begin to cause havoc in my class because they are bored and not properly stimulated.” (S. 24 TP1)*

*“What we also do sometimes is when we have parents that can't necessarily afford to get assistance for their children; we then refer them to the district, which should place them in remedial schools.” (S.93 TP4)*

The recommendation that learners displaying challenging behaviour as a result of ADHD be referred to remedial schools reflects the teachers' understanding of the function of the remedial school. The teacher participants acknowledge these schools as better suited for the learners, because within the remedial education environment,

the remedial teachers will ensure that the learner is appropriately stimulated and supported to fulfil their holistic potential.

#### **4.3.3.2.2 Psychologist intervention**

According to the guidelines proposed in Education White Paper 6, “all children and youth can learn and need support” (DoE, 2001, p. 6). The guidelines also state that all the learner’s strengths need to be encouraged and effectively utilised to promote the learner’s active participation in the curriculum (DoE, 2001). Education White Paper 6 further recommends that the two most effective approaches to overcoming barriers to learning are prevention and support – approaches that require the skills of teachers and educational psychologists (DoE, 2001). Although the teacher participants in the study did not acknowledge their role in supporting learners with ADHD as valuable (as a result of their perceived educational incompetence) they did, however, acknowledge the psychologist as fulfilling an integral role in assisting learners to overcome their barriers to learning.

*“I have a child in my class; this child is very quiet but has some queer ways about her. I contacted her mom because she would often dream and would take a while to get on with her work, and when I got hold of the mother ... I asked her to get her child assessed by a psychologist.” (S.6 TP1)*

*“Look I think there are incidents and cases that are positive, where learners have been identified as really struggling with barriers that are outside of the teacher’s control and as a result, they get assessed by the district psychologists and get placed in the right school.” (S.32 TP2)*

*“I also agree with Ma’am who says that this is not our job; it is the job of the psychologist. The parents need to act on it, we can’t ... But they can’t take it to the general practitioner, because this practitioner is not qualified either and they base it only on what they have heard about the child’s behaviour. This, therefore, means that the children have to be taken to the psychologists, who will assess and evaluate if the child indeed has ADHD (S.88 TP5)*

According to Archer & Mohangi (2015) educational psychologists in South Africa are mainly responsible for assessing and supporting children with special educational needs and the scope of their duties is formally defined in the Health Professions Act

(No. 54 of 1974) as among other things, “the assessing, diagnosing, and intervening in order to optimise human functioning in the learning and development”, and “applying psychological interventions to enhance, promote and facilitate optimal learning and development” (Department of Health, 2011, p. 8). The statements by the teacher participants communicate their understanding of the role of the educational psychologist. According to the teacher participants, the educational psychologist’s core function is to assess and diagnose the learning barrier. Additionally, the teacher participants acknowledge the educational psychologist’s ability to place learners into remedial schools (as a result of the assessment and diagnosis) as the form of support that the psychologists provide.

#### **4.3.3.2.3 Parental involvement and support**

Parental involvement in education is known to have a substantial effect on the overall development of children (Mautone, Marcelle, Tresco, & Power, 2015). Studies have shown that the parent’s involvement in their children’s education directly contributes to their child’s academic achievement, academic motivation, behaviour and their socio-emotional maturity (Bachman, El Nokali, Votruba-Drazil, 2010). According to Mautone et al. (2015), this involvement occurs in different forms, namely, home-based involvement, school-based involvement and home-school collaboration. Home-based involvement refers to the educational support that is initiated by the parent and takes place outside of the school (Mautone et al., 2015). A parent helping a child with homework or planning a family trip to the Hector Peterson Museum is an example of home-based involvement. School-based involvement encompasses the activities that take place within the school setting and in which the parent is expected to participate actively (Mautone et al., 2015). These activities include parents volunteering to assist with the school tuckshop or the management of school fundraisers. Lastly, home-school collaborations refer to the relational activities between the family and the school. Parental availability and willingness to attend parents’ meetings as well as any communication between parents and teacher can be regarded as home-school collaboration (Mautone et al., 2015). The stronger the collaboration between the school and the parent, the more beneficial the effect will be on the child in both home and school settings (Bachman et al., 2010). However, for children who display challenging behaviour in the classroom as a result of ADHD, the parent-school relationship is often strained due to the conflicting nature

of ADHD symptoms and the behavioural expectations of the classroom (Archer & Mohangi, 2015).

The teacher participants in this study expressed a profound need for increased parental involvement in their school. They acknowledged the current parental involvement as deficient. This deficiency was attributed to the parent's socio-economic realities (which will be discussed in detail in the next section) as well as the accepted oppositional relationship that some parents subscribe to. These subscriptions increase the conflict between the parent, the teacher and the child. The teacher participants recognised this conflict as disadvantageous, as it negatively reinforces the challenging behaviour that is displayed in the classrooms without adequately acknowledging the learner's behaviour as a learning barrier that needs support.

*“Because of that the children now think that they have rights that are supreme and they are also protected by these fancy terms we use ... ‘barriers to learning’. Them and their parents know their rights and don't even know their responsibilities, they know how to cheat the system but the system has no way to respond to their needs because they overwhelm us.” (S.51TP1)*

*“The children feel that we must teach them, irrespective of whatever they do, they can abuse us and we must still teach and ‘support’. Children and their parents think they have a hold on us.” (S.51 TP1)*

Despite the frustrating school-home relationships that currently exist within the school, the teacher participants still recognise the importance of fostering productive relationships with the learners' parents. This is an acknowledgement of the holistic nature that the support for learners with learning barriers should be moulded against. This corresponds with the theoretical framework of the study, which endorses a systemic approach to intervention and responding to learners' needs.

*“You are probably aware of the educational triangle. The teacher, parent and child. Parents need to be called to a meeting and they need to be told exactly what we would like, what our current realities are and together we discuss what has happened and how we can move to our desired situation” (S.58 TP1)*



*“So far because we don’t have any support measures we can apply as a school, we rely on the parents for their inputs and support.” (S.105 TP5)*

These statements echo the findings of Emmerson, Fear, Fox, and Sanders (2012) which state that optimal learning outcomes are achieved when the learner’s parents and teachers form a respectful, collaborative partnership. A partnership that is directed at working towards holistic developmental goals for the learner (Emerson et al., 2012).

#### **4.3.3.2.4 Reintroduction of stringent and traditional discipline methods**

Despite the growth and gains of democracy that are currently visible in post-apartheid South Africa, South Africa is still inundated with socio-economic challenges. Mncube & Harber (2013) attribute these challenges to the inequality that characterises the South African population with more than 55% of the population being regarded as poor and the continued unequal distribution of resources. Together with poverty, the high levels of crime and violence that are prevalent in the communities may spill over into the schools (Chikoko & Makhasane, 2016). And as such, schools often reflect the problems that are experienced by society at large (Mncube & Mthanti, 2014). However, irrespective of the social ills that infiltrate the school community, the school occupies a central position in educational and societal change (Mncube & Mthanti, 2014). Given the nature of these social ills and the teacher realities regarding the display of challenging behaviour in the classroom, many teachers advocate the use of corporal punishment as a method of irradiating the unruly behaviour that serves as a barrier to teaching and learning (Mncube & Mthanti, 2014). The practise of corporal punishment in South African was abolished in 1997 (Power & Veriava, 2017). Corporal punishment is defined as “the use of physical force to cause pain but not injury, for purposes of correction or control” (Department of Education, 2000a). Even after banning the practice of corporal punishment, many teachers remain conflicted about its use in instilling discipline in schools. Some teachers acknowledge the use of corporal punishment as having negative impacts on the victim (Chikoko & Makhasane, 2016). They suggest that corporal punishment often socialises the learners into violent behaviour and the use of violence as a conflict resolution tactic (Ogando & Pells, 2015). Other teachers think that banning corporal punishment has resulted in enabled learners indulging in unruly behaviour, resulting in disempowered and apathetic teachers (Maina &



Sindabi, 2016). These teachers report being verbally abused and harassed by their learners to the extent they experience reduced job satisfaction and were unable to optimally fulfil their teaching responsibilities (Chikoko & Makhasane, 2016). Ogando and Pells (2015) found that corporal punishment is a preferred method of punishment for teachers who found it quick to administer and the least time consuming of all discipline approaches. Lastly, these teachers advocated for corporal punishment as they believed it was harmless and a guaranteed way to instil discipline and obedience in learners (Mncube & Mthanti, 2014). Two of the teacher participants in this study made mention of the recall and legalisation of traditional discipline methods as recommended support to learners exhibiting challenging behaviour as a result of ADHD.

*“Why is it in my day, bad behaviour was exactly that ... bad behaviour and a child would get a hiding for it. In today’s day and age, it is a barrier to learning. You can’t reprimand it but you have to support it.” (S.51 TP1) d*

*“ADHD makes it very difficult to teach. The boy children are very aggressive and agitated with each other, which could be because of the limited physical space they have among each other, but they fight a lot. They interrupt me when I talk, which makes me mad because this is very rude behaviour and it would never have been accepted in my day. They walk around without my permission, which is another thing I don’t understand about this unruly generation; why do they not ask? These children just do as they please and it is because they don’t get hidings at school anymore.” (S.20 TP1)*

These statements echo the findings of Chikoko & Makhasane (2016), as the teachers in this study also reported feeling disempowered and apathetic when responding to the challenging behaviour in the manner in which the current legislation requires.

#### **4.3.3.3 Obstacles preventing the adequate provision of support to learners exhibiting challenging behaviour as a result of ADHD**

##### **4.3.3.3.1 Teacher attitudes to the SIAS process and accompanying paperwork**

In 2001, the ideals of Education White Paper 6 were legislated and inclusive education was legally accepted as the primary approach to education in South Africa (Nel & Grosser, 2016). Education White Paper 6 introduced a policy to guide the

implementation of inclusive education practices in all government schools and the specification on how learners experiencing barriers to learning and development must be identified and supported (DoE, 2001). Before Education White Paper 6, the South African education system subscribed to a medical model that outlined the necessary intervention and support procedures for learners experiencing barriers to learning (Landsberg et al., 2016). The medical model was based on the premise that the 'deficit is *within* the child' and as a result, the child needs a diagnosis and treatment (Donald et al., 2011). This resulted in many learners being categorised as having special needs, receiving placement in special education schools and receiving a systematic exclusion from society. Education White Paper 6 encompasses an ecosystemic perspective (Donald et al., 2011). According to Landsberg et al., 2016, this ecosystemic perspective acknowledges that human beings have relationships with each other and they interact with other groups of people and these relationships and interactions have a significant impact on the identification and support of learning barriers. Furthermore, the ecosystemic perspective moves away from categorising learners as having 'special needs' that need to be catered for within a special, independent education system towards embracing a system that promotes that all learners should be educated together and that the education practices must accommodate individual differences (Nel & Grosser, 2016).

The previous medical model of practice employed a multidisciplinary approach when identifying, diagnosing and treating learners with special needs (Nel & Grosser, 2016). The approach required that different professionals with specialised knowledge and expertise in health disciplines work independently with the child with the aim of responding to the diagnosed needs of the learner (Nel & Grosser, 2016). However, the ecosystemic approach currently employs a transdisciplinary approach to identification and support of learners with learning barriers (Mahlo, 2017). The transdisciplinary approach encourages all role players (such as teachers, parents, the SBST, the DBST, and health professionals) in the learner's life to share interactively their knowledge and expertise, support one another and collaboratively work towards providing the most appropriate support for the learner experiencing barriers (Mahlo, 2017).

In 2008, the Screening, Identification, Assessment and Support (SIAS) of learners experiencing barriers to learning, policy document was first developed. This policy document was revised in 2014 and outlined the protocol that must be followed when a learner is identified as experiencing barriers to their learning and the appropriate support measures that must be introduced to ensure that the learner can participate in the learning and teaching irrespective of the barriers they are experiencing. The SIAS policy directly aligns with the ethos of the ecosystemic approach as it emphasises the importance of collaboration between all role players throughout the process of identification, assessment and support. Borman and Rose (2010) suggest that since teachers and parents are regarded by the SIAS policy as integral to the identification of a barrier to learning, they need to be adequately informed with regards to the identification and support of learners experiencing barriers to learning. The teachers and SBST members must motivate assessments and support, to prevent the dependence on the medical model approach (Borman & Rose, 2010). To do so, the teacher has to complete lengthy paperwork that specifies the level and extent of support required for the identified barrier to learning in the classroom and school environment (Nel & Grosser, 2016). Teachers find this paperwork exhausting and tedious to complete (Nel & Grosser, 2016). Furthermore, due to the human resource constraints in under-resourced schools, they find the completion of these forms a time-consuming task that takes time away from the completion of curriculum-based outcomes (Nel et al., 2016). According to Mahlo (2017), many teachers are inconsistently responding to the diverse needs of their learners due to the feelings of frustration and negativity they associate with the protocols that accompany the support of learners needs.

*"This paperwork scares teachers and means that I turn a blind eye, keep punishing and keep shouting even though I know that that child needs something else. And by doing all that paperwork to get support, it is like punishment...so I don't blame teachers that don't do anything and just ignore the child and their bad behaviour." (S.31 TP3)*

*"But I won't lie, I try my hardest to avoid anything that has to do with additional paperwork ... I have enough marking as is." (S.44 TP2).*

*“I wouldn’t waste my time with those forms, they don’t go anywhere anyway.”*  
(S.56 T3)

*“Well in terms of filling in the SNA forms and the district intervention ... absolutely nothing. No support. So I just don’t do it.”* (S.102 T4)

The findings by Mahlo (2017) are consistent with those that were expressed by teacher participants in the study, who expressed frustration at how long the form completion takes, how this time could be better used to achieve curriculum expectations as well as their reluctance to complete the forms because the forms seldom result in a district-based intervention. Furthermore, the teacher participants distinctly expressed that due to the lack of intervention from the district, when requesting intervention for more familiar learning barriers, they refrain from completing the SIAS process for behaviour related barriers to learning.

#### **4.3.3.3.2 Confusion regarding the role of the SBST**

The South African National Department of Basic Education established School Based Support Teams in 2014 (DBE, 2014). These teams were established to deal with inclusive education and its implementation at the school level (Makoelle, 2014). The SBST is comprised of teachers, remedial teachers, support staff members, parents, caregivers, members of the school management team as well as local community members (Bornman, 2017). According to Makoelle (2014), the SBST's role is to coordinate the institutional support, collectively develop strategies aimed at addressing the needs of vulnerable learners, mobilise for the availability and use of resources and ensure that the principles of inclusion are upheld at an operational level. The SBST fulfils an important role in the school, as they help learners, staff and parents to think and act more inclusively. In doing so, the SBST ensures that teachers and parents understand inclusive education and create a learning climate that favours collaboration and the effective mobilisation of resources to respond to learners unique needs.

In trying to establish how teacher participants understood the function of the SBST to be, most teacher participants acknowledged that they understood it to be related to inclusive education and that the SBST's main priority is to uphold the principles of inclusive education. Furthermore, they acknowledged the recent conversion of their school into a full-service school and the intentional inclusion of learners with different

learning abilities and needs, indicated that the school and the SBST are implementing the ideas of inclusivity. The teacher participants emphasised that their role was to identify the respective learning barriers by outsourcing the responsibility to support the barrier to the district psychologist, remedial therapist, learning support teacher and the parent.

*“Learners are identified by us as really struggling with barriers that are outside of the teachers’ control and as a result, they get assessed by the district psychologists and get placed in the right school.” (S.32 TP2)*

*“Our role is definitely to identify. We have to say that ‘these are the children that we suspect to have ADHD and other barriers’, to contact the parents thereafter, try to explain to them exactly what the situation is.” (S.90 TP4)*

However, teacher participants expressed confusion with the translation of policy into practice through the efforts of the SBST. They noted that although they all believed that learners should not be discriminated against and excluded because of their educational needs, the practice of said inclusivity is challenging. Most of the teacher participants understood their involvement on the SBST as a district requirement and expressed frustration at their placement on this team, as the actual function of the team is not always understood.

*“I honestly wouldn’t know, because the function of this team keeps changing and because we meet at different times, we don’t always speak with one voice. And it just changes really often; I don’t know what my role is on this team of people.” (S. 31. TP1)*

*“I think we kind of give each other support as to what we can do to respond to the challenges that the children give us. We speak about what has worked in the past and what people think we should try, but the paperwork is a bit of a drag and we don’t really have time to meet consistently, so our ability to support is also limited. Oh yes, we discuss how we can support the children who have been suspended because they were naughty and how we must make sure they catch up on the work they missed. But I think that’s about it, I can’t think of any other ways we actually support them.” (S.32 TP2)*

#### **4.3.3.3 Academic progression and promotion of learners irrespective of observable challenges and learning barriers**

According to Spaul (2013), South Africa has the worst education system of all middle-income countries that participate in cross-national assessments of educational achievement. Irrespective of the great strides and innovations that have been introduced in education, the majority of South African school-going learners are significantly below where they should be in terms of curriculum and obtaining academic milestones (Reddy, 2016). A crucial factor in the unfavourable educational outcomes of South African students is the high progression rates that are approved every year (Kika & Kotze, 2019). According to Le Roux (2018), progression refers to the advancement of a learner from one grade to the next (excluding Grade R), irrespective of the learner having obtained all the promotion requirements. Learners can only be promoted once in a phase, to prevent learners being retained for longer than four years in any phase (Reddy, 2016). In 2018, the Gauteng Department of Education documented that 16.4% of the enrolled school population comprised of progressed learners (Le Roux, 2016). According to Kika and Kotze (2019), of the most important reasons learners are promoted is to ensure that learners do not spend extended amounts of time in one phase as well as to ensure that learners are roughly in the same age bracket in particular phases. The teacher participants in the study noted the progression of learners as demoralising to the progressed learner as well as the teacher who inherits the learner with unsupported learning barriers. The learner's demoralisation is associated with their learning barriers not being identified or adequately supported (Kika & Kotze, 2019). While the teacher is overwhelmed with the backlog in the learner's education and is reportedly unable to respond to the learner's needs (Le Roux, 2016).

*"[He is going to cause] problems for the next year because he doesn't know the content well enough because his previous year teacher just ignored him and they promoted him."* (S.34 TP1)

*"These children were brought to my attention and the district's attention in the first week of the second term last year, and the district is 'still coming to assist us', while they have promoted the children to a new grade."* (S.43 T1)



*“They keep getting pushed through, and they continue to struggle with understanding the work. This struggle builds up into frustration and together with their challenges, it shows up in our classes and schools as the crazy behaviour they have each and every day.” (S. 48 T2)*

#### **4.3.3.3.4 Parental education and literacy**

Children’s earliest learning experiences occur within the family (Agirdag, Hemmerechts, & Kavadias, 2017). These learning experiences not only include the learning of attitudes and behaviours, but also the foundational skills that are important for academic achievement (Agirdag et al., 2017). According to Bourdieu (1977), children enter the school environment after having already experienced family-specific skills and education that will form the base for the knowledge they will obtain through formal schooling (Agirdag et al., 2017). The nature and depth of these foundational literacy skills correlate with parental literacy and education (Bearman, Buckingham, & Wheldall, 2014). Parental education and literacy refer to the highest educational level attained by the learner’s parents or legal guardians (Agirdag et al., 2017). Terfassa (2018) states that learners whose parents support, encourage, monitor their educational activities and give them academic support, are more likely to attain academic success than those who do not receive support and guidance from their parents. The absence of this support often results in low motivation, negative attitudes towards learning, low academic self-efficiency, high absenteeism as well as reduced academic achievements that could ultimately result in drop-out (Bearman et al., 2014).

Although many variables affect the learner’s academic performance; the relationship between parental education and literacy, and the learner’s academic achievement was identified as a harsh reality by the teacher participants. The teacher participants noted that the low educational and literacy levels of the parents served as additional barriers to learning. The low educational and literacy levels of the parent resulted in delayed identification of the learner’s learning barrier and the inability to mobilise the appropriate resources to support the identified learning barrier.

*“If we want to better the child at Bontle Primary, we need to better our parents. We need to find out what these parents are experiencing at home. Do they know how to assist their children, and can they read? Because many*



*parents openly say ‘Ma’am, their homework is beyond what I can do’. And in that case, maybe we should look at aftercare services or bring in parent interventions.” (S.58 T1)*

*“The problem comes in where some parents are illiterate and they are struggling.” (S. 59 T2)*

The concerns and feelings of apathy communicated by the teacher participants in the study support findings by Tersfassa (2018), which positively associated the higher education and literacy level of the parent to the desirable educational achievement of the learner and the support of the barriers to education the learner may experience. In line with this, it appears that the frequency of support offered at home not only has a positive impact on the learner’s academic performance but also ensures that the support provided to the learner is holistically administered at school and home (Agirdag et al., 2017).

