

**THE EFFECTIVE ESTABLISHMENT AND FUNCTIONING OF THE
INSTITUTIONAL LEVEL SUPPORT TEAM AT PRIMARY SCHOOLS
IN THE UITENHAGE DISTRICT.**

By

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Submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of

MAGISTER EDUCATIONIS

In the Faculty of Education

At the Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University

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December 2013.

DEPARTMENT OF ACADEMIC ADMINISTRATION
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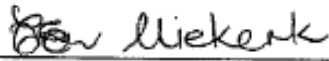
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TITLE OF PROJECT: The effective establishment
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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Reflecting on the road travelled whilst writing this dissertation, I am reminded of the efforts, inputs, assistance, guidance and support to which I have been indebted in the writing of this dissertation. I would therefore like to express my sincere appreciation to:

- My Creator, Lord Jesus Christ, for giving me the strength, ability, skills and knowledge to write this dissertation and through whose guidance I am able to pursue my educational dreams and aspirations.
- My supervisor, Dr.C.F.Pienaar. Dr.Pienaar, words would never be enough to express my gratitude for your significant contribution in writing this dissertation. Your patience and kindness, as well as your academic experience, have been invaluable to me. Thank you to Mrs.Pienaar for allowing me to intrude and use family time.
- To all the educators who have taught me from Pre-School to High School a very big thank you. Without you teaching me basic reading and writing skills, I would not have been able to come thus far. Some of you are still part of my life and therefore I need to acknowledge the following schools and educators.
 - ✚ St.Christopher’s Nursery Crèche – Mrs L.Goliath and Father B.O.Botha
 - ✚ De Vos Malan Primary School – Mrs. N.Du Preez.
 - ✚ Alpha Primary School and Fontein Primary School – Mr.E.L.A. Williams
 - ✚ Gelvendale High School – Mr. S Hermanus.
- To all my colleagues at the Uitenhage District Office, with specific reference to ESSS (Education Social Support Services), thank you very much for your support over the past four years. Mrs.Bashman and Mr.Spies thank you for allowing me to conduct research in the District. Mr.Grundling thank you for being my co-researcher and Mrs.M.Shaw thank you for being my reader. Thank you to Dr.L.Oosthuizen, Ms.S.Magxwalisa, Mr.P.Bulo Mr.E.Loggenberg, for your continuous support and guidance during my study period.

- To all participants, including schools, educators, district staff and other professionals, thank you for your assistance in completing questionnaires, going through interviews and allowing observations.
- To all my friends, Mr & Mrs.D.Brown, Mr & Mrs.E van Heerden and Mr.& Mrs N.Boswell thank you for your continuous support and encouragement.
- To my entire family, thank you for your enduring support, encouragement and motivation throughout my life. I would like to make an exception of the following aunts who have always been a pillar of strength in all circumstances, Mrs.M Damons, Mrs.R.Farao and the late Ms.E.M.Settler.
- My parents, Nellis and Sylvia Frans, and brother, Michael, who have been a constant source of emotional and moral support. You have stood at my side through many trials in my life. It is because of my mother who instilled in me the passion and love for education, that I became interested in education. My Dad, who has inspired me to strive and achieve to the best of my ability. He has always set high standards for us as his children, and Michael can testify to that. To Michael, Jessica and Tiffany thank you for your enduring love and support in all endeavours.
- Finally to my husband Dalton (Paps), you are my pillar, my joy and my guiding light, throughout tertiary education and our time together. Your love and constant support is highly appreciated. To my two sons, Aaron and Stanton, thank you for creating the space and time, allowing me to dedicate myself to my work.

ABSTRACT

Policy documents derived from the South African Constitution and the South African Schools Act clearly state that all learners are entitled to support, thus enabling them to reach their full potential. Support should be rendered effectively at school level within a well-established and functioning Institutional Level Support Teams (ILST). Institutional Level Support Teams (ILSTs) at primary schools within the Uitenhage District seem to be problematic, since parents, the school and the community do not realise that they should work interrelated with each other to enhance the effective establishment and functioning of the ILST

The main aim of this study is, therefore, to formulate guiding principles for the effective establishment and functioning of Institutional Level Support Teams. A qualitative research design using a phenomenological strategy was deemed appropriate for this study, as the researcher wants to gain a deeper understanding of the phenomenon under study.