#### **4.4 ALIGNMENT OF THEORETICAL FOUNDATIONS AND FINDINGS**

Landsberg et al. (2016) acknowledge that schools do not function in isolation and that what happens in schools is a direct reflection of the developments and changes in society. The introduction of inclusive education in 2001 was in response to the societal changes towards democracy and the intentional creation of an inclusive country (DoE, 2001). The principles of inclusive education correlate with the principles of Urie Bronfenbrenner’s (1979) bioecological perspective on human development. The integration of these perspectives advocates for an intentional change in the system, the development of a system that will deliberately support the learning needs of all learners, a system that fosters trans-disciplinary collaboration between all the stakeholders in the learner’s life as well as encourage the mainstream placement of all learners as far as possible (Landsberg et al., 2016) The SIAS policy and recommended processes were developed to implement the integration of these perspectives on a practical level (DBE, 2014). However, based on the reports from the study teacher participants, the SIAS policy (as they implement it) has not yielded desirable outcomes in supporting learners displaying challenging behaviour as a result of ADHD and upholding the SBST’s ability to uphold the principles of inclusive education.

The diagram below indicates the bio-ecological levels at which the SBST experiences challenges when applying the SIAS policy to adequately support learners displaying challenging behaviour as a result of ADHD.

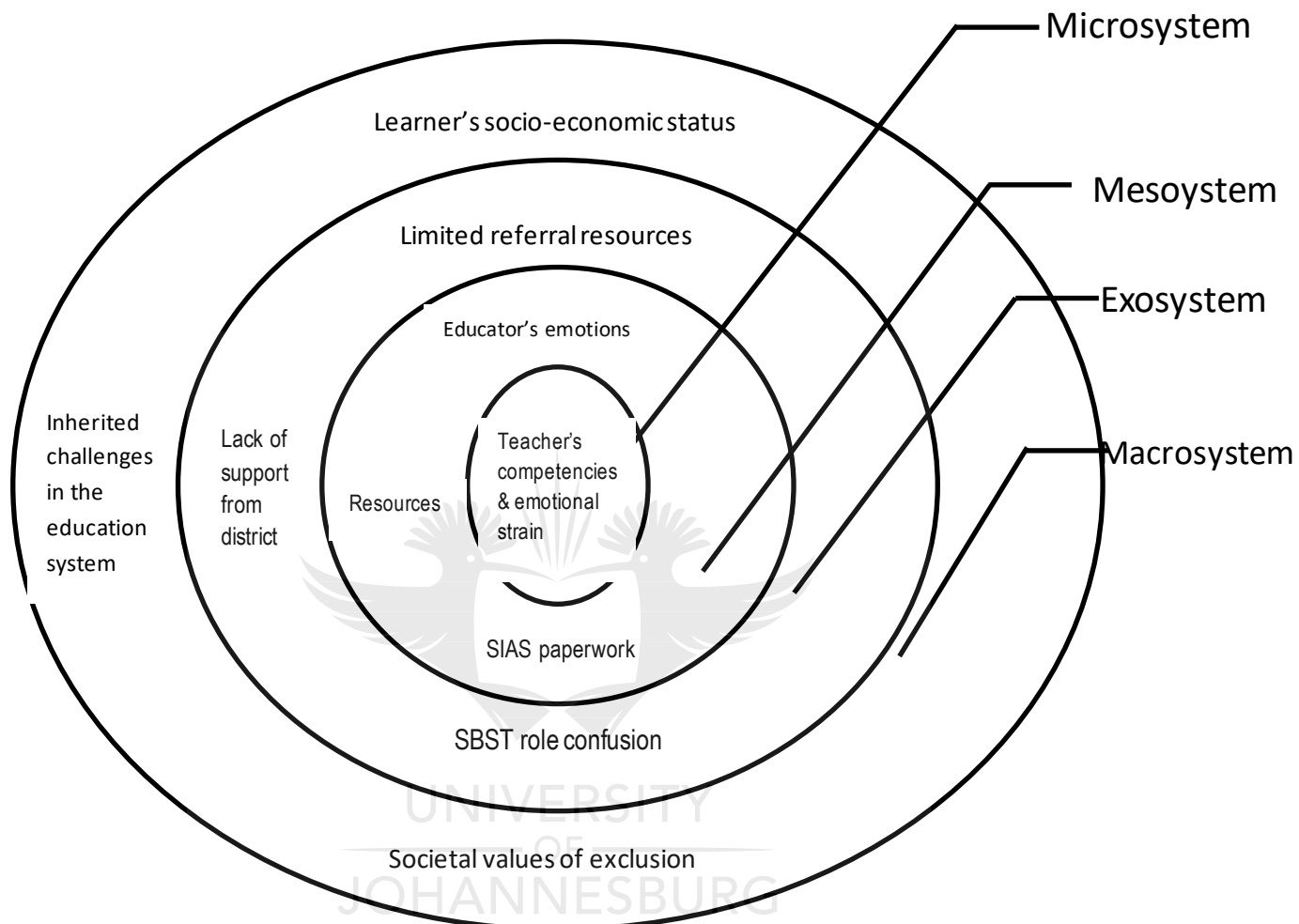


Figure 2 *Integration of findings with Bronfenbrenner's bioecological model of human development*

In accordance with definitions provided by Donald et al. (2010) the microsystems within the SBST system refer to the most intimate and immediate systems. This system involves the roles, relationships and patterns of daily activities that shape the SBST member's ability to adequately support learners displaying challenging behaviour as a result of ADHD (Moleko & Visser, 2012). According to the findings, the SBST's microsystem is comprised of the following: the teacher's feelings of professional incompetence; the emotional strain the teacher participants experience in their attempt to adequately respond to the various learning needs of all the learners in their classroom; the confusion and uncertainty regarding the role of the

SBST; the lack of resources within their school as well as the negative attitudes the teacher participants have towards the SIAS process. The teacher participants in this study acknowledged the facets of their microsystem as being pervasive, as they have a direct and continuous impact on the SBST's ability to support the learning needs of learners experiencing challenging behaviour as a barrier to learning.

The mesosystem refers to the relationships that develop and exist between two or more of the microsystems (Donald et al., 2011). These relationships are interrelated resulting in the connectedness and the interdependent nature of the systems (Ebersson & Eloff, 2004). According to Bronfenbrenner, the development of the systems is enhanced if the different micro-systems are strongly linked (Moleko & Visser, 2012). The harsh realities that characterise the teacher participant's microsystem cumulatively support the teacher participants' views on the SBST's effectiveness in responding to the learning needs of learners displaying challenging behaviour as a result of ADHD. This situation further inhibits the system's ability to uphold the ideals of inclusive education, as set out by the Department of Basic Education.

According to Moleko & Visser (2012), the exosystem consists of interconnections between the micro- and mesosystems as well as the systems that the SBST has no direct contact with. Regardless of the lack of contact between the SBST as well as the facets that comprise the exosystem, this system continues to have an impact on the functioning of the micro- and mesosystems (Ebersson & Eloff, 2004). The findings indicate that the SBST exosystem is comprised of the following: the lack of support from the district and education departments; the literacy and education levels of the learner's parents and the limited referral options and resources they can mobilise to respond to the learner's varying learning needs.

The macrosystem is defined as the wider system of ideology and organisation of social institutions that are inherent to the systems of a particular society and culture (Landsberg, 2016). Although not explicitly expressed by the teacher participants, the learner's socio-economic status; the societal values of exclusion as well as the challenges in education that have been inherited from the pre-democratic education system, all form part of the SBST's macrosystem.

Lastly, the chronosystem refers to the time dimension that indicates that all the systems develop together over time (Landsberg, 2016). The chronosystem seeks to identify how time relates to the interactions between the systems as well as the influence on the development of the various systems (Moleko & Visser, 2012). The constitutional call and progression of the introduction of inclusive education are indicative of the value of time on the interactions and development of the SBST system, as, before the abolishment of apartheid, South Africa was characterised by racially segregated education systems. The introduction of democracy and the constitutional values that underpin a democratic South Africa called for an inclusive and equal education system, a system that has led to the introduction of the SIAS policy and continues to advocate for the implementation of inclusive education practices in the classroom (DBE, 2014).

#### **4.5 CONCLUSION**

This chapter presented the analysis of and findings from the collected data. Themes and sub-themes were identified with the use of qualitative content analysis. The identification of the themes made it clear that even though there are many difficulties within the school-based support structures, there are also innovative and solution-oriented ideas that could be implemented to better respond to the learners varying needs.

The findings indicate that SBST members are constantly challenged by the behaviour displayed by learners with ADHD. Furthermore, these SBST members have knowledge of ADHD, the implications of ADHD support in the classroom as well as its influence on the learners' behaviour. This behaviour, together with the harsh realities that characterise their work environment, has a significant influence on the SBST's ability to adequately respond to the learning needs of a learner whose challenging behaviour, as a result of ADHD, serves as a barrier to their learning.

Although problematic factors with the SIAS process and the effectiveness of the SBST were uncovered, it was also found that the SBST members are capable of solution-orientated talk and activity. This will enable the school to creatively support all the learners and their varying learning needs.

In Chapter 5, a summary of the findings, conclusions and recommendations, as well as a critical reflection on the research, will be presented.



## **CHAPTER 5 CONCLUSIONS**

### **5.1 INTRODUCTION**

In this chapter, the focus will be on the conclusions derived from the data analysis as related to the main research questions. This research aimed to gain insight into the role that the SBST could fulfil when supporting learners experiencing ADHD as a barrier to learning. Set within an interpretive research paradigm, this qualitative study provided the researcher with insight into the meaning-making processes of the participants and allowed the researcher to understand how the participants saw their role as a member of the SBST, in supporting learners displaying challenging behaviour as a result of ADHD. Chapter 1 focused on the process followed within the study and was an introduction to the study as a whole. Chapter 2 focused on reviewing literature that discussed ADHD and the support needs of learners experiencing ADHD as a barrier to learning. Chapter 3 gave an in-depth discussion of the methodology and design for this specific research study. Chapter 4 focused on discussing the data collected in this study. Chapter 5 will provide a review of the research findings discussed in Chapter 4, as well as elaborate on the strengths, limitations and recommendations of the study.

### **5.2 SUMMARY OF THE THEMES IDENTIFIED IN THIS STUDY**

The purpose of the study was to explore and describe how learners who present with challenging behaviour resulting from ADHD are supported by the SBST and to examine which inclusive processes are implemented by the SBST to assist learners whose behaviour serves as a barrier to their learning. My study was qualitative and in order to realise the aims of the study, I used an interpretive research design. I collected data by conducting group interviews, noting observations as well as keeping a researcher's journal. The data were transcribed, analysed and coded. Three main themes were identified. In Chapter 4, these themes were discussed in detail and I will now summarise the main findings of my study according to these three themes.

### **5.2.1 Theme 1: Identification and understanding of challenging behaviour that is a result of ADHD as a learning barrier**

This study highlighted the importance of the teacher's ability to identify challenging behaviour that could be a result of ADHD and the application of inclusive practices in response to the behaviour. The SBST members and study participants demonstrated an in-depth knowledge about ADHD as a barrier to learning and how these barriers influence the learner's academic progression and overall development. This knowledge is important as it supports Topkin et al.'s (2015) findings which acknowledge the crucial role teachers fulfil in the identification and referral for assessment of learners exhibiting ADHD-related symptoms. This knowledge continues to be paramount to the research aims, as the teacher's role enables the teacher to create a conducive environment that advocates for the holistic development of all learners, irrespective of their learning barriers. The concern is that the SBST members seldom acknowledged the display of challenging behaviour as a barrier to learning that needed support. Instead, they perceived this behaviour as controllable and punishable. The teachers also found that the display of challenging behaviour made managing their classrooms difficult and negatively impacted on their ability to complete curriculum expectations (Butler & Monda-Amaya, 2016).

The display of challenging behaviour appears to be a growing concern in schools (Nash, Schlösser & Scarr, 2016). Although not all behaviour can be attributed to the characteristics of ADHD, the SBST could implement more inclusive referral and remediation strategies to manage behaviour and support learning barriers. The teachers seem to be resistant to being involved in the support and referral of learning barriers, as they associate this with the responsibilities of the Learning Support Educator (LSE) or a psychologist. The teachers expressed feelings of professional incompetence when having to respond to the various learning needs in their classrooms (Engelbrecht, Nel, Nel, Tiale, 2016). These feelings are intensified by the pressures the teachers experience when striving to complete curriculum expectations while simultaneously providing an environment that recognises and accommodates the diverse learning needs of all learners (Dalton, McKenzie, Kahonde, 2012). The training and upskilling of teachers will have multifaceted benefits, namely: the teachers would be better equipped to respond to the learners' diverse needs; the support of learners will take place within their current learning environments; all learners will be encouraged and enabled to experience the full



excitement and joy of learning; and lastly, by upskilling teachers the schools will be strengthened to meet the needs of all learners (Navarro, Zervas, Gesa, & Sampson, 2016).

### **5.2.2 Theme 2: The environmental conditions that influence the SBST's ability to provide adequate support for learners with ADHD**

The number of environmental factors that were identified by SBST members as significant hurdles to their ability to support learners was cause for concern. The multifaceted and interrelated nature of these factors results in teachers feeling despondent and hopeless about the way forward. The teachers identified teacher competencies, resource constraints and learner characteristics as the most salient factors influencing their provision of support.

In terms of teacher competencies, the recurring nature of this sub-theme highlights the severity of the teachers' realities. Also, it communicates that despite their willingness to embrace policy change; they believe that they are unable to actualise these changes because of their limited remedial skills (Engelbrecht, Nel, Smit & van Deventer, 2016). All teachers participating in the study reported not having been trained in remedial education irrespective of the time they received their training and qualifications. Furthermore, they reported not having received adequate, consistent and practical in-service training when policy changes were introduced (Nel, Tlale, Engelbrecht & Nel, 2016). Not having the necessary qualifications or training to support learners negatively impacts the teacher's ability to interact, teach and support learners with diverse abilities and needs (Nel et al., 2016). The teachers continue to struggle with the implementation of inclusive education because they were only trained for general mainstream education, under the impression that 'specialised education' occurred in separate educational settings (DoE, 2001). This echoes the paradigm of the medical model which is based on identifying the deficits inherent in the learner and ensuring that these deficits are intervened by specialists provided in separate special education schools (DBE, 2014).

The school used in the study was recently categorised as a full-service school and opened admissions to learners with diverse learning needs. White Paper 6 (DoE, 2001) and the SIAS policy (DBE, 2014) state that all mainstream schools converted into full-service schools will be strengthened with physical and human resources to support the conversions. According to the SBST members, no training or upskilling

was offered to them in the conversion process. To date, they remain unfamiliar with the practical processes and procedures that accompany the implementation of the above-mentioned policies. This emphasises the need for ongoing teacher training and upskilling, to ensure that the SBST correctly supports all learners and enforces structures and systems that meet the learners' needs.

According to White Paper 6 and the SIAS policy document, implementation was to be accompanied by resource allocation that would strengthen the school and the teachers' ability to respond to learners' diverse needs (Dalton, Mckenzie & Kahonde, 2012). The SBST members reported that there had been no such resource allocation and acknowledged their school's current resource constraints as a contributing factor preventing the adequate support of learners' needs. Some of the features of Bontle Primary School are overcrowded classrooms, poor infrastructure, a shortage of teaching supplies and a shortage of teachers and support staff. These factors are particularly challenging as they are indicative of the historical challenges inherited by the current government and its education departments (McKeever, 2017). These realities support questions posed by Nel et al. (2016) who questioned South Africa's infrastructural readiness to implement inclusive education. Nel et al. (2016) acknowledge South Africa's unique history of apartheid, its diverse population and the current economic climate as factors that increase the difficulty associated with implementing inclusive education. This highlights the fact that the call for inclusive education for all learners is not adequately matched with the realities evident in schools, realities supported by the statements given by SBST members at Bontle Primary School.

Lastly, the teachers acknowledged the learners' socio-economic backgrounds as influential in their access to support (Gewirtz, 2017). The SBST acknowledged that although the SIAS policy states that support for learning barriers must be provided for internally, the considerable challenges they face as teachers could be reduced by learners seeking support independently. This would translate into reduced reliance on state resources and the provision of speedy and appropriate support for learners experiencing barriers to learning. This idealistic suggestion highlights the sense of helplessness the SBST members associate with their own lack of capacity to offer support and their feelings of hopelessness about relying on the education system to provide support internally.

### **5.2.3 Theme 3: Support provided for learners exhibiting challenging behaviour**

The teachers participating in the study all mentioned their punitive disciplinary methods used when responding to the display of challenging behaviour in their classrooms. It was very frustrating for them to attempt to remediate this behaviour in any other way and they often found that alternative methods that were not stringent and punitive did not restore discipline in their classrooms (Nash, Schlösser & Scarr, 2016). They therefore resorted to suspensions and expulsion recommendations, while occasionally contacting parents and including them in the intervention process (Moyo, Khewu & Bayaga, 2016). The teachers reported experiencing difficulty with contacting parents and if the parents did attend the meetings, the teachers felt that the parents did not assist teachers by addressing the behaviour with their children after the meetings. Some of the teachers interpreted this as the parents' unwillingness to support the teachers and it increased the teacher's reluctance to use support-centred intervention, while others attributed the parent's inability to collaborate with the teachers as an indicator of the socio-economic realities that characterised their school community (Gewirtz, 2017). Although little can be done to address the parental unwillingness to become involved with improving their child's behaviour where poverty is not an issue, greater efforts for collaboration and involvement must be explored for those parents who cannot afford the taxi fare to come to meetings or who are not allowed time off work or are paid hourly wages. These efforts could include extending the meeting request to other guardians that the learner lives with and are available to attend the meeting; conducting the meetings on the phone and ensuring that the phone call is made using school resources (so as to not further strain the parents budget); as well as possibly scheduling meetings for Saturday afternoons to ensure parental availability that does not clash with other work commitments.

The teachers in this study expressed particular impressions about what they perceived as challenging behaviour and how it should be remediated. These behaviours cause the teachers much distress as they assume and expect that these learners are not learning (Marais, 2016). The teachers acknowledged that the currently implemented strategies are not effective or acceptable in the mandated inclusive classrooms in which they are required to teach (Engelbrecht, et al. 2015). According to Landsberg et al. (2016), teachers who work with learners displaying

challenging behaviour should be proficient in using creative management and discipline strategies that are flexible and respond to the learner's needs. This creativity supports the theoretical foundations of inclusive education, as it embraces the uniqueness of all learners and their needs (DBE, 2014). Against their understanding of inclusivity, the SBST members recommended the implementation of the following procedures when supporting learners exhibiting challenging behaviour that could be a result of ADHD: psychologist assessment and intervention; the referral and admission into remedial schools based on assessment results; the consumption of medication and the reintroduction of stringent traditional discipline methods in incidences where the learner is not admitted into a remedial school

The cumulative findings obtained support the study's rationale, as they indicate that the SBST members are currently unable to adequately implement the SIAS policy to support learners who display challenging behaviour that could result from ADHD (Engelbrecht et al., 2015). The findings highlight the need for teacher education and training programmes that need to be structured in a manner that prepares teachers to teach and support in inclusive settings (Engelbrecht et al., 2015). Furthermore, the study stresses the urgent attention that should be given to the allocation of resources aimed at strengthening mainstream schools converted into full-service schools (Chisholm, 2015). Although the current South African economic climate is not conducive for the successful implementation of inclusive education, the purposeful upskilling of teachers and support structures within the schools could change classroom practices and improve learner outcomes. Lastly, several changes are necessary to uphold the principles of inclusive education and to implement the SIAS policy effectively. Some of these changes and their practical implications will be discussed in the following section

### **5.3 RECOMMENDATIONS**

It is clear from this study that many of the participants realised that the support structures currently implemented at Bontle Primary School were inadequate. Although the punitive intervention processes were aimed at responding to the display of challenging behaviour holistically, the SBST acknowledged that this does not always happen. Recommendations about how this recently converted full-service

school could implement inclusive education will be discussed in relation to the analysis and conclusions provided by the data.

It should be noted that this study revealed that SBST members feel ill-equipped and under-resourced to respond to the learners' needs. This suggests that in-service training should be given, with a greater emphasis on the practical changes that teachers can implement in their classrooms. The in-service training should be context-appropriate and provided continuously.

There should be collaboration between the school system and the communities the learners come from. This would enable educators, management structures, internal support structures and the learners' families to be aware of the different needs each learner has and ensure that the applied interventions respond to the holistic developmental needs of the learner.

The SBST should not only serve as a link between the school community (learners, teachers and management), it should also extend its link to the community and other supporting professionals such as community leaders, counsellors from the various religious denominations within the community and NGOs. The SBST should uphold the principles of inclusive education with regards to their response to the well-being and support needs of learners with ADHD. This could be implemented using educational workshops for educators, parent-teacher training seminars, the completion and submission of SNA documents, the introduction of psycho-education into the school discipline procedures, appropriate referrals and the provision of in-service training opportunities.

These recommendations will enable all role players to respond effectively to the learning needs of learners with ADHD while reducing the observed obstacles to the provision of adequate support within the participants' school context.

### **5.3.1 Proposed model for change**

From the above-mentioned research discussion, it is clear that steps should be put into place for the effective support of learners experiencing ADHD as a barrier to learning.

Maclean & Vannet (2016) suggest that Kotter's Model for Change is a useful model aimed at conceptualising behavioural and transformational change as a process that

unfolds over time and involves progression through a series of eight steps: *increasing urgency, building the guiding team, developing the right vision, communicating buy-in, empowering action, creating short term wins, not letting up and making it stick* (Hackman, 2017). Kotter's model is a model that is often used before behavioural interventions begin; as it helps prepare group members for behavioural change by responding to how they are feeling about issues that impact the group relations and functions (Mohrman & Worley, 2014). Together with assessing the individual or group's readiness for behavioural change, Kotter's model provides the group or individual with strategies and processes of change to guide the group or individual (Mohrman & Worley, 2014). The findings suggest that the SBST is currently in the contemplation stage. The SBST's openness to participating in the study, their willingness to share their experiences and the nature of the information shared indicates that they are aware of the challenges within their structure and how these challenges prevent the implementation of their inclusive education mandate. The SBST knows that problems exist in the manner in which learners with ADHD are supported within the school and it is regularly spoken about among SBST members, however, they have not yet committed to taking action.

The following ecosystemic and inclusive steps have been modified by the researcher from those provided by Maclean and Vannet (2016), in order to suggest ways that the SBST could effectively support learners displaying challenging behaviour as a result of ADHD.

**Table 7 *Eight steps to effectively support learners in the school system***

| <b>Step</b>                            | <b>Step characteristics</b>  |
|--|--|
| <b>1. Establish a sense of urgency</b> | The SBST is not fulfilling its core purpose as a team and not adequately responding to the learners' needs so something needs to be done about it.   |
| <b>2. Create a guiding coalition</b>   | Although the problem exists among the SBST members and with their lack of responsiveness, the ability to bring about change relies on collaboration between the SBST and other stakeholders in the school community. |

|  |   |
|--|---|
| <b>3. Getting the right vision</b>                           | The SBST must take action and decide what changes are needed and what needs to be done to actualise these changes.  |
| <b>4. Communicate for change vision</b>                      | The SBST must communicate the mandate and function of the SBST to the other stakeholders in the school community in a way that promotes the importance of change. |
| <b>5. Empower action</b>                                     | The SBST must ensure that the team empowers and mobilises action within the school.   |
| <b>6. Generate short-term wins</b>                           | The SBST must create short-term wins that will contribute to the comradery among all stakeholders and create momentum for the initiative.                         |
| <b>7. Consolidate gains and produce more change</b>          | The SBST must commit to maintaining the momentum that early changes are built on, to ensure perseverance when responding to learners' needs.                      |
| <b>8. Anchor new approaches in the (transformed) culture</b> | The SBST must nurture the new behavioural culture that develops among all stakeholders responsible for the inclusion of all learners.                             |

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Modified from Maclean & Vannet, 2016

The findings indicate that the introduction of the SIAS policy and its recommended support procedures was perceived by many SBST members as abruptly introduced and that their opinions were not considered. Kotter acknowledges that the introduction of transformational change from a top-down approach does not mobilise positive and sustainable change (Hamel & Zanini, 2014). He proposes that change leaders should generate a sense of urgency regarding the challenges at hand (Hamel & Zanini, 2014). This urgency should communicate the underlying crisis the team is facing and the importance of transformational change (Hackman, 2017). The findings from this study will be communicated to the SBST and will highlight the



importance of transformational change and communicate the underlying challenges the team experiences with implementing the ideals of inclusive education. This can be regarded as Step 1.

The SBST's progression towards Step 2 will require that the SBST identifies the various stakeholders within the school community who will be able to collaboratively respond to the crisis that they have been made aware of. These stakeholders should be comfortable with confronting issues that are traditionally avoided (Hackman, 2017). This guiding team should be trustworthy and committed to responding to support the needs of all learners (Hackman, 2017). The identification of these stakeholders will reinforce the functions of the SBST within the school and will contribute to ensuring that the principles of inclusive education are upheld (Mohrman & Worley, 2014). The potential stakeholders could include SMT members, DBST members, learners' parents, faith-based leaders and entrepreneurs in the school community. This step introduces professional collaborations with various stakeholders in the school community as a practical tool for supporting learners with ADHD. These collaborations will enable the SBST to ensure that the support procedures applied when supporting learners with ADHD are holistic in nature and display a unified approach to the overall development of the learner. Lastly, these collaborations support the bioecological theoretical foundation of the study, which acknowledges the interconnected nature of the different systems that contribute to the development of the learner.

In Step 3, the SBST is tasked with identifying the team's vision for the future and what change is needed to actualise the proposed vision (Maclean & Vannet, 2016). Stakeholders should ensure they create compelling and contextual situations that respond to the underlying crisis that requires behavioural change (Maclean & Vannet, 2016). Kotter suggests that the identified vision should be one that mobilises people and hones in on the specific changes that stakeholders can introduce to respond to the identified crisis (Hackman, 2017). This vision should take the SBST towards an end-state in which they indicate the strategy on how the team intends to achieve the end state and the step-by-step plans of how to carry out the strategy (Hackman, 2017).

The communication of the change vision (Step 4) will require the SBST members to generate and circulate the requisite information about the need for the specific transformational change the team is proposing (Hamel & Zanini, 2014). The goal of communication is to get as many stakeholders understanding the value and purpose of inclusion (Hackman, 2017). The information provided should be relevant, honest and reflect behaviour that will be consistent with the identified vision (Hackman, 2017).

In Step 5, the SBST should ensure that their actions empower action. Kotter acknowledges that disempowered people are programmed to learn to look for what they cannot achieve before seeking out what they can achieve (Maclean & Vannet, 2016). This feeling of disempowerment can be associated with feelings of incapability and insecurity, which may result in other stakeholders holding back their ability to support learners (Maclean & Vannet, 2016). To prevent disempowerment within the SBST and support stakeholders, SBST co-ordinators should build optimism and self-confidence within the team by recognising and rewarding achievement, sharing inspirational stories of learners whose needs have been adequately supported by the SBST as well as making use of people who have change experience (Mohrman & Worley, 2014).

During Step 6 in this process, the SBST will be tasked with “generating short-term wins”. The proposed transformational change of the SBST and their implementation of mandated support procedures can be considered as large-scale organisational change. Kotter states that for organisational change to occur on a large scale, it requires “momentum, a sense of achievement and optimism”, all of which are achieved by seeking out the short-term wins that are easily achieved, unambiguous and related to the inclusive education mandate (Maclean & Vannet, 2016). These wins will fulfil the following purposes: it will give the SBST the feedback it needs regarding the validity of its vision and strategies; it will give recognition to the stakeholders who are strenuously working to achieve change and it will strengthen faith in inclusive education (Maclean & Vannet, 2016).

Step 7 involves the creation of structures that continue to empower the support team members and enable them to continue working towards actualising the vision (Hackman, 2017). For example, the SBST should host regular meetings with parents

and other stakeholders invested in learner support, ensuring that the vision for support and intervention is holistically applied.

Lastly, Step 8 in this process will be to constantly evaluate the interventions and tools that are introduced by the SBST to enhance the support procedures given to learners experiencing ADHD as a barrier to learning (Hamel & Zanini, 2014). This will enable the SBST to judge the effectiveness of their tools and their ability to respond to the learners' needs.

#### **5.4 FURTHER RESEARCH POSSIBILITIES**

This research has surfaced the need for a collaborative approach towards the challenging behaviour displayed by learners with ADHD. Because an ADHD diagnosis increases the difficulties associated with conforming to the rigid routine that characterises the classroom and school settings, the challenging behaviour displayed by learners could be masking ADHD-related symptoms. This could then be approached as a barrier to learning and the necessary school-based support procedures should be administered. The supporting recommendation to acknowledge the challenging behaviour displayed as a result of ADHD is to ensure that the SIAS policy is monitored consistently by extensively training the DBST, SBST, SMT, educators and members of the external school community. This training should include more practical recommendations regarding the identification of learning barriers and the completion of the required documents.

It was found that the SBST acknowledges their role as supporting learners experiencing barriers to learning. However, the SBST needs to fulfil a more prominent role in supporting the needs of learners displaying challenging behaviour as a result of ADHD. It is suggested that collaborative support structures and consistent in-service training be implemented by the SBST, to ensure that the different support needs of all learners are prioritised. Psycho-education as part of in-service training could form part of equipping SBST members to effectively respond to learners' support needs.

This study also emphasised the importance of communication in schools. Teachers should be provided with information on how to best support learners who have previously been identified as experiencing barriers to their learning. Their role as

inclusive educators and the adoption of an inclusive attitude needs to be embodied in the ethos held by the staff. Teachers can also be exposed to external agencies (i.e. remedial schools) to learn other curriculum and intervention techniques. This may be initiated by the DBST, as they already have relationships with neighbouring remedial schools.

Lastly, when learning and teaching are completely disrupted by challenging behaviour, teachers often need to rely on conflict resolution skills and effective methods to manage their classrooms. These conflict resolution skills and methods include overtly practising empathy, the development of options, the use of appropriate assertiveness as well as managing the emotions of those in conflict. It is suggested that these should be further researched with specific reference to the training of teachers to respond appropriately to challenging behaviour that arises in their classrooms.

## **5.5 REFLECTIONS ABOUT THE RESEARCH STUDY**

### **5.5.1 Strengths**

As the study was very narrow in its sample size, it could be said that the information collected was context-specific. This narrow size was consistent with the small sample sizes that characterise qualitative research studies that allow for rich and descriptive data. Starting with a clear-cut research approach and design, enabled the researcher to gain in-depth insight into the perceptions, experiences and support needs of the SBST members. These insights were important as they helped to identify the realities faced by the SBST when supporting learners with ADHD as well as inform the recommendations made. Furthermore, the interviews conducted also allowed SBST members to reflect critically on the problematic situations within their system and to brainstorm collaboratively contextual ways that these problematic realities can be remedied.

Lastly, the diverse participant characteristics (age, expertise and teaching subject) served as a strength in the study. These characteristics ensured that the data collected was descriptive and reflective of the different experiences that members of the SBST had experienced when supporting learners with ADHD.

### **5.5.2 Limitations**

The research topic chosen arose from my interests and expertise as a school counsellor and member of an SBST in a mainstream high school in Pretoria. This research was not conducted without errors. As a researcher, I would change some of the processes and decisions that I took if I were given the opportunity.

One of the prominent challenges I had was the time factor. I was given permission by the deputy principal to conduct the interviews a week before the school's exams started and had to ensure that the interviews were conducted after school. This was problematic as the participating teachers were all under pressure to submit their assessment marks before the commencement of exams. The pressure experienced by these educators was evident in their distractibility when answering the questions and their restlessness during the interviews. The teachers politely informed me that their demeanour was not in response to my presence but was rather the result of their need to finish their marking and submit marks to their HODs. The absence of this stress on the teachers could have increased the number of interview sessions hosted with the participants as well as contributed to the richness of the information obtained from the participants.

Furthermore, the female saturated participant group also served as a limitation for this study, as although the attrition of male participants was unintentional, the inclusion of the experiences of male SBST members could have strengthened the study findings.

Lastly, the researcher is seen as a subjective interpreter of the data collected in this study (Bailey et al., 2011). Although I attempted to remain detached from the study and had an independent data-analysis coder to ensure credibility, it may still have been influenced by my current thinking and preferences.

### **5.5.3 Personal reflections**

This study was an interesting learning experience for me in terms of doing research and expanding my knowledge about the support provided to learners displaying challenging behaviour that could be a result of ADHD. However, on the negative side, it was an emotionally draining experience.

I have always found supporting learners who display challenging behaviour as motivating and rewarding. I understand the importance of this support not only in my

role as an educational psychologist who is invested in offering learners the opportunity to constructively overcome the barriers to learning they experience but also as a black South African woman who believes in the principles of *Ubuntu*. My practice is founded on being intentionally inclusive and mindful of how my being is a result of the contributions of those around me – a principle that I aim to uphold through my role as an educational psychologist.

Having to confront the realities faced by the SBST and how these realities translate in their practice as teachers left me feeling hopeless and despondent. I felt hopeless about the pervasive results of the systematic inequalities of the past and how these inequalities continue to hinder the progress of the underprivileged child.

I often felt that the teachers needed a space to debrief and express their realities. In hindsight, I think they used their participation in the study to do so. Although the teachers were not looking to me for answers, their use of the study as a platform to debrief was stressful. I do however think that collecting the data using group interviews was helpful for the SBST members, as this helped them listen to each other's experiences and could have a positive effect on creating cohesion in the team.

I have also grown as a researcher and an inclusive practitioner. I have learned that the inclusion of learners with ADHD in full-service schools is a way of preparing our schools and society, in general, to be more inclusive and responsive to learners needs. In my opinion, this inclusion is much better than referring learners to remedial schools and will encourage teachers to be lifelong learners by equipping themselves with innovative strategies to support learners with different learning needs. Furthermore, I have learned that supporting learners with ADHD is not the sole responsibility of the educator currently teaching the learner. It is the responsibility of all stakeholders, including me, who in my practice as an educational psychologist, will play a role in the learner's life by improving the level of integration of learners with barriers to learning in the school environment.

## **5.6 CONCLUSION**

This research project indicates that the SBST fulfils a pivotal role in the alleviation of learning barriers by applying the mandated principles of inclusive education within

the school. However, the findings of the study indicate that the teachers feel too inadequate and inexperienced to support learners' diverse needs. This perception of their abilities is a contributing factor to what they understand as acceptable procedures when supporting learners. The study indicates the interrelated nature of teacher competencies and the procedures and processes implemented by the SBST to support learners' needs.

As I engaged with the participants, it became clear that they have a substantial amount of responsibility in and outside of the SBST. It was clear that the participants lack the time and resources to be able to effectively support learners with ADHD.

In a country that is characterised by the unequal distribution of resources and which is plagued by exclusive systems, the school should serve as a resource that is inclusive and responsive to the needs of all its learners, regardless of their abilities or the diversity of their learning needs. The SBST has a professional and social responsibility to share their expertise, knowledge and skills with those in and outside of the school community. Doing so will provide the school system with the opportunity to effectively cater to the well-being and holistic development of all learners. Therefore, the SBST should fulfil an integral role in supporting learners displaying challenging behaviour as a result of ADHD.



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## APPENDIX 1: FACULTY HIGHER DEGREES COMMITTEE



### ETHICS CLEARANCE

Dear Buhle Tshabalala

**Ethical Clearance Number: Sem 1 2019-064**

**Understanding school based support processes for learners experiencing ADHD as a barrier to learning.**

Ethical clearance for this study is granted subject to the following conditions:

- If there are major revisions to the research proposal based on recommendations from the Faculty Higher Degrees Committee, a new application for ethical clearance must be submitted.
- If the research question changes significantly so as to alter the nature of the study, it remains the duty of the student to submit a new application.
- It remains the student's responsibility to ensure that all ethical forms and documents related to the research are kept in a safe and secure facility and are available on demand.
- Please quote the reference number above in all future communications and documents.

**The Faculty of Education Research Ethics Committee has decided to**

- Grant ethical clearance for the proposed research.
- Provisionally grant ethical clearance for the proposed research
- Recommend revision and resubmission of the ethical clearance documents

Sincerely,



Dr David Robinson

**Chair: FACULTY OF EDUCATION RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE**

11 May 2020

## APPENDIX 2: NDD PROJECT ETHICAL CLEARANCE

NHREX Interim registration number REC-110613-036



### ETHICS CLEARANCE

Dear H Dunbar-Krige and J Fourie

Ethical Clearance Number: 2017-023

Re: Appropriate support for learners with neuro developmental disorders

Ethical clearance for this study is granted subject to the following conditions:

- If there are major revisions to the research proposal a new application for ethical clearance must be submitted.
- If the research question changes significantly so as to alter the nature of the study, a new application for ethical clearance must be submitted.
- It remains the researcher's responsibility to ensure that all ethical forms and documents related to the research are kept in a safe and secure facility and are available on demand.
- Please quote the reference number above in all future communications and documents. Please quote the reference number above in all future communications and documents.

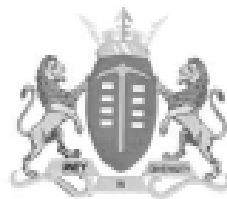
The Faculty of Education Research Ethics Committee has decided to

- Grant ethical clearance for the proposed research.
- Provisionally grant ethical clearance for the proposed research
- Recommend revision and resubmission of the ethical clearance documents

Sincerely,

Prof Geoffrey Lautenbach  
Chair: FACULTY OF EDUCATION RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE  
4 April 2017

## APPENDIX 3: GDE RESEARCH APPROVAL LETTER



### GAUTENG PROVINCE

Department: Education  
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

8/4/1/2

### GDE RESEARCH APPROVAL LETTER

|                                |  |
|--------------------------------|--|
| Date:                          | 25 April 2019  |
| Validity of Research Approval: | 04 February 2019 – 30 September 2019<br>2018/475   |
| Name of Researcher:            | Tshabalala B   |
| Address of Researcher:         | 555A 24 <sup>th</sup> Avenue<br>Villieria<br>Pretoria, 186   |
| Telephone Number:              | 078 112 6446   |
| Email address:                 | buhle-tshabalala@yahoo.com   |
| Research Topic:                | Understanding school based support processes for learners experiencing ADHD as a barrier to learning |
| Type of qualification          | Masters  |
| Number and type of schools:    | One Primary School   |
| District's/HO                  | Johannesburg North   |

#### ***Re: Approval in Respect of Request to Conduct Research***

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

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

Making education a societal priority

Office of the Director: Education Research and Knowledge Management

7<sup>th</sup> Floor, 17 Simmonds Street, Johannesburg, 2001

Tel: (011) 355 0438

Email: Faith.Tshabalala@western.cap.gov.za

## APPENDIX 4: TEACHER PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORMS



(For all participants, parents, guardians and other stakeholders)

**Faculty of Education Research Ethics Committee**  
NHREC Reference Number REC-110613-036

### INFORMED CONSENT/ASSENT FORM

*Project Title:*  
Understanding SBST support processes for learners experiencing behaviour challenges as a barrier to learning.

*Investigator:*  
Bahle Tshabalala

*Date:*  
9 May 2019

*Please mark the appropriate checkboxes. I hereby:*

- Agree to be involved in the above research project as a **participant**.
- Agree to be involved in the above research project as an **observer** to protect the rights of:
- Children younger than 18 years of age;
  - Children younger than 18 years of age that might be vulnerable\*; and/or
  - Children younger than 18 years of age who are part of a child-headed family.
- Agree that my **child**, \_\_\_\_\_ may participate in the above research project.
- Agree that my **staff** may be involved in the above research project as participants.

- I have read the research information sheet pertaining to this research project (or had it explained to me) and I understand the nature of the research and my role in it.  
I have had the opportunity to ask questions about my involvement in this study.  
I understand that my personal details (and any identifying data) will be kept strictly confidential.  
I understand that I may withdraw my consent and participation in this study at any time with no penalty.

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

*Please provide contact details below ONLY if you choose one of the following options:*

- Please allow me to review the report prior to publication. I supply my details below for this purpose:
- Please allow me to review the report after publication. I supply my details below for this purpose:
- I would like to retain a copy of this signed document as proof of the contractual agreement between myself and the researcher

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone or Cell number: \_\_\_\_\_

e-mail address: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

0727415892

allison.gth@gmail.com





SECTIONS 1 & 2 SIGNATURES required to indicate consent/assent  
(For all participants, parents, guardians and other stakeholders)

**Faculty of Education Research Ethics Committee**  
NHREC Reference Number REC-110613-036

**INFORMED CONSENT/ASSENT FORM**

*Project Title:*

Understanding SBST support processes for learners experiencing behaviour challenges as a barrier to learning.