The researcher used a combination of convenience sampling, as well as purposive and judgement sampling. The sample group included educators, members of the Institutional Level Support Teams, Institutional Level Support Team co-ordinators, School Principals, community members and members of the District Based Support Team (DBST).

Data were collected by means of semi-structured interviews, participant observations and questionnaires. Tesch's eight step data analysis process was employed to identify possible common themes.

The findings indicated that the stakeholder component of the social system representing learners, parents, schools and the community, do not provide sufficient support to learners experiencing learning challenges and therefore ILSTs are not functioning optimally presently.. Therefore the researcher provided supportive guiding principles to parents, the school and the community, for the effective establishment and functioning of the ILST, based on Bronfenbrenner's eco-systemic theory, which is the theoretical framework of this study.

Key words:

Barriers to learning

District Based Support Team

Eco-systemic theory

Guiding principles

Inclusive Education

Institutional Level Support Team

Learner support

Schools

Support provisioning

Systems theory

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

CAPS:	Curriculum Assessment Policy Statements
CES:	Chief Education Specialist
COLT:	Culture of Teaching and Learning
CSIE:	Centre for Studies on Inclusive Education
DAT:	Didactical Aids Team
DBST:	District Based Support Team
DCES:	Deputy Chief Education Specialist
DOE:	Department of Education
ESSS:	Education Social Support Services
FAS:	Foetal Alcohol Syndrome
FBA:	Functional Behaviour Assessment
GILP:	Guidelines for Inclusive Learning Programmes.
ILST:	Institutional Level Support Team
INDS:	Integrated National Disability Strategy
ISP:	Individual Support Plan
LSE:	Learner Support Educator
LSEN:	Learners with Special Educational Needs
NCS:	National Curriculum Statements
NCESS:	National Committee for Education Support Services
NCSNET:	National Commission on Special Needs in Education and Training
NGO:	Non-Governmental Organization
NMMU:	Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University

NQF:	National Qualifications Framework
OBE:	Outcomes Based Education
PAL:	Pensioners Assisting Learners
REC-H:	Research Ethics Committee (Human)
SASA:	South African Schools Act
SES:	Senior Education Specialist
SGB:	School Governing Body
SIAS:	Screening, Identification, Assessment and Support
SMT:	School Management Team
SNA:	Special Needs Assessment.
SWPBS:	School-wide Positive Behaviour Support
UDL:	Universal Design for Learning.
UNESCO:	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization

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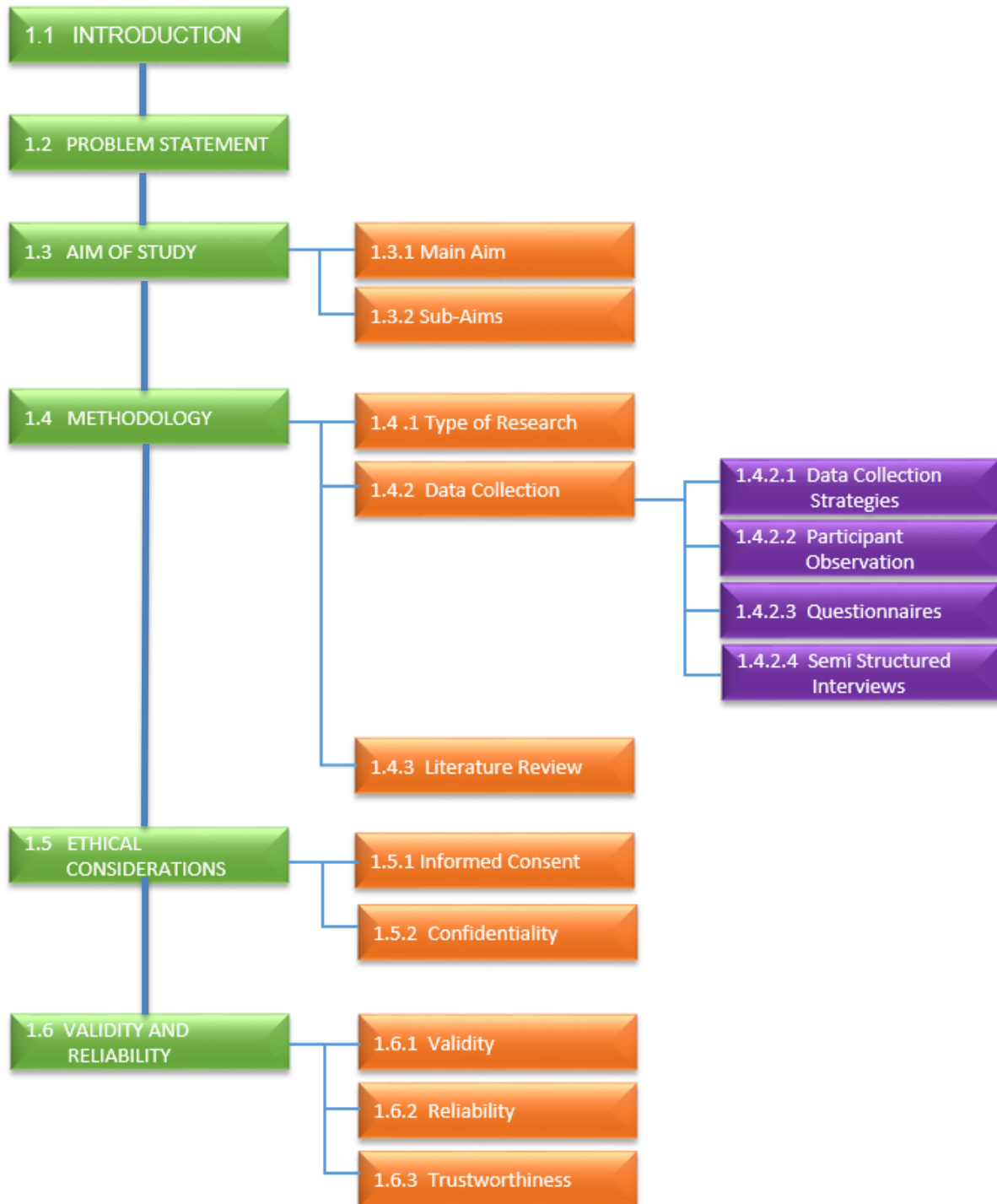
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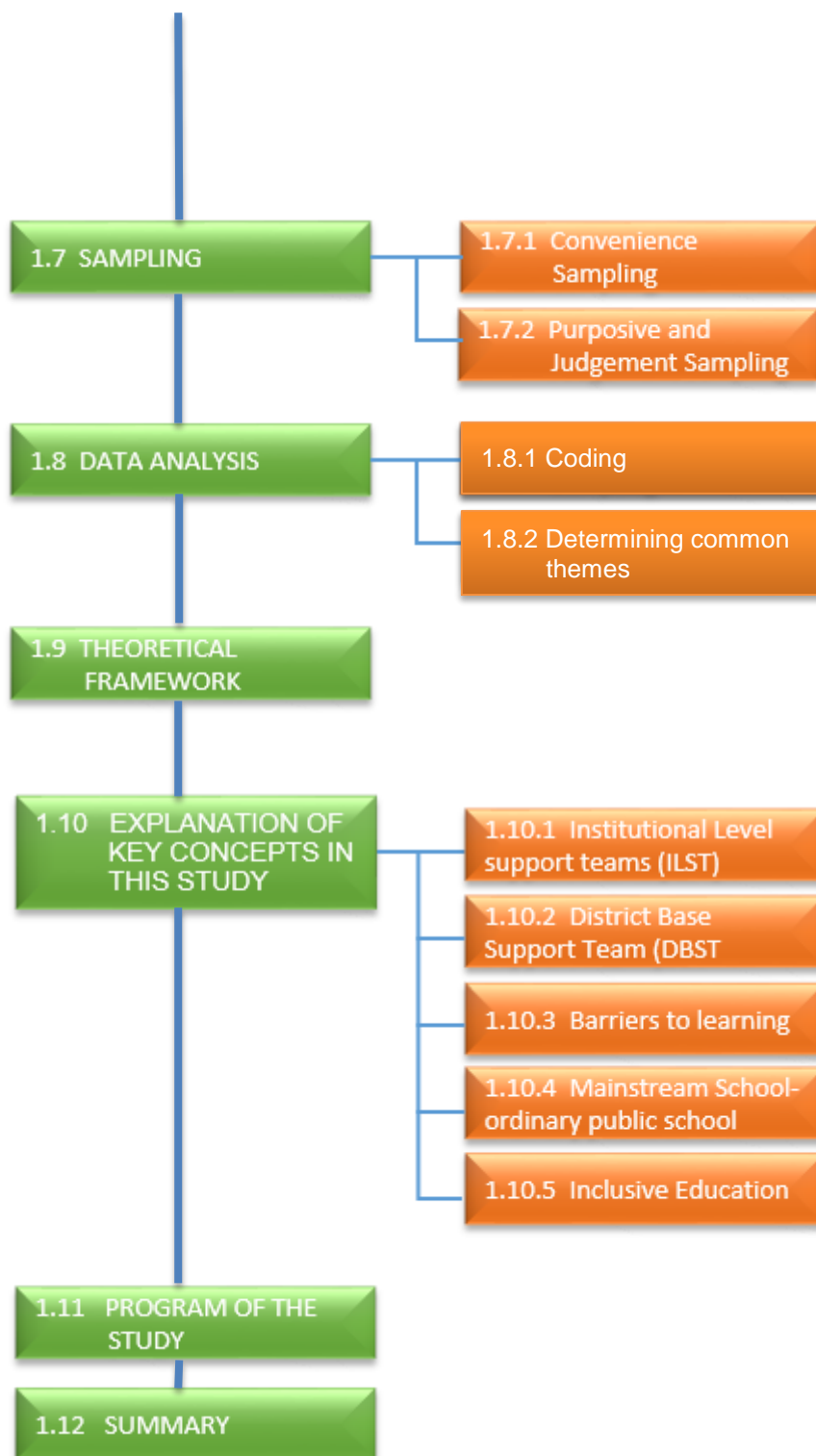
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CHAPTER 1 OUTLINE:

INTRODUCTION, PROBLEM STATEMENTS, AIM OF STUDY, METHODOLOGY AND PROGRAMME STUDY



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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION, PROBLEM STATEMENTS, AIM OF STUDY, METHODOLOGY AND PROGRAMME OF STUDY

1.1 INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

The effective establishment and functioning of Institutional Level Support Teams (ILSTs) is the cornerstone for the development of an Inclusive Education system at school level. The *Education White Paper 6: Special Needs Education, Building an Inclusive Education and Training System* states that Institutional Level Support Teams (ILSTs) must be established at all schools (Department of Education, 2001:48). The core function of an ILST will be to support learners in need of additional support within an Inclusive Education setting.

The Institutional Level Support Team (ILST) should be a multi-disciplinary support team, in which School Management Teams (SMT's) and educators play a pivotal role. The Institutional Level Support Team should identify barriers to learning within the school and ensure that all learners are granted the opportunity to access basic education (Department of Education, 2001:48). It is therefore apparent that the ILST, with the support of School Management Teams and educators, needs to address institutional, educator and learner needs that may prohibit learners from accessing and benefiting optimally from instruction (Department of Education, 2001:29).

The Constitution of South-Africa, Act 108 of 1996, (which will be discussed in Chapter 2, section 2.4.2), clearly states that everyone has the right to basic education. This basic right to education compels the state to provide equal and non-discriminative education, with particular reference to learners with special educational needs (South African Constitution). Prior to 1994, special needs and mainstream education was characterised by racial inequality and segregation. During 1994, a political change occurred in South Africa. This change, which is the achievement of democracy in South Africa, paved the way for a new and transformed National Education System within South Africa (UNESCO, 1994:14-20; Department of Education,2001).