*Investigator:*

Buhle Tshabalala

*Date:*

9 May 2019

*Please mark the appropriate checkboxes. I hereby:*

- Agree to be involved in the above research project as a **participant**.
- Agree to be involved in the above research project as an **observer** to protect the rights of:
  - Children younger than 18 years of age;
  - Children younger than 18 years of age that might be vulnerable\*; and/or
  - Children younger than 18 years of age who are part of a child-headed family.
- Agree that **my child**, \_\_\_\_\_ may participate in the above research project.
- Agree that **my staff** may be involved in the above research project as participants.

- I have read the research information sheet pertaining to this research project (or had it explained to me) and I understand the nature of the research and my role in it.  
I have had the opportunity to ask questions about my involvement in this study.  
I understand that my personal details (and any identifying data) will be kept strictly confidential.  
I understand that I may withdraw my consent and participation in this study at any time with no penalty.

Signature:

*Abraham*

*Please provide contact details below ONLY if you choose one of the following options:*

- Please allow me to review the report prior to publication. I supply my details below for this purpose:
- Please allow me to review the report after publication. I supply my details below for this purpose:
- I would like to retain a copy of this signed document as proof of the contractual agreement between myself and the researcher

Name:

[Redacted]

Phone or Cell number:

072 149 5579

e-mail address:

NA

UNIVERSITY OF JOHANNESBURG



SECTION D: Signatures required to indicate consent/assent  
(For all participants, parents, guardians and other stakeholders)

**Faculty of Education Research Ethics Committee**  
NHREC Reference Number REC-110613-036

**INFORMED CONSENT/ASSENT FORM**

*Project Title:*

Understanding SBST support processes for learners experiencing behaviour challenges as a barrier to learning.

*Investigator:*

Buhle Tshabalala

*Date:*

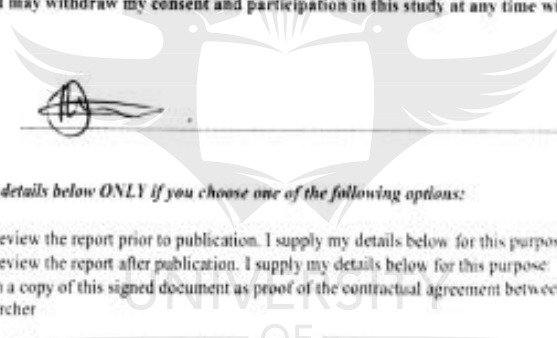
9 May 2019

*Please mark the appropriate checkboxes. I hereby:*

- Agree to be involved in the above research project as a **participant**.
- Agree to be involved in the above research project as an **observer** to protect the rights of:
  - Children younger than 18 years of age;
  - Children younger than 18 years of age that might be vulnerable\*; and/or
  - Children younger than 18 years of age who are part of a child-headed family.
- Agree that my child, \_\_\_\_\_ may participate in the above research project.
- Agree that my staff may be involved in the above research project as participants.

- I have read the research information sheet pertaining to this research project (or had it explained to me) and I understand the nature of the research and my role in it.  
I have had the opportunity to ask questions about my involvement in this study.  
I understand that my personal details (and any identifying data) will be kept strictly confidential.  
I understand that I may withdraw my consent and participation in this study at any time with no penalty.

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_



*Please provide contact details below ONLY if you choose one of the following options:*

- Please allow me to review the report prior to publication. I supply my details below for this purpose.
- Please allow me to review the report after publication. I supply my details below for this purpose.
- I would like to retain a copy of this signed document as proof of the contractual agreement between myself and the researcher.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone or Cell number: \_\_\_\_\_

e-mail address: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

082 857 8770

braanbecanne@gmail.com



SECTION D: Signatures required to indicate consent/assent  
(i.e. all participants, parents, guardians and other stakeholders)

Faculty of Education Research Ethics Committee  
NHREC Reference Number REC-110613-046

INFORMED CONSENT/ASSENT FORM

Project Title:

Understanding SBSI support processes for learners experiencing behaviour challenges as a barrier to learning.

Investigator:

Buhle Tshabalala

Date:

9 May 2019

Please mark the appropriate checkboxes. I hereby:

- Agree to be involved in the above research project as a participant.
- Agree to be involved in the above research project as an **observer** to protect the rights of:
- Children younger than 18 years of age;
  - Children younger than 18 years of age that might be vulnerable\*; and/or
  - Children younger than 18 years of age who are part of a child-headed family.
- Agree that my child, \_\_\_\_\_ may participate in the above research project.
- Agree that my staff may be involved in the above research project as participants.
- I have read the research information sheet pertaining to this research project (or had it explained to me) and I understand the nature of the research and my role in it.  
I have had the opportunity to ask questions about my involvement in this study.  
I understand that my personal details (and any identifying data) will be kept strictly confidential.  
I understand that I may withdraw my consent and participation in this study at any time with no penalty.

Signature:

Please provide contact details below ONLY if you choose one of the following options:

- Please allow me to review the report prior to publication. I supply my details below for this purpose.
- Please allow me to review the report after publication. I supply my details below for this purpose.
- I would like to retain a copy of this signed document as proof of the contractual agreement between myself and the researcher

Name:

[Redacted name]

Phone or Cell number:

082 361 7643

e-mail address:

tas1699@yahoo.com



SECTION D: Signatures required to indicate consent/assent  
(for all participants, parents, guardians and other stakeholders)

Faculty of Education Research Ethics Committee  
NHREC Reference Number REC-110613-046

INFORMED CONSENT/ASSENT FORM

Project Title:

Understanding SBSI support processes for learners experiencing behaviour challenges as a barrier to learning.

Investigator:

Buhle Tshabalala

Date:

9 May 2019

Please mark the appropriate checkboxes. I hereby:

- Agree to be involved in the above research project as a **participant**.
- Agree to be involved in the above research project as an **observer** to protect the rights of:
- Children younger than 18 years of age;
  - Children younger than 18 years of age that might be vulnerable\*; and/or
  - Children younger than 18 years of age who are part of a child-headed family.
- Agree that **my child**, \_\_\_\_\_ may participate in the above research project.
- Agree that **my staff** may be involved in the above research project as participants.

- I have read the research information sheet pertaining to this research project (or had it explained to me) and I understand the nature of the research and my role in it.  
I have had the opportunity to ask questions about my involvement in this study.  
I understand that my personal details (and any identifying data) will be kept strictly confidential.  
I understand that I may withdraw my consent and participation in this study at any time with no penalty.

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Please provide contact details below ONLY if you choose one of the following options:

- Please allow me to review the report prior to publication. I supply my details below for this purpose:
- Please allow me to review the report after publication. I supply my details below for this purpose:
- I would like to retain a copy of this signed document as proof of the contractual agreement between myself and the researcher

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone or Cell number: \_\_\_\_\_

e-mail address: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

082 361 7643

tas1699@yahoo.com



(For all participants, parents, guardians and other stakeholders)

**Faculty of Education Research Ethics Committee**  
NHREC Reference Number REC-110613-036

**INFORMED CONSENT/ASSENT FORM**

*Project Title:*

Understanding SBST support processes for learners experiencing behaviour challenges as a barrier to learning.

*Investigator:*

Buhle Tshabalala

*Date:*

9 May 2019

*Please mark the appropriate checkboxes. I hereby:*

- Agree to be involved in the above research project as a **participant**.
- Agree to be involved in the above research project as an **observer** to protect the rights of:
  - Children younger than 18 years of age;
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- Agree that my child, \_\_\_\_\_ may participate in the above research project.
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- I have read the research information sheet pertaining to this research project (or had it explained to me) and I understand the nature of the research and my role in it.  
I have had the opportunity to ask questions about my involvement in this study.  
I understand that my personal details (and any identifying data) will be kept strictly confidential.  
I understand that I may withdraw my consent and participation in this study at any time with no penalty.

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

*Please provide contact details below ONLY if you choose one of the following options:*

- Please allow me to review the report prior to publication. I supply my details below for this purpose:
- Please allow me to review the report after publication. I supply my details below for this purpose:
- I would like to retain a copy of this signed document as proof of the contractual agreement between myself and the researcher

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone or Cell number: \_\_\_\_\_

074 663 2055

e-mail address: \_\_\_\_\_

lizelv.w@yaho.com

## **Appendix 5:Teacher Participant Interview Questions**

1. How would you define a barrier to learning?
2. How would you define ADHD?
3. Based on your answers to the first two questions, does ADHD constitute as a barrier to learning
4. Based on your definition and teaching experience, in what ways does ADHD affect the display of challenging behaviour in your classroom?
5. How is this challenging behaviour remediated in the classroom and in the school?
6. What is the role of the School Based Support Team in providing support to learners displaying challenging behaviour as a result of ADHD?
7. Have you ever completed or participated in the completion of a Support Needs Assessment Form (SNA) 1 & 2?  
YES                      NO  
a.If yes, what barriers to learning have you previously requested support for?
8. Are the behavioural challenges that result from ADHD barriers to learning that you have requested SBST support for?  
YES                      NO  
a. If yes, what interventions did the SBST apply in response to the support needs as stated in the SNA 1 & 2 forms?  
b. If no, how do you respond to the challenging behaviour that is as a result of ADHD?



## **Appendix 6: Researchers field notes**

- All the educators have a need to be and feel heard. They often branched off to other topics that they wanted to speak about, so as to express their frustration.
- The hour and a half spent with them was heavy hearted as many of them have become so despondent and have very little hope for change
- Although their experiences were unpleasant and painful to share, many of them shared them openly.
  - Might be because they have an inherent need to feel heard and debrief
- There isn't very many alternatives or aspirations for alternatives in the room
  - Although the large majority of the participants complained about the ill treatment and horrible working conditions, none of them (even the relatively young educators) expressed a desire to explore alternative career options or actively engage in ways that will improve their relationships with their employment
- Teachers would benefit from a more present and consistent form of leadership among them.
  - Inconsistencies in education system and lack of present leadership results in everyone doing their own thing and many being lackadaisical about the learners welfare
- The staff room where the interview was conducted reflected a lot of their concerns. It seemed disorganised and indicative of the limited resources the school has.
  - The first set of interviews were constantly being disrupted by people coming in and out of the staff room, although an announcement was made that a private meeting would be held there. Some educators who were supposed to attend the meeting, as per instruction of their deputy principal, didn't attend without submitting reasons of absentia to the deputy principal.
  - The deputy principal tried getting hold of them to no avail. This frustrated her as it served as an inconvenience to both the researcher and the deputy principal who was already running late for a GDE meeting.



**Appendix 7: Self-designed observation table**

| Participant | Professional | Friendly | Open to conversation | Uncomfortable | Anxious | Relaxed | Appreciates formal structures in the school | Prefers a more informal structure in school | Difficulty articulating | Ease of articulation |
|-------------|--------------|----------|----------------------|---------------|---------|---------|---|---|-------------------------|----------------------|
| TP1         | X            |          | X                    |               |         | X       | X   | X   |                         | X                    |
| TP2         | X            | X        | X                    |               |         | X       | X   |   |                         | X                    |
| TP3         |              |          | X                    |               | X       |         | X   |   |                         | X                    |
| TP4         | X            | X        | X                    |               |         | X       |   | X   |                         | X                    |
| TP5         | X            | X        | X                    |               | X       |         | X   |   | X                       |                      |

## Appendix 8: Coded Transcriptions

Date: 28/05/2019

Venue: XXX Primary School XXX

|       |  |
|-------|--|
| Buhle | <p>Afternoon everyone, thank you all for coming today. I know that you're all particularly busy during exams and staying afterschool is sometimes more than you bargained for, so for that I really am thankful. Oh yes, before I forget, our conversation today is recorded so that I can be able to accurately remember what we discussed and transcribe it as part of my data collection.</p> <p>Before we go any further, I would like to re-introduce myself, as the last time you saw me, was when we were collecting my colleague Ntombi's research and we explained the purpose of the entire project and your role in the project. So my name is Buhle Tshabalala, I too am currently a Masters in Educational Psychology student at the University of Johannesburg and am currently doing my thesis on support learners that show behavioural challenges as a result of ADHD receive from the SBST. I will be asking you a few questions, questions you guys can choose to answer as a collective or as individuals. There isn't a right way or a wrong way to answer these questions, what is most important is that your personal experiences are communicated, because not only will it be beneficial to the quality of my research but most importantly it will be beneficially to the greater project that will feed your encounters and lived experiences through the DBE and hopefully, spear-ahead change.</p> <p>Now, before I start with the actual questions can we all look at the paper in front of you? This is an informed consent form; it represents an acknowledgement and agreement to voluntarily participating in this research. It acknowledges that you were not forced to be here and that you are giving me permission to use the information that we discuss about your experiences, as part and parcel of my studies. Please read through it, and ask me any questions you have regarding the form or anything else I have spoken about, and if you are okay with participating please sign the form and should you not be interested in participating, that's also fine 😊.</p> <p>Any questions? All signed...? Thank you, let's start</p> |
|       | <p>As I mentioned before, my research is centred around the identification and understanding of ADHD as an experience that bars the child from learning, so as a barrier to their holistic learning. So majority of my questions will be centred on finding out what is your understanding of what a learning barrier is and is ADHD part of what we understand as learning barriers. Most</p>   |

|  |  |
|--|--|
|  | <p>importantly, how we can help each other understand how the behavioural consequences of ADHD are serving as a barrier to the child with ADHD's learning.</p> <p>My first question is, how would you define a barrier to learning? So from your experience and understanding, what is a barrier to learning?</p>  |
| Teacher 1 – sitting on left side                       | I think a barrier to learning is anything that makes you as an educator concerned and makes the alarm bells go off. It is when you have gone over a concept with a child and you can see they are struggling, even though you have given this concept at the child's level and you realise that no matter what you do, you cannot move forward or ahead with this child because there seems to be <b>some sort of a gap that is preventing this child from moving with that particular aspect of your teaching.</b>                                |
| Teacher 2  | Yes, this <b>block that ma'am is talking about can be physical or an emotional issue that is affecting the child.</b> A learning barrier in essence is something that stands in the way of the child being able to learn properly in your class.   |
| Teacher 3  | A learning barrier is anything that means the child can't learn. It is like a trench that stands between the child and the work you teach them, meaning they can't get to the work.... <b>not that they don't want to do it, they just can't get to it.</b> So basically making it something that <b>gets in their way of focusing</b> and actually taking in what you are teaching them.  |
| Buhle  | With that in mind, well what you said is a learning barrier, how would you then define ADHD?   |
| Teacher 1  | I have a child in my class, this child is very quiet but has some queer ways about her. I contacted her mom because she would <b>often dream</b> and would take a while to get on with her work, and when I got hold of the mother...I asked her to get her child assessed. And I told the mother that although the child needs to be assessed, it is difficult to diagnose a girl child with ADHD, unlike that of the boys. <b>Girls portray this very aloof attitude</b> , but once you tell her to hurry up and get going, then she does that.  |
| Buhle  | Have you had any other children in your class, who you thought might have had ADHD?  |
| Teacher 1<br><br>= Distractibility<br>= disrupt others | Yes, I did, two years ago.<br>In this class, my entire class and teaching had to be clinically clean for that child, because <b>when they see a box, they become more concerned</b> with the box - want to know what's in the box, play with the box and even take the box home. They are <b>distracted and distract the other children.</b> Their distractions even go as far as them fiddling in the box, your box, while you are trying to teach. These children <b>struggle to concentrate</b> , their concentration <b>span is very short</b> |
| Buhle to teacher 2                                     | And yours ma'am? Have you had any children in your class who you thought might have had ADHD?  |
| Teacher 2  | Yes I have, and it was very similar to what ma'am (teacher 1) has  |

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| <p>Definition</p> <p>Context</p> <p>Recommended support</p> | <p>said. From my experience, I have probably taught one or two learners with Attention deficit disorder and it affects learners concentration span, their attention span is weak, they can't focus for very long on one thing, and their mind seems to have a million other things. This is especially with the boy children, they are very busy and active and it is hard to teach them and still have to teach an entire class. The children with ADD disrupt the entire learning process.</p> <p>I know some learners who have been on medication, where I have fortunately seen a difference once the child goes on medication but there are obviously side effects to this. But because the medication is up to the parents, they manage that process. But irrespective of whether the child is on medication or not, it is very hard to teach a child with ADD, especially in this context. A context that is supposed to be mainstream but we have lots of children with barriers and these barriers affect the entire class – because your attention is focused on that learner and this extended focus takes away from teaching and explaining to the other learners.</p> |
| Teacher 3<br>Definition                                     | ADHD is just a mix up. Children with it are very disorganised, they are absent minded, have very bad behaviour and very disorganised. These children are difficult to teach and make it difficult to teach the other children in class.  |
| Buhle   | So based on the responses that you ladies have just given, where have now looked at what we think is a learning barrier and our understanding of ADHD, do you think that ADHD should qualify as a barrier to learning?   |
| Teacher 3   | Absolutely   |
| Teacher 2   | Definitely   |
| Teacher 1   | Yes  |
| Teacher 3<br><br>Suggested support/remediation of challenge | Very interesting thing for you psychologists, you know the experiments on the frontal lobotomy of the 60's. Where they spilt the left and the right brain? Yes, so now they are talking about manipulating the frontal lobe to cure ADHD. I don't think it will be as drastic as splitting the lobes, because when you split them the impulses don't flow from the one to the other and there is a potential of the loss of creativity happening. This manipulation is apparently going to help with the reducing of the temper tantrums that people with ADHD display and their violent and aggressive behaviour.   |
| Buhle   | Thank you for that insight ma'am. My follow up question to this is in what ways does adhd affect the display of challenging behaviour in your classroom  |
| Teacher 2<br>Context<br>Behavioural manifestation of ADHD   | It creates a nightmare situation. A situation where you don't want to go back there and teach, because in our big classes of 45/50, one child with ADD causes havoc to the entire class. They are loud, disruptive, and inattentive, easily get into fights with other children and just consume all of my energy.   |
| Teacher 3   | The adhd child is so disorganised that it disrupts everything in my  |

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| <p>Behavioural manifestation of ADHD</p> <p>Definition = forgetful</p>   | <p>classroom. They can't seem to sit still, they bother the children next to them because they fidget with things on their table, they take things that aren't theirs – causing unnecessary conflict, they shout at each other and they never can fully participate in the class because either they are being naughty or they don't have they're stuff at school needed to complete the tasks.</p>  |
| <p>Teacher 1</p> <p>Definition</p> <p>Behavioural manifestation</p> <p>Context</p> <p>Educator response to behavioural problems</p> <p>Educator Perception</p> | <p>Adhd makes it very difficult to teach. The boy children are very aggressive and agitated with each other, which could be because of the limited physical space they have among each other, but they fight a lot. They interrupt me when I talk, which makes me mad because this is very rude behaviour and it would never had been accepted in my day. They walk around without my permission, which is another thing I don't understand about this unruly generation, why do they not ask? These children just do as they please</p>   |
| <p>Buhle</p>   | <p>Is there anything else you would like to add to that question</p>   |
| <p>Teacher 1</p> <p>Behavioural manifestation</p> <p>Educator perception</p> <p>Definition</p>   | <p>They also disturb other children around them. They make it impossible to do group teaching, as the group with the child with adhd, will take the longest to complete the task. The child distracts the other children. What I have also seen in these groups is that the ADHD child is not always the child that is a struggler. The child with ADHD can be brilliant in certain aspects of their life – that is why I don't believe in Ritalin.</p>  |
| <p>Teacher 2</p> <p>Context</p>  | <p>I think they are as with any learner with a barrier, they need to be put into a context where they are able to grow their skills and their strengths, and mainstream is not the context for that.</p>   |
| <p>Teacher 1</p> <p>Context</p> <p>Behavioural manifestation</p> <p>Educator response</p> <p>Shortfalls in educator competencies</p>                           | <p>I agree with you Ma'am. These children show this unruly and uncontrollable behaviour in our classes because they are not in the right space. These children can have high IQ's but because they are not in a stimulating environment, they don't get stimulating work to do. The lack of stimulation leads to them getting bored and then after that they begin to cause havoc in my class because they are bored and not properly stimulated. So what happens is that I get annoyed with him and punish him because not only am I not trained to stimulate that child but also because I have a big class that I need to focus on as well. On top of that, I don't have the resources to help that child even if I wanted to. What that means is that we are not clued up, not resourceful and no one teaching more than 45 children at a time will have time to pay attention to one or two children with ADHD.</p> |
| <p>Teacher 3</p> <p>Context</p>  | <p>What ma'am just mentioned is very important, because how we respond to these children and what the international standards that we compete with, don't have the same contexts. 1:15 is not the same as 1:45/50.</p>   |
| <p>Teacher 3</p> <p>Definition = questioning order of</p>  | <p>What I think is also important in understanding how it affects the displays of challenging behaviour in my classroom, is the chicken and the egg phenomena – which one came first?<br/>I am always intrigued to see and even understand which one presented itself first in this child's life. Is it the learning barriers that came first and brings about the behavioural manifestations or</p>   |