The Bill of Rights pronounces the democratic values of human dignity and endorses that all learners have a right to basic education (Department of Education, 2003(a):G-2). An Inclusive Education and Training System flow naturally from our Constitution and Bill of Rights. Various white papers, legislation, and policies signal an unambiguous commitment to an inclusive system of education and training for instance, the *White Paper on an Integrated National Disability Strategy for South Africa; Education White Paper 6: Special Needs Education. Building an Inclusive Education and Training: and the National Strategy on Screening, Identification, Assessment and Support (SIAS)*. A detailed discussion regarding these policy documents will be provided in Chapter 2, section 2.4.

Inclusive Education promotes maximum participation of all learners in the culture and the curriculum of schools (Department of Education, 2001:16). Based on this fact it is evident that support structures within and beyond the classroom ought to be in place for Learners with Special Educational Needs (LSEN) (Thomas and Vaughan, 2004:32; Mitchell, 2008:28 and UNESCO, 1994:14-20). The Salamanca Statement, which will be discussed in chapter 2, section 2.2.1, highlights that schools should be able to address the needs of all learners. As mentioned before the ILST will play a vital role in supporting learners experiencing barriers to learning within an Inclusive Education system. To attain this, the ILST is compelled to collaborate with various stakeholders involved in learner support.

Collaboration within the Institutional Level Support Team (ILST), which will be discussed in Chapter 3 section 3.5 is of the utmost importance if the ILST aspires to address learner and educator needs effectively (Department of Education,2009:16). Collaboration enables stakeholders to establish relationships, plan together, and make joint decisions on learner support and intervention (Ainscow and Sandill, 2010:403). The development of collaborative relationships with other relevant stakeholders within the ILST, is imperative (Waghid and Engelbrecht, 2002:23; Swart and Pettipher, 2005(a):26). The ILST should collaborate with parents and experts from the local community, specialist staff representing the District Based Support Team (DBST), and other professionals (Department of Education, 2001:49, Boon and Spencer,2010:88).

Collaboration with relevant stakeholders to identify and address learner, educator and institutional needs, is important if schools strive for all learners to access education. If

the number of learners accessing education increases, the number of learners eligible for support will also increase. Consequently, the ILST should employ a variety of learner support strategies to optimise or increase learner attainment (Mortier, Hunt, Desimpel and Van Hove, 2009:337–338; Department of Education, Manual for School Management, O-9:645). Optimising learner support and learner attainment justifies the need for the effective establishment and functioning of support structures such as the ILST.

The ILST should work in close collaboration with the DBST, especially with Education Social Support Services (ESSS), with its sub-section on Inclusive Education. The core function of this sub-section is to support the ILST in its endeavours, supporting learners, educators and schools. At present this section within the Uitenhage District is experiencing its own challenges as it does not have enough staff to support ILSTs optimally. Currently this sub-section consists of five staff members, which includes 2 Deputy Chief Education Specialists (DCES's) and 3 Senior Education Specialists (SES's), including an Educational Psychologist, a Speech and Hearing Correctionist and a Remedial Therapist. Due to staff shortages, it is challenging for this sub-section to do justice to the number of learners in need of support at primary schools in the Uitenhage District (Personal communication, Deputy Chief Education Specialist – Education Social Support Services).

According to the Deputy Chief Education Specialist, one hundred and twenty eight ILSTs were established at schools in the Uitenhage District. Advocacy for the Institutional Level Support Team (ILST) is already completed at all Primary Schools in the District. The next is to determine the effective establishment and functioning of ILSTs at schools. What was discovered is that educators attended the advocacy and training workshops regarding the Institutional Level Support Team but they do not establish an effective team at school (Personal communication, Deputy Chief Education Specialist – Education Social Support Services).

The Uitenhage District consists of five municipal areas. For logistical reasons, six schools per municipal area will be utilized to gather data. The area spreads from the Langkloof to Coldstream, Tsisikamma, Humansdorp, Jeffreys Bay, Uitenhage, Addo, Paterson and Kirkwood (See sampling point 1.7).

1.2 PROBLEM STATEMENT

The Education White Paper 6 - Building an Inclusive Education and Training System Special Needs Education (2001) made it clear that learners with low and moderate support requirements should be accommodated within mainstream schools. An ILST, that will become the “internal” support team at school, should initiate a problem solving approach to the challenges faced by learners and in particular learners with low and moderate support needs (Department of Education, 2005 (b):34). The ILST should provide learners with a solid foundation for learning so that they can overcome their barriers to learning. It will be required from ILSTs to be effective, dedicated, persistent and committed to the task, as their effectiveness will determine the level of support they will be able to provide to learners (Landsberg, 2005:66).