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| <p>symptoms</p> <p>Suggestions for support</p>  | <p>was it the other way around? Is it the lack of focus, behavioural manifestations that stands in the way of being able to learn? It is important when remedying the situation; <b>you need to be able to tell which one came</b> first, the learning difficulty or the ADHD behavioural problem.</p>   |
| <p>Buhle</p>  | <p>What we speaking about now is so important because it leads me to my next question. Which seeks to find out how this challenging behaviour that children with ADHD are showing is being supported in the classroom?</p>   |
| <p>Teacher 1</p> <p>Suggestions for support</p>   | <p>Well like I mentioned the girl who was in my class, who although hasn't been fully assessed, <b>I had to sit on her</b> (not physically) but I had to constantly go to <b>her and remind her to finish her work</b>. If I was busy with group reading on the mat, I would have to get a lap desk and <b>have her sit next to me</b>, even though she wasn't in that group, to makes sure that she completes her work.</p>   |
| <p>Teacher 2</p> <p>Suggestions for support</p> <p>Shortfalls in educator competencies</p> <p>Emotion : frustration at the process</p>              | <p>Well its difficult because I don't really know what to do. I try give them some <b>more attention</b>, because that is really all that I feel capable of doing because, like ma'am said – we are not trained to respond to their needs the way they should be responded to. On top of that, <b>we don't have the resources</b> and even though we are qualified teachers, we are not all trained in remedial. The second challenge <b>that I face that makes it difficult for me to support these children in my classroom is giving the children activities</b> that are suited to their abilities and what they actually need from the classroom. But even if I knew how to do this, <b>we don't have the support in terms of fully assessing them and having a plan for them after this assessment</b>. What ends up happening is that these <b>children are stuck in the system</b> and it takes lots of evidence and counselling <b>and paperwork to actually get them into a place that is suited for what they need</b>.</p> |
| <p>Teacher 3</p> <p>Educator perception</p> <p>Educator response to their perceived reality</p> <p>Stumbling blocks in the provision of support</p> | <p>I think the amount of paper work that is involved with supporting these learners the way we should be, stands in way. <b>This paper work scares teachers and means that I turn a blind eye</b>, keep punishing and keep shouting even though I know that that child needs something else. And by doing all that paperwork to get support, it is like punishment...so I don't blame teachers that don't do anything and just ignore the child and their bad behaviour. And worst of all, once <b>the teacher's tiredness gets the better of her and you can't reach all your deadlines</b>; you will always find the quickest short cut and take it. You look past the child and keep doing your job for the other 43/44 that aren't causing havoc in your class because of their ADHD</p>   |
| <p>Teacher 2</p> <p>Stumbling blocks in the provision of support</p> <p>Educator perception</p>   | <p>Look I think there are incidents and cases that are positive, where learners have been identified as really struggling with barriers that are outside of the teachers control and as a result, they get assessed and get placed in the right school. <b>But there are a lot of cases where the paperwork has been done, lost or just ignored</b>. So this thing of <b>turning a blind eye</b>, doesn't happen at school level only...even in the districts and the ISS units, they <b>turn a blind eye and don't take it seriously</b>.</p>   |

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| <p>Teacher 3<br/>Emotion: frustrated</p>  | <p>And most of the time, they (the district) don't even look for ways to help the child.</p>   |
| <p>Teacher 1</p> <p>Emotion: frustration<br/>Behavioural manifestation</p> <p>Stumbling blocks in the provision of support</p> <p>Systemic challenges</p> <p>Systemic challenges</p> <p>Context</p> <p>Educator response to perceived reality</p> | <p>I can give you a few examples of how this system has failed us. One refers to the little boy I had in my class, he was extremely busy, restless and struggled to pay attention for too long. But the difference is that this little boy could understand what you were teaching him, irrespective of the distractions he had. But the adhd caught up with him because after he started changing classes (older grades have multiple teachers), and some teachers became impatient and didn't want to understand what his challenge was and just randomly group him according to his disruptive behaviour. This means that in this group he isn't given attention, is ignored and not taught properly. Causing problems for the next year he is going to, because he doesn't know the content well enough because his previous year teacher just ignored him.</p> <p>Just to also show you where things are lacking, last year I had two boys in my class – where the one boy was in a terrible car accident, with the impact on his head. His head was badly swollen, water retention and he honestly couldn't cope and struggled to the point that this child didn't want to come to school because of the level of work that we were doing and how much he had missed out on. Even with all of these challenges, the government sent him on to grade 2.</p> <p>The other little boy who hurt his right arm and the parents just tried to get him to work with his left arm, without taking into consideration what it means for the brain to just change channels like this. He too was sent to grade 2.</p> <p>This means that somewhere along the line, another teacher will experience major block in their understanding and maybe even have the disruptive behaviour we are talking about and then they too ignore it.</p> |
| <p>p-2wTeacher 3</p> <p>Stumbling blocks in provision of support</p> <p>Shortfalls in educator competencies</p> <p>Emotion: frustration</p>   | <p>To add to that, we can't accommodate for the ways that you psychologists suggest that we support the learner with ADHD. All the reports we receive state that "the child struggles to concentrate and pay attention for long periods of time....give him more time during exams". Not only do we not understand what exactly must we do to support the child in the actual classroom but also that this recommendation is contradictory – because how does it help is the child has a low concentration and you give him more time that he must sit still and stare into space. That isn't a recommendation, it doesn't help us and it doesn't help the child, especially in exam situations. You people must start coming up with something else as a recommendation because the things you anyway recommend, we can't apply in our classes.</p>   |
| <p>Buhle</p>  | <p>Thank you for that, it is very insightful and I am sure Ntombi can</p>  |



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|  | <p>also attest that this information is really enlightening.</p> <p>Now I would like us to move onto how you guys as members of the SBST are responding to these behavioural challenges that arise as a result of ADHD?</p> <p>So my question in essence is what is your role as the SBST in providing support to learners displaying challenging behaviour as a result of ADHD?</p>   |
| <p>Teacher 1</p> <p>Shortfalls in educator competencies</p> <p>Systemic challenges</p>   | <p>I honestly wouldn't know, because the function of this team keeps changing and because we meet at different times, we don't always speak with one voice. And it just changes really often; I don't know what my role is on this team of people.</p>   |
| <p>Teacher 2</p> <p>Educator perception</p> <p>Stumbling blocks in the provision of support</p> <p>Recommendations for support</p> | <p>I think we kind of give each other support as to what we can do to respond to the challenges that the children give us. We speak about what has worked in the past and what people think we should try, but the paperwork is a bit of a drag and we don't really have time to meet consistently, so our ability to support is also limited.</p> <p>Oh yes, we discuss how we can support the children who have been suspended because they were naughty and how we must make sure they catch up on the work they missed. But I think that's about it, I can't think of any other ways we actually support them.</p>   |
| <p>Teacher 3</p> <p>Shortfalls in educator competencies</p> <p>Emotion: frustration and despondence</p>                            | <p>I honestly don't know. I don't know what we should be doing expect filing in forms and requesting intervention, that in any case doesn't come.</p>  |
| Buhle  | Are you all familiar with what the SNA 1 and 2 Forms are and have you participated in its completion?  |
| All  | Nods in agreement  |
| Buhle  | What are the learning barriers that you have previously requested support for?   |
| <p>Teacher 1</p> <p>Emotion: frustration at process and how long it takes</p> <p>Systemic challenge</p>                            | <p>The child of mine who couldn't write after hurting his arm and the one who was in an accident, and like I told you, they were both moved to grade 2. All that paperwork for nothing.</p> <p>And mind you, these children were brought to my attention and the districts attention in the first week of the second term last year, and the district is 'still coming to assist us', while they have promoted the children to a new grade. They are 'still coming'.</p> <p>These people keep telling us they come to assess children in the intermediate phase, which doesn't even make sense because if the problem already obvious in the foundation phase, why are they not sorting it out... instead of waiting for it to become bigger than what it should be?</p> |
| <p>Teacher 2</p> <p>Systemic challenge</p>   | <p>I have requested support for a child who couldn't read or write in my grade 4 class. The LSE now helps him, but he is still here and his gap is too big for me or the LSE to properly help him.</p>   |

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| <p>Stumbling blocks to support<br/>Educator realities</p>  | <p>But I won't lie, I try my hardest to avoid anything that has to do with additional paperwork...I have enough marking as is.</p>   |
| <p>Teacher 3</p> <p>Emotion: frustration and hopelessness</p> <p>Educator perception</p> <p>Systemic challenge</p> | <p>I also helped the English HOD complete it for a child in her class who couldn't read. But it was a waste because no one even came to come assess the child and we just had to go on.</p> <p>There is no point in filling those forms out because after age 12 (the ages that I work with), there is literally nothing that can be done for that learner anymore. The problem is too big and set in stone. Early identification is important. This is things that all of us know but many of us remain useless because we can't do anything to actually help the child. We have to wait for answers from up there at the district offices; we need to create our own resources out of nothing. What this shows us is that the teachers actually have a grip of what is going on but the processes to get help for the child are not in place, so no one sees it through.</p> |
| <p>Teacher 1</p>   | <p>Shame ma'am, are we answering your questions the way you would like us to?</p>  |
| <p>Buhle</p>   | <p>Oh definitely. As I said this process has been so insightful because like I said I work at a high school in Pretoria and sometimes I too get incredibly despondent when I meet a grade 10 or 11 who can't read or write properly and I just think 'how did you get this far in the system and you haven't gotten the help you need'?</p> <p>We have children that display very wild and erratic behaviour to the extent that we are considering getting a metal detector because their behaviours are so uncontrollable and we don't know where or when the problems started?</p> <p>So what I would like to understand that is how do we remediate this challenging and problematic behaviour that these children are showing, as a result of ADHD? And how do we do this at the level that you guys are at, the primary schools.</p>                                      |
| <p>Teacher 2</p> <p>Systemic challenges</p> <p>Behavioural manifestations</p>                                      | <p>Ma'am I think you're right, our challenges start here. Our children don't understand the work they are being given because of underlying challenges they are experiencing. They keep getting pushed through, and they continue to struggle with understanding the work. This struggle builds up into frustration and together with their challenges, it shows up in our classes and schools as the crazy behaviour they have each and every day.</p>  |
| <p>Teacher 1</p> <p>Suggested recommendation</p>   | <p>The other problem with trying to remediate this problem as you state, is the lack of research around it. The department would do itself a favour if it could research when these behavioural problems that result from all sorts of barriers came about?</p> <p>In my opinion it started when we were no longer allowed to reprimand children. I think that is what we must look at!</p>  |
| <p>Teacher 3</p>   | <p>Absolutely</p>  |
| <p>Teacher 1</p>   | <p>Because of that the children now think that they have rights that</p>   |

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| <p>Educator perception</p> <p>Context</p> <p>Emotion: frustration</p>   | <p>are supreme and they are also protected by these fancy terms we use... 'barriers to learning'. Them and their parents know their rights and don't even know their responsibilities, they know how to cheat the system but the system has no way to respond to their needs, because they overwhelm us.</p> <p>The children feel that we must teach them, irrespective of whatever they do, they can abuse us and we must still teach and 'support'.</p> <p>Children and their parents think they have a hold on us. Why is it in my day, bad behaviour was exactly that... bad behaviour and a child would get a hiding for it. In today's day and age, it is a barrier to learning. You can't reprimand it but you have to support it.</p>                    |
| <p>Teacher 3</p> <p>Systemic challenge</p> <p>Recommended solution</p>  | <p>Our other problem is that we listen to too much international voices. These international people like Mary Medkumf, who came all the way from Rhodesia and came to tell the government that they must take away corporal punishment. They took her word as law and there was absolutely no other measures put into place that was aimed at helping the teacher, be able to teach the child. Teachers didn't hit because they are sadistic, but they did it to teach children boundaries – the children knew how far to go and what the consequences would be.</p> <p>And now that we have gone away from it, it's not simple to go back to it and nor is it simple to solve the problems we have in our classrooms because we don't know what else to do.</p> |
| <p>Buhle</p>  | <p>That's an important point you raise... so what I would like to know is, with what we have now – the SIAS policy, the SBST's, the SNA forms and all the intervention that we should get from these resources, have you ever requested support for the behavioural challenges that arise and serve as a learning barrier because of ADHD?</p>   |
| <p>Teacher 1</p> <p>Emotion: despondency</p> <p>Educator perception</p> | <p>Never before... I mean, they can't even help a child who was in a car accident and had water retention... how will they help a child who is acting out because of ADHD? This education department and all its forms don't care about that!</p>  |
| <p>Teacher 2</p> <p>Current methods of support and remediation</p>      | <p>Not at all ma'am. I have only been teaching for a few years and I haven't been on this SBST thing for a long time, but I do know we have never (in my time) referred a child for intervention for behavioural challenges, let alone ADHD challenges. All we do is punish them by suspending them.</p>   |
| <p>Teacher 3</p>  | <p>I wouldn't waste my time with those forms, they don't go anywhere anyway.</p>   |
| <p>Buhle</p>  | <p>So ladies, with what we have now and can use – what can we do to respond to this challenging behaviour in our schools that is specifically shown by children with ADHD?</p>   |
| <p>Teacher 1</p> <p>Recommended method of support</p>                   | <p>You are probably aware of the educational triangle. The teacher, parent and child. Parents need to be called to a meeting and they need to be told exactly what we would like, what our current realities are and together we discuss what has happened to</p>  |

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| <p>Context</p> <p>Emotion: anger</p>  | <p>move us away from our desired to our current situation. Yes also it is the economic situation in our country. The norm no longer two parents in the house, now it's mostly one. The mother has to go out and work and by the time she gets home, the day is over and all she can do is make supper and put her child to bed. So there is not much interaction and conversation between mother and child. Mother is tired! That's is one of the problems, the situations in some of these families. Oh yes, then we come to the gogo's! The gogo that has to take control of her grandchildren. Money becomes a problem, because she needs to pay r800 for transport; granny has to feed the children, when granny should actually be sitting, reading and knitting her old age away. I had a situation where one of my learner's mothers was on drugs; granny had to take care of the children. These parents or gogo's don't know how to cope, we need to get assistance for those parents.</p> <p>If we want to better the child at Bosmont Primary, we need to better our parents. We need to find out what these parents are experiencing at home, do they know how to assist their children, and can they read? Because many parents openly say "Ma'am, their homework is beyond what I can do". And in that case, maybe we should look at aftercare services or bring in parent interventions.</p> <p>I really think that is the route to go...call the parent in, call the teacher in and then lastly, call the child in. by doing this you reach the stage where you are speaking the same language and you can actually help the child...because now we do and can do nothing!</p> |
| <p>Teacher 2</p> <p>Recommended method of support</p> <p>Context</p> <p>Emotion: demotivated and hopelessness</p> <p>Educator realities</p> | <p>Yes, I think parental involvement is the only thing that I have actually seen making a slight difference in helping children with barriers to learning. If we are on the same page with the parent, the parent understands what you are talking about and they too want to help their children. The problem comes in where some parents are illiterate and they themselves are struggling...unfortunately getting to know them and understanding what they need isn't always possible with the time we have but it is important.</p> <p>As a new teacher and a young teacher coming in at a different time...I am quite demotivated in this career, because I honestly don't know what I can do to help children and make the change that is needed. So all I actually do now is come in, teach, do my job and leave. So I kind of just ignore all the other factors, the socio-economic factors, the children's struggles, their barriers...all the things I can't change – I ignore and go home. So to answer your question, I don't know what can be done with what we have because I am currently doing nothing with what I have.</p>   |
| <p>Teacher 3</p>  | <p>I think we as teachers we also need to expose ourselves to the</p>  |

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| Context<br><br>Recommended method of support                                    | resources out there that don't really need a lot of money. I recently remembered that government library's all have internet and it's free to use it. So I think if we could use these free resources, encourage our parents to do the same...maybe we can help our children.<br><br>We must also use the resource that the parents offer. Before I thought we as teachers we lone rangers in education, but after hearing a recent conversation on 702, I realised that parents are also becoming worried about what is happening in education.                                       |
| Teacher 1<br>Context  | But Ma'am those parents listening and commenting on 702 are not the parents of the Bosmont Primary child. Our parents are absent, illiterate or abusive. So there is no winning!   |
| Teacher 1<br><br>Educator realities<br><br>Emotion: overwhelmed                 | Another thing is that our system is really not designed to educate the child. These children are fed too much information, at an abnormal pace and as a result the teacher also speeds through the work. We don't focus on what the child actually needs; we focus on what I need to hand into my HOD. I don't focus on the actual support the child needs; nope...I do what I need to do! It is hectic...it's just too hectic! And I don't even know if we can do anything anymore, it's just too hectic!   |
| Teacher 3<br><br>Systemic challenges<br><br>Emotion: overwhelmed<br><br>Context | I would like to mention one last thing, I don't know what to do to help children and to help the situation we are in at the moment because there are SO many changes. These changes make me feel like that 'threw out the child with the bath water'. I cannot keep up and I don't even know what they want from us.<br><br>These people keep bringing in imported systems, systems that do not work in our space because of things like...the cultural bias, socio-economic factors, assessments that consume teaching time, not all our children go to grade r and the class ratios. |
| Teacher 1   | Okay, you're going to have to excuse me. I have to go  |
| Buhle   | No worries ma'am that was actually my last question.   |
| Buhle   | Ladies, this was really insightful. I have asked all the questions that I had to. I am so thankful for this engagement and your willingness to participate in the process. And as someone who works at a school, I really know that after school is a precious time for you all and not only are we in exams when you have so much mark, and you really sacrificed your time. Thank you all so much!   |

**Date: 12/06/2019**

**Venue: Bosmont Primary School, Randburg**

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| Buhle | Afternoon ladies, thank you so much for sacrificing your afternoon to spend with me and to talk about your experiences here at Bosmont Primary School. I acknowledge that you guys are obviously super busy, especially since it is the last week of school and marks have to be in, and SA SAMS and everything else that |
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|                                    | <p>comes with working at a school.</p> <p>I think before we go any further, I would like to remind you that the last time we were here it was for Ntombi's project and now we are here for mine. So my research topic is centred on identifying the behavioural challenges that come as a result of ADHD, as a barrier to learning and understanding how exactly the SBST can support learners experiencing this as a barrier to learning. So I think I would like to start by asking if you have any questions to ask me, before I jump into my questions for you?</p>   |
| All teachers                       | No, no questions.   |
| Buhle                              | <p>Okay, with that said, I would like you to please turn to the paper in front of you. This is the consent forms that I would please like you to complete if you would like to participate in this process.</p> <p>What this means is that you're acknowledging that your involvement in the research was not forced, you are not here under duress, your information will be dealt with, in the highest regard and lastly that both you and I acknowledge that you are able to choose to go out of the process whenever you would like to.</p> <p>You guys can read through them and if you agree to being involved, after reading everything on the form, you can please sign it for me.</p> <p>Last bit of logistics is that I am recording this conversation between us, the purpose is so that I can remember everything that we speak about and just to make sure I capture our discussion as accurately as possible.</p> |
| Buhle                              | Okay, so my first question for you is how would you define a learning barrier?  |
| Teacher 4<br>Definition            | <p>I would say it is something that is either physical, emotional or psychological that prevents a child from reaching their potential. So this thing can be something like, the problems at home, there's no food, they are being abuse or they can't concentrate in class. So these things come together and prevent them from learning and from achieving the best quality of education they possibly can get.</p>   |
| Teacher 5<br>Definition<br>Context | <p>So I think in the grade 1 classes that I am working with, the barrier to learning is one that prevents them from being able to participate in the grade 1 content as best as what they can. Often times there is no money to send the children to crèche, so what that means is that their developmental needs for grade 1 aren't achieved and then they can't actually participate in the learning process the way they should be. By the time you come to grade 1, the teacher spends more time trying to teach you the skills you were supposed to have learned in crèche. Skills like how to hold a pencil or how to use the proper sound words. So in my short span of teaching, I have noticed that money or the absence of it, serves as a barrier to the child's proper learning in their foundational phases.</p>   |
| Buhle                              | Alright, thank you. Now I would like to know how would you define   |