Therefore, the **main research problem** of this study was formulated as follows:

How can guiding principles be established for the effective functioning of an Institutional Level Support Team, as part of an integrated support system in schools?

From this main research problem the following sub-problems were posed:

- Which guiding principles does the literature on Inclusive Education provide for the establishment of Institutional Level Support Teams in schools?
- What can be derived from a literature review on learner support?
- What problems do schools encounter in the establishment of their Institutional Level Support Teams?
- Why do schools experience problems in the establishment of Institutional Level Support Teams?
- What support systems need to be implemented at schools to accommodate learners with barriers to learning within an Inclusive Education system?
- How can schools enhance the practice of an effective Institutional Level Support Team?

1.3 AIM OF THE STUDY

The purpose of this study was to provide guiding principles to parents, schools and the community for the effective establishment and functioning of Institutional Level Support Teams at school level.

1.3.1 Main Aim

- To determine what guiding principles should be provided to parents, schools and the community for the effective establishment and functioning of Institutional Level Support Teams.

1.3.2 Sub-Aims

- To establish which guiding principles literature provides on Inclusive Education, for the effective establishment and functioning of Institutional Level Support Teams.
- To explore what guiding principles literature provides on learner support.
- To determine what problems schools encounter in the effective establishment and functioning of their Institutional Level Support Teams.
- To discover why schools experience problems in the effective establishment and functioning of Institutional Level Support Teams.
- To determine what support systems should be implemented to accommodate learners with barriers to learning within an Inclusive Education system.
- To enhance the practice of Institutional Level Support Teams at school level.

1.4 METHODOLOGY

1.4.1 Type of research

Research can be described as a systematic process or journey by which the researcher sets out to discover the truth, which is dynamic when studying people in their daily life, their work situations and their social setting (Lichtman, 2010:3-4). Qualitative research emphasises processes and meanings that is not measured in terms of quality or frequency but in terms of gaining a deeper understanding of lived experiences (Bogdan and Biklen, 2003:4; Denzin and Lincoln 1998:3; Mertens 2010:2

and Holliday,2002:24). Research is a means to know and understand a phenomenon. The qualitative researcher wants to understand, describe and sometimes explain the world “out there” (Mertens, 2010:2). For the purpose of this study, the researcher investigated the activities of the Institutional Level Support Team to gain a better understanding of this support structure.

Qualitative research was the preferred research approach for this study as it falls within the Social Sciences which align themselves with the characteristics of qualitative research. According to Holliday (2002:6), education forms part of the Social Sciences where people are studied through continuous dialogue with different social worlds. The social world of this study included parents, the school, learners, educators and the community.

The qualitative research approach was suitable for this specific study as this investigation was aimed at designing supportive guiding principles for the effective establishment and functioning of Institutional Level Support Teams (ILST) within an integrated support structure. This research approach does not have a distinct set of methods that are entirely its own. Various resources provide guidance and suggestions regarding the correct design to be used for a qualitative research design (Snape and Spencer, 2003:1, Fouché, 2005(a):267).

A research design uses a wide variety of strategies to acquire an in-depth understanding of the research problem. Research design, according to Mouton (2001:55), is the blueprint or plan on how we intend conducting research. This blueprint or plan does not follow a step-by-step approach, meaning all qualitative research is unique (Holliday, 2002:8).

Fouché (2005(a):268) identifies the following five strategies or methodologies that could be used in qualitative research:

- Ethnography.
- Phenomenology.
- Biography.
- Grounded Theory.
- Case Study.

Mertens (2010:230) added three more methodologies to those mentioned above, namely:

- Participatory research.
- Clinical research.
- Focus groups.

The researcher made use of the **phenomenology** strategy. Phenomenology aims to understand and interpret the meaning that the subjects give to their everyday life (Fouché, 2005(a):270; Springer, 2010,20). It emphasises the individual's experience, perceptions and meaning of a phenomenon (Mertens, 2010:235; Springer,2010:403).

The aim of this study was to gain a deeper understanding of educators' experience with the establishment and functioning of an effective Institutional Level Support Team (ILST) within an integrated support structure at school level. To gain a deeper understanding of the phenomenon required knowledge of the development and present status of Institutional Level Support Teams (ILSTs). The research participants were asked to share their feelings, views, beliefs, thoughts, attitudes and perceptions regarding the establishment of the ILST at their respective schools.

The researcher is interested in understanding the research phenomenon from the perspective of the research participant, therefore knowledge, meaning and understanding are created from the research participants' own perspectives (Struwig and Stead, 2001:16). Bogdan, et al., (2003:5) agree that meaning is the essential concern to the qualitative research approach. The researcher seeks to understand, describe and interpret an event or structure from the point of view of the participant (Mertens, 2010:235).The study of interpretive understanding is called **hermeneutics**, which is also applicable to this study.

Hermeneutics is described as the interpretive understanding or meaning of words (Mertens, 2010:16). Henning (2004:82) agrees and describes hermeneutics as a craft in interpreting texts. A hermeneutical research study aims to understand what meaning the research participants bring to the research (Mertens, 2010:225).The researcher applied hermeneutics during the interpretation of data in this study to gain a deeper

understanding of the transcribed interviews and field notes. Hermeneutics assisted the researcher to gain a holistic picture of the collected data.

The researcher needs to have a holistic picture of the phenomenon to gain meaning, knowledge and a deeper understanding regarding the phenomenon (Snape et al., 2003:3). Struwig et al., (2001:17), Kincheloe, (2003:190), Springer, (2010:20) and Bogdan et al.,(2003:4) agree that qualitative research is concerned with the organic wholeness of the research process as all aspects of the process are explored. It is therefore true that the qualitative researcher looks at the bigger picture and starts to search for an understanding of the whole (Snape et al., 2003:4; Mertens, 2010:226). Qualitative research is holistic in nature as it attempts to obtain information by covering the whole context of the research topic (Denzin and Lincoln, 2005:384). In this study the researcher and the co-researcher entered the research field to identify the problems that schools encounter in the establishment of their Institutional Level Support Team (ILST).

Bogdan et al., (2003:4), Denzin et al., (1998:3) and Snape et al.,(2003:3) state that qualitative research is naturalistic as the researcher studies phenomena in their natural settings, and attempts to interpret it in terms of the meaning they bring to people. Kincheloe (2003:188) agrees that the research context should not be changed. The research participants in this study were able to provide information based on everyday life experiences as these are lived and felt. The researcher used participant observation to capture the lived experiences of educators in the establishment and functioning of the ILSTs at school level.

One of the characteristics of qualitative research according to Gibbs (2002:3) and Struwig et al., (2001:12), is seeing life through the eyes of others. Snape et al.,(2003:4) and Kincheloe (2003:188) agree with this viewpoint and state that the qualitative researcher must view events, concerns, feelings and actions from the perspective of the research participant, therefore the researcher infiltrates the frame of meaning of the research participants and, by doing so, the researcher is able to give meaning to events and comes to understand the phenomena under study. This view is supported by Fouché (2005 (a):270) who writes that the researcher places himself in the shoes of the research participant. Mertens(2010:16) highlights the attempts by the researcher to understand the “lived experiences” from the perspective of the research

participant. In this study, the researcher investigated what guiding principles parents, schools and the communities need for the effective establishment and functioning of Institutional Level Support Teams.

Maykut and Moorehouse (1994:25) claim that the researcher captures all valuable experiences and perspectives gained during data collection. Researchers who adopt a qualitative approach need to listen attentively to the experiences of the research participants and interact with the participants in order to understand individual experiences, whilst Mertens (2010:16 and 226) and Springer (2010:20) are of the opinion that the qualitative research approach does not view reality as external to the researcher. Qualitative research emphasises the intimate relationship between the researcher and what is being studied. The interpretive researcher believes that knowledge is socially constructed from interacting with the people who lived and felt these experiences. Therefore the researcher used Participant Observation and Semi-structured interviews within this study. These methods will be discussed later in this chapter (see section 1.4.2). These data collection strategies allowed the researcher to listen attentively to the experiences of research participants and interact with them to gain a good understanding of their experiences.