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|   | ADHD based on your experiences, your studies and your actual practical encounters with the children in the classroom?   |
| Teacher 4<br><br>Definition                         | I think ADHD is actually very difficult to define or classify 100%, because a lot of times kids are busy...they are playing, they are throwing each other with stuff and just being children, and as a result, we can't now say that every child that is not sitting still and concentrating is ADHD. But what I think the big thing with ADHD is when these problems become a learning barrier, so when it comes to such a stage where this child is not focusing on anything, where while you're trying to explain a concept in class you realise that this child is not at all with you, and this distraction isn't because they are just playful. No, rather it is constantly happening. ADHD is not a child that is just busy and playful today and tomorrow they are able to concentrate. I think a child with ADHD won't even be able to finish colouring in a picture because they will start and soon thereafter, they will get distracted by something else. So ADHD is also not being able to finish a task because the child is constantly distracted by a lot of other things. |
| Buhle   | And you ma'am...what is your definition of ADHD?  |
| Teacher 5<br>Definition<br><br>Context              | I think it is very similar to what Lize has said; the child doesn't really concentrate on one thing. The child is unable to concentrate and they are constantly distracted. But I think with us, we really have to take a lot into consideration before we actually acknowledge the lack of concentration as a problem – we need to factor in whether or not the child ate at break, did they eat sweets, and did they have porridge with lots of sugar in the morning? We also need to remember that the concentration span of a child is the same as their age, what that means is if he is 7 years old, he can only concentrate for 7 minutes at a go. This concentration span reality is often overlooked by both parents and teachers  |
| Buhle   | Okay, thank you for that ladies. So now my follow up question is based on the answers you have given to the first two questions, the first question being 'what is your definition of a learning barrier' and the second question being 'what is your definition of ADHD?' so based on the previous two answers that you have given me, would you acknowledge ADHD as a barrier to learning?  |
| Teacher 4<br><br>Systemic challenges<br><br>Context | Definitely. It is a barrier to learning, but on the other hand I want to mention that not every child has ADHD. But for a child that actually has ADHD it definitely is a learning barrier, but most children who have been diagnosed, I don't think have it. In our society today, especially in the richer school, parents just throw their children with medication. It becomes a situation of just giving the child the pills, so that the child can just sit still, while the child might not even need it. While here with us at Bosmont, most of the parents wouldn't even give their children medication because they think if their child has to go on medication, they are crazy – which is also not the truth.   |
| Buhle   | And you ma'am...would you define ADHD as something that constitutes as a learning barrier?  |
| Teacher 5   | Yes, I think it is a learning barrier. But I also think ADHD can't  |



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| <p>Definition</p> <p>Recommended methods of support</p>                      | <p>always be used as an excuse for a child who isn't academically inclined. I think there are ways to help a child who has ADHD, by spending more one-on-one time with them and to help the child progress as well as the other children in the class.</p>  |
| Buhle  | <p>Alright. I just want to say this information is incredibly rich and insightful, and it shows a lot of your experiences. So now what I would like to ask is in what ways is ADHD affecting the challenging behaviour as displayed in your classroom?</p>  |
| Teacher 1  | <p>So do you mean how does ADHD affect the way in which teaching is taking place?</p>   |
| Buhle  | <p>What I mean is, let's say I was a child who had ADHD and I had to show erratic behaviour in your classroom. What would this behaviour look like in the class and how would it in essence affect teaching and learning?</p>   |
| <p>Teacher 5</p> <p>Behavioural manifestations</p>                           | <p>So I think the way it shows up as challenging behaviour in my classroom is that the child cannot sit still, he needs shout out (appropriate or inappropriate) comments about everything in the class or even worse, the child can't just use one instrument to work with, they have an excessive need to use multiple instruments and while he is doing that, he is bothering his friend behind him and simultaneously getting into a fight with the child on his left.</p>  |
| <p>Teacher 4</p> <p>Educator realities</p> <p>Behavioural manifestations</p> | <p>I definitely think that it is that the child never finishes anything. So it takes a lot of effort on your side as the teacher to get them to finish their work, which also means that you are getting into fights with them on the regular. They are often staring out the window, asking very weird and inappropriate questions (all of which irritate you as the teacher because it really distracts the entire class). They are everywhere in your classroom and they really irritate the other children and because their minds are constantly jumping around, and the other children get into conflict with them because of this and it just becomes chaotic. And the big problem is that their inability to stay focused doesn't just disrupt themselves, but also majorly affects the other children in the class as well. They want to talk to their friends, irritate them, tease them and it just negatively impacts the entire class.</p> |
| Buhle  | <p>So based on what you have just said, I would like to know how is this behaviour being supported in your classroom and the Bosmont Primary School in general?<br/>So how are you supporting the inattention, the disruption to other children, the fighting, and the chaos created?</p>   |
| <p>Teacher 4</p> <p>Context</p> <p>Shortfalls with educator competencies</p> | <p>I have to be honest, it is extremely difficult and I think the big thing is in the classes we have, were we have 45/50 learners per class it is very difficult to make the time to support and give special attention to one child. And also remember in a class with 45, means there is a likelihood of more than one of them and just the fact that there is so many children in a class feels like all the kids have ADHD. So I think it really is very difficult to support these children because one we are not qualified to do the support they need, we are not psychologists, and all I am is a teacher. So as</p>  |

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| Current method of support being implemented  | the teacher my support starts and ends at me constantly shouting their name out, so they can regain their concentration and focus on me.  |
| Teacher 5<br><br>Recommended method of support<br><br>Shortfalls with educator competencies<br><br>Educator perception | So I think in the foundation phase, if the child is actually diagnosed with ADHD (which in this setting is highly unlikely) you could start off by allowing the child to sit alone at a table (because in their grade 1 phase, they often times sit two at a table, but if he is easily distracted, this seating placement will be problematic). I also agree with Ma'am who says that this is not our job; it is the job of the psychologist. And the parents need to act on it, we can't. But they can't take it to the general practitioner, because this practitioner is not qualified either and they base it only on what they have heard about the child's behaviour. This therefore means that the children have to be taken to the psychologists, who will assess and evaluate if the child indeed has ADHD.   |
| Buhle  | My sixth question, we are nearing the end, as members of the SBST what is the role of the SBST in supporting that display challenging behaviour as a result of ADHD   |
| Teacher 4<br><br>Role of the SBST<br><br>Context   | <p>Our role is definitely to identify. We have to say that 'these are the children that we suspect to have ADHD and other barriers', to contact the parents thereafter, try explain to them exactly what the situation is. Because like I said in one of the previous questions, in the schools that we are at; where the parents don't necessarily have a lot of money and might not know a lot about barriers to learning, your recommendation for the child to get tested by psychologists suggests to them that you think their child is crazy. And to try explain to them that, 'no, I am not saying that your child is crazy – what I am saying is your child has a learning barrier. So if we can fix this, your child can do better at school by drinking the medication or whatever the case may be'.</p> <p>So the biggest role that we as an SBST have is that we have meetings, where we sit together and we discuss the different children in different grades. We talk about what we think the different children are struggling with from that we will contact the parents and request a meeting where we give the parents the necessary information about where they can go to get their kids tested. Obviously, we can't force them if they disagree or actually can't take their children. If the parents completely disagree and don't want to take their children, there is nothing we can do about it.</p> |
| Teacher 5<br>Role of SBST<br>Educator realities  | As the support team I think our role is obviously to sit together and discuss the child's challenges. This is a good initial start because sometimes teachers and children might not actually get along and the behaviour problems might be in response to them not getting along with the teacher and not necessarily that the child's behaviour is a barrier to their learning.   |
| Buhle  | Is there anything else that you guys as support team members should be doing to support the children?   |

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| <p>Teacher 4</p> <p>Context<br/>Emotion: frustration</p> <p>Systemic challenges</p> <p>Emotion: despair</p> <p>Behavioural manifestations<br/>Educator perceptions</p> <p>Emotion: worry</p> | <p>What we also do sometimes is when we have parents that can't necessarily afford to get assistance for their children, we then refer them to the district. But that has its own problems. Our districts are overworked, which means that a lot of times nothing happens for the children we identify as experiencing ADHD as a barrier to their learning or any other barrier to learning in actual fact, nothing ever happens. The problem is that at the end of the day, the child is the one that suffers. I am speaking from experience because like a while back, I had this child in our school, who literally could not write. By the time she came to our school she was already in grade 7, as she came from another school. This poor little child could not write. I do not know how this girl got so far and got to grade 7 with her writing skills, it actually looked like she was writing another language and it doesn't even seem like the language actually exists...it's more like her own language. What this means is that she was completely illiterate and we referred her to the district, because that is the new system now...if you want to get children into LSEN schools, you have to go through the district. They have to test them and decide on the placement. We did all of that for this little girl I'm telling you about and nothing has happened. She is still in our school; she is failing every single subject because she can't read or write at all and it is just too far gone for the teachers to singlehandedly help her. What is worse is that we can't go to a LSEN school in our district and apply for the child there with their parent...not any more. The system used to be like that before, but now with all the system changes, our children are stuck here and don't get helped. And because the district has taken over that system, too many of our children don't get assisted.</p> <p>What I also want to tell you, well I'm not 100% sure about this, but I have heard that per district, there is only 1 educational psychologist serving all the schools in the district. So now the challenge becomes that one psychologist has however many schools in her district, everyone in these schools is applying to take children to other schools and even if that one psychologist is doing an excellent job, there is no way that they can get to all the children.</p> <p>And it's an even greater concern because the child with the barrier to learning, in our school, is not benefiting from the education system at all.</p> <p>They are disrupting the class and teaching because they don't even understand what is going on, and if these children were in a vocational school...then they could actually learn something because let's face it, they are not going to get a meaningful matric. Rather they are just going to be passed along, every time they have failed enough times per phase and end up being in matric by 22 (years) and still have the potential to dismally fail matric and leave the school system not having learned anything they can use later in their lives. These children cannot even read</p> |
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|  | and write. So it's a very big concern.  |
| Buhle  | Okay, ma'am now I would like to find out as an individual teacher, have you ever participated in the completion of the SNA 1 & 2 forms?   |
| Teacher 4 & 5  | Yes   |
| Buhle  | So in your completion of this form, what types of learning barriers have you previously requested support for?  |
| Teacher 4<br><br>Type of learning barriers               | I have recently completed for a child who had sight and vision problems, where the challenge was particularly simple...the parent couldn't afford glasses and this reality negatively impacted the child's ability to participate with my content because they can't necessarily see. I have also requested support for learners who couldn't read or write...but you know how that story goes. Oh yes, I have also applied for concessions for children who I have identified that they are stronger in their verbal descriptions of the work rather than their written descriptions – to get these children the permission to get their work either scribed or that they can complete their assessments in a oral manner. |
| Teacher 5<br><br>Stumbling blocks to support             | I have actually applied for what I suspected was ADHD and for a child who had distinct hearing problems. In both of the cases was it significantly difficult to teach them because they both required a lot of individual attention that I could not afford them due to the size of our classrooms.   |
| Buhle  | Ok thank you. So based on your answers, you have both previously requested support for children who have ADHD and display challenging behaviour as a result of it. So from these requests that have been made and your experience as a teacher here at BPS, what was the response that you received?  |
| Teacher 4  | Is this now by filling in the form and everything?  |
| Buhle  | Yes, because remember you are request intervention by completing those forms  |
| Teacher 4<br>Emotion: anger                              | Well in terms of the forms and the district intervention...absolutely nothing. No support   |
| Buhle  | Alright and what support did you receive from the SBST when you brought these learners and their challenges forward to them?  |
| Teacher 4<br>"Role" of the SBST fulfilled                | Well, all the SBST could do is exactly what it did...which was to contact the parents and hope that they can see the challenges that you are experiencing and that they too can become involved and serve as a greater support to the child. Once you're able to get the parents to realise that by us not doing anything about the child concerns, their children will never be able to perform in school. And depending on the parents abilities and understanding of our concerns, they can support the child because they will take them to go get tested and then we will be given recommendations on how to best support the child.   |
| Teacher 5<br><br>Emotion: anger, frustration and despair | So far because we don't have any support measures we can apply as a school, we rely on the parents for their inputs and support. Because the reality is that the support we expect from the district is seldom fulfilled as we are still waiting now and  |

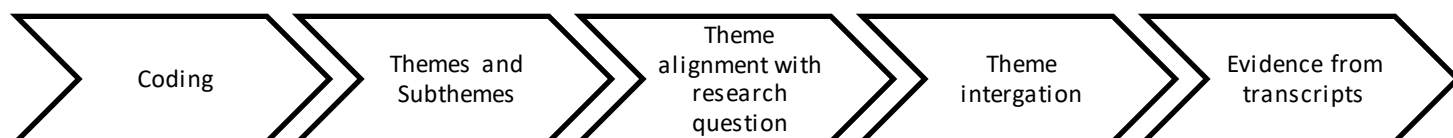
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|   | nothing is being done to help the poor children .   |
| Buhle   | So then my last question relates to what you have just said about having to play a waiting game with the district. What I would like to now is, in the interim of you 'waiting and seeing"... what is there that can be done internally to support the displaying challenging behaviour as a result of possible ADHD?   |
| Teacher 4<br>Shortfalls on educator competencies<br><br>Context<br>Stumbling blocks to support<br>Recommended methods of support<br>Emotion: despair and feeling disempowered | <p>It is extremely difficult. I don't even know how to support these children and their challenging behaviour. So what we would do is sometimes to ask the LSE guy to take them out of the class and let them write tests and assessments in smaller groups, with the potential of reducing the distractions they are exposed to and the interruptions they cause themselves. But in a class where I am teaching, it is too difficult and what ends up happening is that I just apply the necessary discipline steps to minimize their behaviour and make my teaching environment more conducive to learning.</p> <p>What is very unfortunate is that because of the very little support I can give the child, and my shouting and punishing, the child continues doing whatever it is got them in 'trouble' in the first place...which isn't fair because that child cannot help themselves. And I think that is the biggest thing with ADHD that it doesn't matter how many times I can shout and punish, that child is going to do it again because they can't help themselves. And I know that medication isn't always the way to go, especially because of its side effects, in the situations that we are in with 40/50 children in a class...I honestly can't support one child with ADHD and ignore the rest. So if they were on medication, it might calm the situation a bit better. As much as what I would like to support these children and not advocate for the use of medication, my hands are chopped off at the moment and I can't see another way.</p> |
| Teacher 5<br>Recommended methods for support  | <p>I agree with Lize and I also think with what we have now...all we can do is keep the child busy. I am going to have to make him my 'special helper' in my class, just so that he is constantly busy and the opportunities to disrupt are minimized. And I mean I once gave a child a fidget spinner in my class (I know they are banned but I just couldn't take the disruptions anymore). Each time he got slightly off track, I allowed him to play with his fidget spinner for 2 minutes and thereafter he would go on with his work.</p> <p>The other thing is while we wait for the district, what I think we can do is keep asking and empowering our parents with information regarding their children's challenges. Because the more empowered and informed they are, the better able they will be able to help their children.</p>  |
| Buhle   | Okay ladies, we have reached the end of our interview. Thank you so much ladies. This was incredibly insightful and it was indicative of the environments that you work in and the knowledge the departments must have about what is going on in our schools. Because I think that often times, they are far removed from us  |



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|  | <p>and what happens at the different levels of educations happens in silos. The hope is that with giving them information such as these this, we will make them more aware and alert of what is going on and hopefully with the next round of changes to education, the changes reflect what the need on the grass route level is.</p> <p>If you have any questions about anything we spoke about today, please message me or email me. But again, thank you both for all this rich information.</p> |
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## APPENDIX 9: THEMATIC ANALYSIS PROCESS



### Code descriptions:

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| Definition   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Definition of learning barriers/ADHD</li> <li>• Acknowledgement of how broad the definition can be and what it can include</li> </ul>   |
| Context  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Acknowledgement of the context they are working in and how this context does not accommodate the needs of the learners</li> <li>• Context is characterised by educators who are overworked and heavily burdened</li> <li>• Educators take note of how the Bosmont Primary context affects the behavioural manifestations of an ADHD diagnosis or the symptoms there of</li> <li>• The classes are big and the educators don't have enough resources at their disposal to accommodate class size and learner educational needs</li> <li>• Context is generally overwhelming for educators, who not only feel unappreciated but also abused by the learners and the system they work for</li> </ul> |
| Behavioural manifestations                                       | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How the ADHD presents itself behaviourally in the class and school context</li> </ul>   |
| Educators response to the behaviours displayed by their learners | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Typical responses from the educator, that accompany the behavioural manifestation</li> </ul>  |
| Recommended methods of support                                   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Recommendations include an acknowledgement of the broader systems the child participates in and how support must be a multifaceted process</li> <li>• Acknowledge that broader knowledge base (on the part of the educator) is required for effective support</li> <li>•</li> </ul>   |
| Stumbling blocks in the provision of support                     | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All the factors internal or external to the school that stand in the way of providing adequate and necessary support to the child and their needs</li> <li>• Educators include their attitudes and non-compliance as factors contributing to support not being provided for learners</li> </ul>   |



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| Emotions experienced by educators   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Emotional responses include: frustration, despair, overwhelmed</li> </ul>   |
| Educator perceptions                | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Refer to the perceptions the educators hold about: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The children they interact with</li> <li>The system they work within</li> <li>The contexts and dynamics of the country</li> </ul> </li> </ul>                                     |
| Systemic challenges                 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Include all those challenges that reflect issues in the entire education system and not just those at their school.</li> <li>These challenges call for a change in structure organisation or policy</li> </ul>  |
| Shortfalls in educator competencies | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>All the perceived and experienced competency shortfalls that educators think they have and how these competencies stand in the way of the effective provision of support to learners displaying behavioural challenges as a result of ADHD in their class/school</li> </ul> |

### Themes and subthemes:

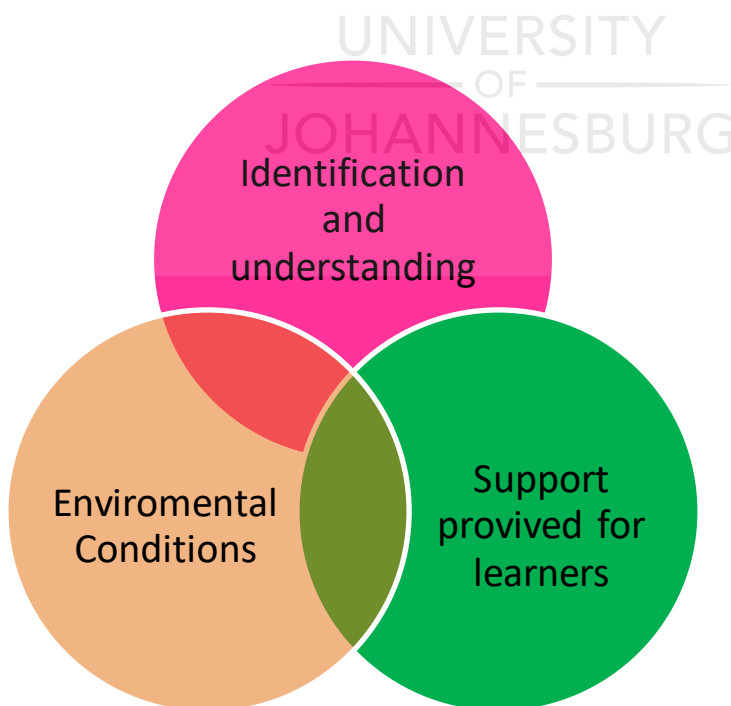
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| <b>Identification and understanding of the challenging behaviour that is a result of ADHD as a learning barrier:</b>  |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Educators understanding of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Learning Barriers</li> <li>ADHD</li> <li>Challenging behaviour</li> </ul> </li> <li>Educator knowledge of the behavioural manifestation of ADHD in the classroom</li> </ul>   |
| <b>Support provided for learners exhibiting challenging behaviour as a result of ADHD:</b>  |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Current support available to learners exhibiting challenging behaviour as a result of ADHD <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Suspension and expulsion recommendations</li> <li>Educators ignoring learners reality and challenges they are faced with</li> <li>One on one lessons with Learner Support Educator</li> </ul> </li> <li>Recommended support to learners exhibiting challenging behaviour as a result of ADHD <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Medication and surgical procedures</li> <li>Psychologist intervention</li> <li>Parental engagement and support</li> <li>Referral and admission into remedial schools</li> <li>Reintroduction of stringent traditional discipline methods</li> </ul> </li> <li>Obstacles preventing provision of adequate support: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Hostility and negative attitudes towards SIAS process</li> <li>Daunting paper work accompanying SIAS process</li> <li>Role confusion of the SBST</li> <li>Learners get promoted in the face of apparent learning barriers</li> <li>Overpopulated remedial schools</li> <li>Parental education and literacy</li> <li>Inconsistency with LSE placement</li> <li>Teacher morale</li> </ul> </li> </ul> |
| <b>The environmental conditions that influence the educator ability to provide adequate support for learners with ADHD</b>  |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Educator competencies:</li> </ul>  |

- Educators training not inclusive of remedial support
- Remedial support and intervention acknowledge by educators as falling outside of their scope of practice
- Curriculum demands affects the educators capacity to provide adequate support to learners with learning barriers
- Resource constrains
  - Teacher and skills shortage in the school
  - Poor infrastructure and facilities
  - Class sizes not conducive for individual support
  - Lack of support from districts and education departments
- Learner characteristics:
  - Leaners Socio-economic backgrounds
  - Parent education and literacy

**Theme and alignment with research question:**

| Theme                            | Research question   |
|----------------------------------|---|
| Identification and understanding | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● What are the SBST members understanding of Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder and the support required by learners who experience this challenge?</li> </ul> |
| Environmental conditions         | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● How do SBST teachers experience the implementation of the SIAS process?</li> </ul>   |
| Support provided                 |   |

**Theme integration:**



## Theme and evidence from transcript:

### Identification and understanding of the challenging behaviour that is a result of ADHD as a learning barrier:

| Segment | Speaker            | Content   |
|---------|--------------------|---|
| 1.      | Buhle              | <p>As I mentioned before, my research is centred around the identification and understanding of ADHD as an experience that bars the child from learning, so as a barrier to their holistic learning. So majority of my questions will be centred on finding out what is your understanding of what a learning barrier is and is ADHD part of what we understand as learning barriers. Most importantly, how we can help each other understand how the behavioural consequences of ADHD are serving as a barrier to the child with ADHD's learning.</p> <p>My first question is, how would you define a barrier to learning? So from your experience and understanding, what is a barrier to learning?</p> |
| 2.      | Teacher 1          | I think a barrier to learning is anything that makes you as an educator concerned and makes the alarm bells go off. It is when you have gone over a concept with a child and you can see they are struggling, even though you have given this concept at the child's level and you realise that no matter what you do, you cannot move forward or ahead with this child because there seems to be some sort of a gap that is preventing this child from moving with that particular aspect of your teaching.  |
| 3.      | Teacher 2          | Yes, this block that ma'am is talking about can be physical or an emotional issue that is affecting the child. A learning barrier in essence is something that stands in the way of the child being able to learn properly in your class.   |
| 4.      | Teacher 3          | A learning barrier is anything that means the child can't learn. It is like a trench that stands between the child and the work you teach them, meaning they can't get to the work...not that they don't want to do it, they just can't get to it. So basically making it something that gets in their way of focusing and actually taking in what you are teaching them.   |
| 5.      | Buhle              | With that in mind, well what you said is a learning barrier, how would you then define ADHD?  |
| 6.      | Teacher 1          | I have a child in my class, this child is very quiet but has some queer ways about her. I contacted her mom because she would often dream and would take a while to get on with her work, and when I got hold of the mother...I asked her to get her child assessed by a psychologist. And I told the mother that although the child needs to be assessed, it is difficult to diagnose a girl child with ADHD, unlike that of the boys. Girls portray this very aloof attitude, but once you tell her to hurry up and get going, then she does that.  |
| 7.      | Buhle              | Have you had any other children in your class, who you thought might have had ADHD?   |
| 8.      | Teacher 1          | <p>Yes, I did, two years ago.</p> <p>In this class, my entire class and teaching had to be clinically clean for that child, because when they see a box, they become more concerned with the box - want to know what's in the box, play with the box and even take the box home. They are distracted and distract the other children. Their distractions even go as far as them fiddling in the box, your box, while you are trying to teach. These children struggle to concentrate, their concentration span is very short</p>  |
| 9.      | Buhle to teacher 2 | And yours ma'am? Have you had any children in your class who you thought might have had ADHD?   |
| 10.     | Teacher 2          | Yes I have, and it was very similar to what ma'am (teacher 1) has said. From my experience, I have probably taught one or two learners with Attention deficit disorder and it affects learners concentration span, their attention span is weak, they can't focus for very long on one thing, and their mind seems to have a million other things. This is especially with the boy children, they are very busy and active and it is hard to teach them and still have to teach an entire class. The children with ADD disrupt the entire learning process.   |

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|     |   | I know some learners who have been on medication, where I have fortunately seen a difference once the child goes on medication but there are obviously side effects to this. But because the medication is up to the parents, they manage that process. But irrespective of whether the child is on medication or not, it is very hard to teach a child with ADD, especially in this context. A context that is supposed to be mainstream but we have lots of children with barriers and these barriers affect the entire class – because your attention is focused on that learner and this extended focus takes away from teaching and explaining to the other learners. |
| 11. | Teacher 3   | ADHD is just a mix up. Children with it are very disorganised, they are absent minded, have very bad behaviour and very disorganised. These children are difficult to teach and make it difficult to teach the other children in class.  |
| 12. | Buhle   | So based on the responses that you ladies have just given, where have now looked at what we think is a learning barrier and our understanding of ADHD, do you think that ADHD should qualify as a barrier to learning?   |
| 13. | Teacher 3   | Absolutely   |
| 14. | Teacher 2   | Definitely   |
| 15. | Teacher 1   | Yes  |
| 16. | Teacher 3<br>Suggested support/remediation of challenge | Very interesting thing for you psychologists, you know the experiments on the frontal lobotomy of the 60's. Where they spilt the left and the right brain? Yes, so now they are talking about manipulating the frontal lobe to cure ADHD. I don't think it will be as drastic as splitting the lobes, because when you split them the impulses don't flow from the one to the other and there is a potential of the loss of creativity happening. This manipulation is apparently going to help with the reducing of the temper tantrums that people with ADHD display and their violent and aggressive behaviour.   |
| 17. | Buhle   | Thank you for that insight ma'am. My follow up question to this is in what ways does adhd affect the display of challenging behaviour in your classroom  |
| 18. | Teacher 2<br>Context Behavioural manifestation of ADHD  | It creates a nightmare situation. A situation where you don't want to go back there and teach, because in our big classes of 45/50, one child with ADD causes havoc to the entire class. They are loud, disruptive, and inattentive, easily get into fights with other children and just consume all of my energy.   |
| 19. | Teacher 1   | The adhd child is so disorganised that it disrupts everything in my classroom. They can't seem to sit still, they bother the children next to them because they fidget with things on their table, they take things that aren't theirs – causing unnecessary conflict, they shout at each other and they never can fully participate in the class because either they are being naughty or they don't have their stuff at school needed to complete the tasks.   |
| 20. | Teacher 1   | Adhd makes it very difficult to teach. The boy children are very aggressive and agitated with each other, which could be because of the limited physical space they have among each other, but they fight a lot. They interrupt me when I talk, which makes me mad because this is very rude behaviour and it would never had been accepted in my day. They walk around without my permission, which is another thing I don't understand about this unruly generation, why do they not ask? These children just do as they please  |
| 21. | Buhle   | Is there anything else you would like to add to that question  |
| 22. | Teacher 1   | They also disturb other children around them. They make it impossible to do group teaching, as the group with the child with adhd, will take the longest to complete the task. The child distracts the other children. What I have also seen in these groups is that the ADHD child is not always the child that is a struggler. The child with ADHD can be brilliant in certain aspects of their life – that is why I don't believe in Ritalin.   |
| 23. | Teacher 2   | I think they are as with any learner with a barrier, they need to be put into a context where they are able to grow their skills and their strengths, and mainstream is not the context for that.  |
| 24. | Teacher 1   | I agree with you Ma'am. These children show this unruly and uncontrollable behaviour in our classes because they are not in the right space. These children can have high IQ's but   |

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|  |  | because they are not in a stimulating environment, they don't get stimulating work to do. The lack of stimulation leads to them getting bored and then after that they begin to <b>cause havoc</b> in my class because <b>they are bored and not properly stimulated</b> . So what happens is that I get annoyed with him and punish him because not only am I not trained to stimulate that child but also because I have a big class that I need to focus on as well. On top of that, I don't have the resources to help that child even if I wanted to. What that means is that we are not clued up, not resourceful and no one teaching more than 45 children at a time will have time to pay attention to one or two children with ADHD. |
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| Segment | Speaker                 | Content   |
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| 1.      | All teachers            | No, no questions.   |
| 2.      | Buhle                   | Okay, so my first question for you is how would you define a learning barrier?  |
| 3.      | Teacher 4               | I would say it is <b>something that is either physical, emotional or psychological that prevents a child from reaching their potential</b> . So this thing can be something like, the problems at home, there's no food, they are being abuse or they can't concentrate in class. So these things come together and <b>prevent them from learning and from achieving the best quality of education they possibly can get</b> .  |
| 4.      | Teacher 5               | So I think in the grade 1 classes that I am working with, the barrier to learning is one that <b>prevents them from being able to participate in the grade 1 content as best as what they can</b> . Often times there is no money to send the children to crèche, so what that means is that their developmental needs for grade 1 aren't achieved and then they can't actually participate in the learning process the way they should be. By the time you come to grade 1, the teacher spends more time trying to teach you the skills you were supposed to have learned in crèche. Skills like how to hold a pencil or how to use the proper sound words. So in my short span of teaching, I have noticed that money or the absence of it, serves as a barrier to the child's proper learning in their foundational phases.  |
| 5.      | Buhle                   | Alright, thank you. Now I would like to know how would you define ADHD based on your experiences, your studies and your actual practical encounters with the children in the classroom?   |
| 6.      | Teacher 4               | I think ADHD is actually very difficult to define or classify 100%, because a lot of times kids are busy...they are playing, they are throwing each other with stuff and just being children, and as a result, we can't now say that every child that is not sitting still and concentrating is ADHD. But what I think the big thing with ADHD is when these problems become a learning barrier, so <b>when it comes to such a stage where this child is not focusing on anything, where while you're trying to explain a concept in class you realise that this child is not at all with you</b> , and this distraction isn't because they are just playful. No, rather it is <b>constantly happening</b> . ADHD is not a child that is just busy and playful today and tomorrow they are able to concentrate. I think a child with ADHD won't even be able to finish colouring in a picture because they will start and soon thereafter, they will <b>get distracted by something else</b> . So ADHD is also not being able to finish a task because the child is constantly distracted by a lot of other things. |
| 7.      | Buhle                   | And you ma'am...what is your definition of ADHD?  |
| 8.      | Teacher 5<br>Definition | I think it is very similar to what Ma'am has said; the child <b>doesn't really concentrate on one thing</b> . The <b>child is unable to concentrate</b> and they are <b>constantly distracted</b> . But I think with us, we really have to take a lot into consideration before we actually acknowledge the lack of concentration as a problem – we need to factor in whether or not the child ate at break, did they eat sweets, and did they have porridge with lots of sugar in the morning? We also need to remember that the concentration span of a child is the same as their age, what that means is if he is 7 years old, he can only concentrate for 7 minutes at a go. This concentration span reality is often overlooked by both parents and teachers  |



## Support provided for learners exhibiting challenging behaviour as a result of ADHD:

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| 24. | Teacher 2 | I think they are as with any learner with a barrier, they need to be put into a context where they are able to grow their skills and their strengths, and mainstream is not the context for that.   |
| 25. | Teacher 1 | I agree with you Ma'am. These children show this unruly and uncontrollable behaviour in our classes because they are not in the right space. These children can have high IQ's but because they are not in a stimulating environment, they don't get stimulating work to do. The lack of stimulation leads to them getting bored and then after that they begin to cause havoc in my class because they are bored and not properly stimulated. So what happens is that I get annoyed with him and punish him because not only am I not trained to stimulate that child but also because I have a big class that I need to focus on as well. On top of that, I don't have the resources to help that child even if I wanted to. What that means is that we are not clued up, not resourceful and no one teaching more than 45 children at a time will have time to pay attention to one or two children with ADHD.   |
| 26. | Teacher 3 | What ma'am just mentioned is very important, because how we respond to these children and what the international standards that we compete with, don't have the same contexts. 1:15 is not the same as 1:45/50.   |
| 30. | Teacher 2 | Well its difficult because I don't really know what to do. I try give them some more attention, because that is really all that I feel capable of doing because, like ma'am said – we are not trained to respond to their needs the way they should be responded to. On top of that, we don't have the resources and even though we are qualified teachers, we are not all trained in remedial. The second challenge that I face that makes it difficult for me to support these children in my classroom is giving the children activities that are suited to their abilities and what they actually need from the classroom. But even if I knew how to do this, we don't have the support in terms of fully assessing them and having a plan for them after this assessment. What ends up happening is that these children are stuck in the system and it takes lots of evidence and counselling and paperwork to actually get them into a place that is suited for what they need. |
| 31. | Teacher 3 | I think the amount of paper work that is involved with supporting these learners the way we should be, stands in way. This paper work scares teachers and means that I turn a blind eye, keep punishing and keep shouting even though I know that that child needs something else. And by doing all that paperwork to get support, it is like punishment...so I don't blame teachers that don't do anything and just ignore the child and their bad behaviour. And worst of all, once the teacher's tiredness gets the better of her and you can't reach all your deadlines; you will always find the quickest short cut and take it. You look past the child and keep doing your job for the other 43/44 that aren't causing havoc in your class because of their ADHD   |
| 34. | Teacher 1 | The other little boy who hurt is right arm and the parents just tried to get him to work with his left arm, without taking into consideration what it means for the brain to just change channels like this. He too was sent to grade 2.  |
| 35. | Teacher 3 | To add to that, we can't accommodate for the ways that you psychologists suggest that we support the learner with ADHD. All the reports we receive state that "the child struggles to concentrate and pay attention for long periods of time....give him more time during exams". Not only do we not understand what exactly must we do to support the child in the actual classroom but also that this recommendation is contradictory – because how does it help is the child has a low concentration and you give him more time that he must sit still and stare into space. That isn't a recommendation, it doesn't help us and it doesn't help the child, especially in exam situations. You people must start coming up with something else as a recommendation because the things you anyway recommend, we can't apply in our classes.   |
| 37. | Teacher 1 | I honestly wouldn't know, because the function of this team keeps changing and because we meet at different times, we don't always speak with one voice. And it just changes really often; I don't know what my role is on this team of people.   |

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| 38.  | Teacher 2 | <p>I think we kind of give each other support as to what we can do to respond to the challenges that the children give us. We speak about what has worked in the past and what people think we should try, but the paperwork is abit of a drag and we don't really have time to meet consistently, so our ability to support is also limited.</p> <p>Oh yes, we discuss how we can support the children who have been suspended because they were naughty and how we must make sure they catch up on the work they missed. But I think that's about it, I can't think of any other ways we actually support them.</p>   |
| 44.  | Teacher 2 | <p>I have requested support for a child who couldn't read or write in my grade 4 class. The LSE now helps him, but he is still here and his gap is too big for me or the LSE to properly help him.</p>  |
| 48.  | Teacher 2 | <p>Ma'am I think you're right, our challenges start here. Our children don't understand the work they are being given because of underlying challenges they are experiencing. They keep getting pushed through, and they continue to struggle with understanding the work. This struggle builds up into frustration and together with their challenges, it shows up in our classes and schools as the crazy behaviour they have each and every day.</p>   |
| 49.  | Teacher 1 | <p>The other problem with trying to remediate this problem as you state, is the lack of research around it. The department would do itself a favour if it could research when these behavioural problems that result from all sorts of barriers came about?</p> <p>In my opinion it started when we were no longer allowed to reprimand children. I think that is what we must look at!</p>   |
| 55.  | Teacher 2 | <p>Not at all ma'am. I have only been teaching for a few years and I haven't been on this SBST thing for a long time, but I do know we have never (in my time) referred a child for intervention for behavioural challenges, let alone ADHD challenges. All we do is punish them by suspending or recommending expulsion for them.</p>  |
| 58.  | Teacher 1 | <p>If we want to better the child at Bosmont Primary, we need to better our parents. We need to find out what these parents are experiencing at home, do they know how to assist their children, and can they read? Because many parents openly say "Ma'am, their homework is beyond what I can do". And in that case, maybe we should look at aftercare services or bring in parent interventions.</p>   |
| 59.  | Teacher 2 | <p>The problem comes in where some parents are illiterate and they themselves are struggling...unfortunately getting to know them and understanding what they need isn't always possible with the time we have but it is important.</p>   |
| 93.  | Teacher 4 | <p>They are disrupting the class and teaching because they don't even understand what is going on, and if these children were in a vocational school...then they could actually learn something because let's face it, they are not going to get a meaningful matric. Rather they are just going to be passed along, every time they have failed enough times per phase and end up being in matric by 22 (years) and still have the potential to dismally fail matric and leave the school system not having learned anything they can use later in their lives. These children cannot even read and write. So it's a very big concern.</p>   |
| 107. | Teacher 4 | <p>It is extremely difficult. I don't even know how to support these children and their challenging behaviour. So what we would do is sometimes to ask the LSE guy to take them out of the class and let them write tests and assessments in smaller groups, with the potential of reducing the distractions they are exposed to and the interruptions they cause themselves. But in a class where I am teaching, it is too difficult and what ends up happening is that I just apply the necessary discipline steps to minimize their behaviour and make my teaching environment more conducive to learning. I even kick them out of my class, make them sit outside the door, just so that I can carry out teaching the ones that want to be taught and they can still listen from the outside if they really want to.</p> <p>What is very unfortunate is that because of the very little support I can gave the child, and my shouting and punishing, the child continues doing whatever it is got them in 'trouble' in the first place...which isn't fair because that child cannot help themselves. And I think that is the biggest thing with ADHD that it doesn't matter how many times I can shout and punish, that</p> |



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|      |           | child is going to do it again because they can't help themselves. And I know that medication isn't always the way to go, especially because of its side effects, in the situations that we are in with 40/50 children in a class...I honestly can't support one child with ADHD and ignore the rest. So if they <b>were on medication, it might calm the situation a bit better</b> . As much as what I would like to support these children and not advocate for the use of medication, my hands are chopped off at the moment and I can't see another way. |
| 108. | Teacher 5 | The other thing is while we wait for the district, what I think <b>we can do is keep asking and empowering our parents with information regarding</b> their children's challenges. Because the more empowered and informed they are, the better able they will be able to help their children.   |

### The environmental conditions that influence the educator ability to provide adequate support for learners with ADHD

| Segment | Speaker   | Content   |
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| 11.     | Teacher 2 | I know some learners who have been on medication, where I have fortunately seen a difference once the child goes on medication but there are obviously side effects to this. But because the medication is up to the parents, they manage that process. But irrespective of whether the child is on medication or not, it is very hard to teach a child with ADD, <b>especially in this context. A context that is supposed to be mainstream but we have lots of children with barriers and these barriers affect the entire class – because your attention is focused on that learner and this extended focus takes away from teaching and explaining to the other learners.</b>   |
| 19.     | Teacher 2 | It creates a nightmare situation. A situation where you don't want to go back there and teach, <b>because in our big classes of 45/50</b> , one child with ADD causes havoc to the entire class. They are loud, disruptive, and inattentive, easily get into fights with other children and just consume all of my energy.  |
| 21.     | Teacher 3 | Adhd makes it very difficult to teach. The boy children are very aggressive and agitated with each other, which could be because of the <b>limited physical space</b> they have among each other, but they fight a lot. They interrupt me when I talk, which makes me mad because this is very rude behaviour and it would never had been accepted in my day. They walk around without my permission, which is another thing I don't understand about this unruly generation, why do they not ask? These children just do as they please and its because they don't get hidings at school anymore.  |
| 24.     | Teacher 2 | I think they are as with any learner with a barrier, <b>they need to be put into a context where they are able to grow their skills and their strengths</b> , and mainstream is not the context for that.   |
| 25.     | Teacher 1 | I agree with you Ma'am. These children show this unruly and uncontrollable behaviour in our classes because they are not in the right space. These children can have high IQ's but <b>because they are not in a stimulating environment, they don't get stimulating work to do. The lack of stimulation leads to them getting bored and then after that they begin to cause havoc</b> in my class because they are bored and not properly stimulated. So what happens is that I get annoyed with him and <b>punish him because not only am I not trained to stimulate that child</b> but also because I have a big class that I need to focus on as well. On top of that, I don't have the <b>resources to help that child</b> even if I wanted to. What that means is that we are not clued up, not resourceful and no one teaching <b>more than 45 children at</b> a time will have time to pay attention to one or two children with ADHD. |
| 26.     | Teacher 3 | What ma'am just mentioned is very important, because how we respond to these children and what the internationals that we compete with, don't have the same contexts. <b>1:15 is not the same as 1:45/50.</b>   |
| 30.     | Teacher 2 | Well its <b>difficult because I don't really know what to do.</b> I try give them some more <b>attention</b> , because that is really all that I feel capable of doing because, like ma'am said – <b>we are not trained to respond to their needs</b> the way they should be responded to. On top of that, <b>we</b>  |

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|     |           | <p>don't have the resources and even though we are qualified teachers, we are not all trained in remedial. The second challenge that I face that makes it difficult for me to support these children in my classroom is giving the children activities that are suited to their abilities and what they actually need from the classroom. But even if I knew how to do this, we don't have the support in terms of fully assessing them and having a plan for them after this assessment. What ends up happening is that these children are stuck in the system and it takes lots of evidence and counselling and paperwork to actually get them into a place that is suited for what they need.</p>   |
| 31. | Teacher 3 | <p>I think the amount of paper work that is involved with supporting these learners the way we should be, stands in way. This paperwork scares teachers and means that I turn a blind eye, keep punishing and keep shouting even though I know that that child needs something else. And by doing all that paperwork to get support, it is like punishment...so I don't blame teachers that don't do anything and just ignore the child and their bad behaviour. And worst of all, once the teacher's tiredness gets the better of her and you can't reach all your deadlines; you will always find the quickest short cut and take it. You look past the child and keep doing your job for the other 43/44 that aren't causing havoc in your class because of their ADHD</p>  |
| 32. | Teacher 2 | <p>Look I think there are incidents and cases that are positive, where learners have been identified as really struggling with barriers that are outside of the teachers control and as a result, they get assessed by the district psychologists and get placed in the right school. But there are a lot of cases where the paperwork has been done, lost or just ignored. So this thing of turning a blind eye, doesn't happen at school level only...even in the districts and the ISS units, they turn a blind eye and don't take it seriously.</p>  |
| 35. | Teacher 3 | <p>To add to that, we can't accommodate for the ways that you psychologists suggest that we support the learner with ADHD. All the reports we receive state that "the child struggles to concentrate and pay attention for long periods of time....give him more time during exams". Not only do we not understand what exactly must we do to support the child in the actual classroom but also that this recommendation is contradictory – because how does it help is the child has a low concentration and you give him more time that he must sit still and stare into space. Also, who must supervise this extra time? That isn't a recommendation, it doesn't help us and it doesn't help the child, especially in exam situations. You people must start coming up with something else as a recommendation because the things you anyway recommend, we can't apply in our classes.</p> |
| 38. | Teacher 2 | <p>I think we kind of give each other support as to what we can do to respond to the challenges that the children give us. We speak about what has worked in the past and what people think we should try, but the paperwork is abit of a drag and we don't really have time to meet consistently, so our ability to support is also limited. Oh yes, we discuss how we can support the children who have been suspended because they were naughty and how we must make sure they catch up on the work they missed. But I think that's about it, I can't think of any other ways we actually support them.</p>   |
| 43. | Teacher 1 | <p>The child of mine who couldn't write after hurting his arm and the one who was in an accident, and like I told you, they were both moved to grade 2. All that paperwork for nothing. And mind you, these children were brought to my attention and the districts attention in the first week of the second term last year, and the district is 'still coming to assist us', while they have promoted the children to a new grade. They are 'still coming'.</p>  |
| 45. | Teacher 3 | <p>I also helped the English HOD complete it for a child in her class who couldn't read. But it was a waste because no one even came to come assess the child and we just had to go on.</p> <p>There is no point in filling those forms out because after age 12 (the ages that I work with), there is literally nothing that can be done for that learner anymore. The problem is too big and set in stone. Early identification is important. This is things that all of us know but many of us remain useless because we can't do anything to actually help the child. We have to</p>   |

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|     |           | wait for answers from up there at the district offices; we need to create our own resources out of nothing. What this shows us is that the teachers actually have a grip of what is going on but the processes to get help for the child are not in place, so no one sees it through   |
| 54. | Teacher 1 | Never before...I mean, they can't even help a child who was in a car accident and had water retention...how will they help a child who is acting out because of ADHD? This education department and all its forms don't care about that!   |
| 56. | Teacher 3 | I wouldn't waste my time with those forms, they don't go anywhere anyway.  |
| 58  | Teacher 1 | <p>You are probably aware of the educational triangle. The teacher, parent and child. Parents need to be called to a meeting and they need to be told exactly what we would like, what our current realities are and together we discuss what has happened to move us away from our desired to our current situation.</p> <p>Yes also it is the economic situation in our country. The norm no longer two parents in the house, now it's mostly one. The mother has to go out and work and by the time she gets home, the day is over and all she can do is make supper and put her child to bed. So there is not much interaction and conversation between mother and child. Mother is tired! That's is one of the problems, the situations in some of these families. Oh yes, then we come to the gogo's! The gogo that has to take control of her grandchildren. Money becomes a problem, because she needs to pay r800 for transport; granny has to feed the children, when granny should actually be sitting, reading and knitting her old age away. I had a situation where one of my learner's mothers was on drugs; granny had to take care of the children. These parents or gogo's don't know how to cope, we need to get assistance for those parents.</p> <p>If we want to better the child at Bosmont Primary, we need to better our parents. We need to find out what these parents are experiencing at home, do they know how to assist their children, and can they read? Because many parents openly say "Ma'am, their homework is beyond what I can do". And in that case, maybe we should look at aftercare services or bring in parent interventions.</p> <p>I really think that is the route to go...call the parent in, call the teacher in and then lastly, call the child in. by doing this you reach the stage where you are speaking the same language and you can actually help the child...because now we do and can do nothing!</p> |
| 59. | Teacher 2 | Yes, I think parental involvement is the only thing that I have actually seen making a slight difference in helping children with barriers to learning. If we are on the same page with the parent, the parent understands what you are talking about and they too want to help their children. The problem comes in where some parents are illiterate and they themselves are struggling...unfortunately getting to know them and understanding what they need isn't always possible with the time we have but it is important.   |
| 62. | Teacher 1 | Another thing is that our system is really not designed to educate the child. These children are fed too much information, at an abnormal pace and as a result the teacher also speeds through the work. We don't focus on what the child actually needs; we focus on what I need to hand into my HOD. I don't focus on the actual support the child needs; nope...I do what I need to do! It is hectic...it's just too hectic! And I don't even know if we can do anything anymore, it's just too hectic!   |
| 63. | Teacher 3 | <p>I would like to mention one last thing, I don't know what to do to help children and to help the situation we are in at the moment because there are SO many changes. These changes make me feel like that 'threw out the child with the bath water'. I cannot keep up and I don't even know what they want from us.</p> <p>These people keep bringing in imported systems, systems that do not work in our space because of things like...the cultural bias, socio-economic factors, assessments that consume teaching time, not all our children go to grade r and the class ratios.</p>  |
| 76. | Teacher 5 | I think it is very similar to what she has said; the child doesn't really concentrate on one thing. The child is unable to concentrate and they are constantly distracted. But I think with us, we really have to take a lot into consideration before we actually acknowledge the lack of   |

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|     |           | concentration as a problem – we need to factor in whether or not the child ate at break, did they eat sweets, and did they have porridge with lots of sugar in the morning? We also need to remember that the concentration span of a child is the same as their age, what that means is if he is 7 years old, he can only concentrate for 7 minutes at a go. This concentration span reality is often overlooked by both parents and teachers.   |
| 87. | Teacher 4 | I have to be honest, it is extremely difficult and I think the big thing is in the classes we have, were we have 45/50 learners per class it is very difficult to make the time to support and give special attention to one child. And also remember in a class with 45, means there is a likelihood of more than one of them and just the fact that there is so many children in a class feels like all the kids have ADHD. So I think it really is very difficult to support these children because one we are not qualified to do the support they need, we are not psychologists, and all I am is a teacher. So as the teacher my support starts and ends at me constantly shouting their name out, so they can regain their concentration and focus on me.  |
| 88. | Teacher 5 | So I think in the foundation phase, if the child is actually diagnosed with ADHD (which in this setting is highly unlikely) you could start off by allowing the child to sit alone at a table (because in their grade 1 phase, they often times sit two at a table, but if he is easily distracted, this seating placement will be problematic). I also agree with Ma'am who says that this is not our job; it is the job of the psychologist. And the parents need to act on it, we can't. But they can't take it to the general practitioner, because this practitioner is not qualified either and they base it only on what they have heard about the child's behaviour. This therefore means that the children have to be taken to the psychologists, who will assess and evaluate if the child indeed has ADHD  |
| 90. | Teacher 4 | Our role is definitely to identify. We have to say that 'these are the children that we suspect to have ADHD and other barriers', to contact the parents thereafter, try explain to them exactly what the situation is. Because like I said in one of the previous questions, in the schools that we are at; where the parents don't necessarily have a lot of money and might not know a lot about barriers to learning, your recommendation for the child to get tested by psychologists suggests to them that you think their child is crazy. And to try explain to them that, 'no, I am not saying that your child is crazy – what I am saying is your child has a learning barrier. So if we can fix this, your child can do better at school by drinking the medication or whatever the case may be'.   |
| 93. | Teacher 4 | What we also do sometimes is when we have parents that can't necessarily afford to get assistance for their children, we then refer them to the district, who should place them in remedial schools. But that has its own problems. Our districts are overworked, which means that a lot of times nothing happens for the children we identify as experiencing ADHD as a barrier to their learning or any other barrier to learning in actual fact, nothing ever happens. The problem is that at the end of the day, the child is the one that suffers. I am speaking from experience because like a while back, I had this child in our school, who literally could not write. By the time she came to our school she was already in grade 7, as she came from another school. This poor little child could not write. I do not know how this girl got so far and got to grade 7 with her writing skills, it actually looked like she was writing another language and it doesn't even seem like the language actually exists...it's more like her own language. What this means is that she was completely illiterate and we referred her to the district, because that is the new system now...if you want to get children into LSEN schools, you have to go through the district. They have to test them and decide on the placement. We did all of that for this little girl I'm telling you about and nothing has happened. She is still in our school; she is failing every single subject because she can't read or write at all and it is just too far gone for the teachers to singlehandedly help her. What is worse is that we can't go to a LSEN school in our district and apply for the child there with their parent...not any more. The system used to be like that before, but now with all the system changes, our children are stuck here and don't get helped. And because the district has taken over that system, too many of our children don't get assisted. What I also want to tell you, well I'm not 100% sure about this, but I have heard that per district, there is only 1 educational psychologist serving all the schools in the district. So now |



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|      |           | the challenge becomes that one psychologist has however many schools in her district, everyone in these schools is applying to take children to other schools and even if that one psychologist is doing an excellent job, there is no way that they can get to all the children.                         |
| 98.  | Teacher 5 | I have actually applied for what I suspected was ADHD and for a child who had distinct hearing problems. In both of the cases was it significantly difficult to teach them because they both required a lot of individual attention that I could not afford them due to the size of our classrooms.       |
| 102. | Teacher 4 | Well in terms of filling in the SNA forms and the district intervention...absolutely nothing. No support. So I just don't do it.  |
| 105. | Teacher 5 | So far because we don't have any support measures we can apply as a school, we rely on the parents for their inputs and support. Because the reality is that the support we expect from the district is seldom fulfilled as we are still waiting now and nothing is being done to help the poor children. |

### The emotional strain experienced by educators when teaching and supporting learners with ADHD

| Segment | Speaker   | Content  |
|---------|-----------|--|
| 21.     | Teacher 1 | ADHD makes it very difficult to teach. The boy children are very aggressive and agitated with each other, which could be because of the limited physical space they have among each other, but they fight a lot. They interrupt me when I talk, which makes me mad because this is very rude behaviour and it would never had been accepted in my day. They walk around without my permission, which is another thing I don't understand about this unruly generation, why do they not ask? These children just do as they please  |
| 23.     | Teacher 1 | They also disturb other children around them. They make it impossible to do group teaching, as the group with the child with adhd, will take the longest to complete the task. The child distracts the other children. What I have also seen in these groups is that the ADHD child is not always the child that is a struggler. The child with ADHD can be brilliant in certain aspects of their life – that is why I don't believe in Ritalin  |
| 25.     | Teacher 1 | So what happens is that I get annoyed with him and punish him because not only am I not trained to stimulate that child but also because I have a big class that I need to focus on as well. On top of that, I don't have the resources to help that child even if I wanted to. What that means is that we are not clued up, not resourceful and no one teaching more than 45 children at a time will have time to pay attention to one or two children with ADHD.   |
| 30.     | Teacher 2 | Well its difficult because I don't really know what to do. I try give them some more attention, because that is really all that I feel capable of doing because, like ma'am said – we are not trained to respond to their needs the way they should be responded to. On top of that, we don't have the resources and even though we are qualified teachers, we are not all trained in remedial.  |
| 31.     | Teacher 3 | This paper work scares teachers and means that I turn a blind eye, keep punishing and keep shouting even though I know that that child needs something else. And by doing all that paperwork to get support, it is like punishment...so I don't blame teachers that don't do anything and just ignore the child and their bad behaviour.   |
| 34.     | Teacher 1 | Causing problems for the next year he is going to, because he doesn't know the content well enough because his previous year teacher just ignored him.   |
| 43.     | Teacher 2 | The child of mine who couldn't write after hurting his arm and the one who was in an accident, and like I told you, they were both moved to grade 2. All that paperwork for nothing. And mind you, these children were brought to my attention and the districts attention in the first week of the second term last year, and the district is 'still coming to assist us', while they have promoted the children to a new grade. They are 'still coming'.<br><br>These people keep telling us they come to assess children in the intermediate phase, which doesn't even make sense because if the problem already obvious in the foundation phase. |

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|     |           | why are they not sorting it out...instead of waiting for it to become bigger than what it should be?  |
| 44. | Teacher 2 | I have requested support for a child who couldn't read or write in my grade 4 class. The LSE now helps him, but he is still here and his gap is too big for me or the LSE to properly help him.<br><br>But I won't lie, I try my hardest to avoid anything that has to do with additional paperwork...I have enough marking as is.  |
| 45. | Teacher 3 | I also helped the English HOD complete it for a child in her class who couldn't read. But it was a waste because no one even came to come assess the child and we just had to go on.<br><br>There is no point in filling those forms out because after age 12 (the ages that I work with), there is literally nothing that can be done for that learner anymore.  |
| 48. | Teacher 2 | Ma'am I think you're right, our challenges start here. Our children don't understand the work they are being given because of underlying challenges they are experiencing. They keep getting pushed through, and they continue to struggle with understanding the work.   |
| 51. | Teacher 1 | Because of that the children now think that they have rights that are supreme and they are also protected by these fancy terms we use... 'barriers to learning'. Them and their parents know their rights and don't even know their responsibilities, they know how to cheat the system but the system has no way to respond to their needs, because they overwhelm us. The children feel that we must teach them, irrespective of whatever they do, they can abuse us and we must still teach and 'support'. Children and their parents think they have a hold on us. Why is it in my day, bad behaviour was exactly that...bad behaviour and a child would get a hiding for it. In today's day and age, it is a barrier to learning. You can't reprimand it but you have to support it. |
| 59. | Teacher 2 | As a new teacher and a young teacher coming in at a different time...I am quite demotivated in this career, because I honestly don't know what I can do to help children and make the change that is needed. So all I actually do now is come in, teach, do my job and leave. So I kind of just ignore all the other factors, the socio-economic factors, the children's struggles, their barriers...all the things I can't change - I ignore and go home. So to answer your question, I don't know what can be done with what we have because I am currently doing nothing with what I have.   |
| 60. | Teacher 3 | Before I thought we as teachers we lone rangers in education.   |
| 61. | Teacher 1 | Our parents are absent, illiterate or abusive. So there is no winning!  |
| 62. | Teacher 1 | We don't focus on what the child actually needs; we focus on what I need to hand into my HOD. I don't focus on the actual support the child needs; nope...I do what I need to do! It is hectic...it's just too hectic! And I don't even know if we can do anything anymore, it's just too hectic.   |
| 63. | Teacher 3 | I would like to mention one last thing, I don't know what to do to help children and to help the situation we are in at the moment because there are SO many changes. These changes make me feel like that 'threw out the child with the bath water'. I cannot keep up and I don't even know what they want from us.  |
| 80. | Teacher 5 | Yes, I think it is a learning barrier. But I also think ADHD can't always be used as an excuse for a child who isn't academically inclined.   |
| 85. | Teacher 4 | I definitely think that it is that the child never finishes anything. So it takes a lot of effort on your side as the teacher to get them to finish their work, which also means that you are getting into fights with them on the regular. They are often staring out the window, asking very weird and inappropriate questions (all of which irritate you as the teacher because it really distracts the entire class).   |
| 93. | Teacher 4 | What we also do sometimes is when we have parents that can't necessarily afford to get assistance for their children, we then refer them to the district. But that has its own problems. Our districts are overworked, which means that a lot of times nothing happens for the children we identify as experiencing ADHD as a barrier to their learning or any other barrier.   |

|      |           |  |
|------|-----------|--|
|      |           | to learning in actual fact, <b>nothing ever happens.</b>   |
| 102. | Teacher 4 | Well in terms of the forms and the district <b>intervention...absolutely nothing. No support</b>   |
| 107. | Teacher 4 | So if they were on medication, it might calm the situation a bit better. As much as what I would like to support these children and not advocate for the use of medication, <b>my hands are chopped off at the moment and I can't see another way.</b> |



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This serves to confirm that I, Buhle Tshabalala, (ID Number: 93102400184089, Student number: 215029600) enrolled for the Qualification M.Ed Educational Psychology in the Faculty of Education.

Herewith declare that my academic work is in line with the Plagiarism Policy of the University of Johannesburg, which I am familiar with.

I further declare that the work presented in the (minor dissertation/dissertation/thesis) with the title;

**UNDERSTANDING SCHOOL-BASED PROCESSES FOR LEARNERS EXPERIENCING ADHD AS A BARRIER TO LEARNING**

is authentic and original, unless clearly indicated otherwise and, in such instances, full reference to the source is acknowledged and I do not pretend to receive any credit for such acknowledged quotations, and that there is no copyright infringement in my work. I declare that no unethical research practices were used or material gained through dishonesty. I understand that plagiarism is a serious offence and that should I contravene the Plagiarism Policy notwithstanding signing this affidavit, I may be found guilty of a serious criminal offence (perjury) that would, among other consequences, compel the UJ to inform all other tertiary institutions of the offence and to issue a corresponding certificate of reprehensible academic conduct to whomever requests such a certificate from the institution.

Signed at Pretoria on this 28 day of October 2019.

Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Print name: Buhle Tshabalala

#### STAMP COMMISSIONER OF OATHS

##### Affidavit certified by a Commissioner of Oaths

This affidavit conforms to the requirements of the JUSTICES OF THE PEACE AND COMMISSIONERS OF OATHS ACT 16 OF 1963 and the applicable Regulations published in the GG GNR 1258 of 21 July 1972; GN 903 of 10 July 1998; GN 109 of 2 February 2001 as amended.

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## APPENDIX 11: DECLARATION BY LANGUAGE EDITOR

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Writer and editor

BA Hons (Publishing Studies) Wits

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24 October 2019

Dear Dr Sethare-Kajee

**Declaration of work completed**

**Buhle Tshabalala: Understanding school-based support processes for learners experiencing ADHD as a barrier to learning**

This is to confirm that I completed a language edit of the above-mentioned minor master's dissertation in October 2019. I have checked for consistency and readability without substantially altering the work done by the candidate. I have checked the list of references and have pointed out where there were missing or incorrect references.

I have not seen the final version of this dissertation but the candidate did show me that she has implemented the changes I recommended. I cannot be held accountable for any alterations made after this declaration, nor for any suggested changes not being implemented.

I am a member of the Professional Editors' Guild and abide by its Code of Conduct.

Regards



Kathryn Gibbs

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