Relationships in qualitative research is of utmost importance. The researcher is required to make close contact with the people being studied (Snape et al., 2003:5). This enhances the relationship between the researcher and the research participants. The researcher is able to develop a relationship with what is being studied and with the subjects under study. A close association may develop between the researcher and the research participant. Together they may interpret research data and the researcher may request the participant to comment on his interpretation of data. In so doing, the researcher eliminates any misunderstandings (Struwig et al., 2001:117). In section 1.6 the researcher provides a detailed discussion on the interpretive validity of this study.

The aim of research, as stated before, is to interpret and understand what the data means. While a variety of definitions of the term data have been suggested, this study will use the definition suggested by Holliday (2002:67), who described data as a “body of experience”, meaning, that what happens in a specific situation.

Research is based on a system of thought where data is collected and then critically examined (Struwig et al., 2001:3). Similarly, the qualitative researcher uses data collection methods that will allow the researcher to record and examine collected data accurately. Collected data will reveal the meaning it holds for the research participants (Struwig et al., 2001:11 and 226).

The researcher is the primary research instrument according to Freebody (2003:37), Mertens(2010:249) and Snape et al. (2003:5). Thomas (2013:192-193) believes that the qualitative researcher is the key research instrument in a study to direct the study to meaningful results. Qualitative research relies on the researcher to extensively collect data. The researcher must give a written explanation or interpretation of lived experiences. The data gathered may be in the form of words, pictures, drawings, sounds, non-verbal behaviour and videos (Struwig et al., 2001:13 and 243, Mertens, 2010:3). The researcher and the research participant are both involved in the data collection process.

The researcher, a Senior Education Specialist (SES) in the Uitenhage District interacts with ILSTs on a daily basis. Her experience in the field made her aware of the challenges concerning:

- The effective establishment and functioning of ILSTs.
- Learner support strategies.
- The role of the parent, the school and the community within an integrated support structure.

The qualitative researcher makes use of a variety of data collection strategies to gain sufficient knowledge of the research problem. The researcher may combine a variety of data collection strategies to gain adequate knowledge (Struwig et al., 2001:11; Holliday, 2002:6). This is in line with Snape et al., (2003:5) who state that data collection strategies must be flexible and sensitive to the context in which the data are gathered.

Data may be in the form of observations, research diaries, interviews, questionnaires, case studies, personal experiences, photographs, documents, and e-mails (Gay and Airasian, 2000:232; Holliday, 2002:70 and Fouché, 2005 (a):270). Struwig et al.,

(2001:13, 243) and Mertens, (2010:3) agree, and elaborate further by stating that data can be collected by means of observations, interviews, artefacts, photographs, documents, drawings and e-mails. The researcher within this study made use of interviews, observations, questionnaires and a literature review to gather data.

Data were read to understand the collected information. The data were coded to determine possible common themes. This reduces data to a description of the experience and identifies the essence of the research (Fouché, 2005 (a):270). This is broadly set out in Section 1.8 of this study for greater clarity and simplicity.

Evidence is of utmost importance for the qualitative researcher. According to Given (2008:307), evidence justifies and informs the qualitative study. Previous research studies should be known to the researcher, as they can be used to inform the proposed research question.

To summarise, this research study focused on the effective establishment and functioning of Institutional Level Support Teams (ILST) at school level. It involved the identification of problems that schools encounter in the establishment of their Institutional Level Support Team. It investigated why schools experience problems in establishing Institutional Level Support Teams (see sub-problem statements, section 1.3). The researcher elaborated on the various data collection strategies used to detect what problems schools experience in the effective establishment and functioning of Institutional Level Support Teams in Chapter 4, section 4.2.4. Furthermore the researcher became aware of the challenges that schools experience with the effective establishment and functioning of their Institutional Level Support Teams.

More specifically, this study focused on what support systems need to be implemented at schools in order to accommodate learners with barriers to learning within an Inclusive Education system. The research subjects included educators, members and co-ordinators of the Institutional Level Support Team, School Principles, Deputy Principles and other professionals involved in support structures at schools. The participants must be able to contribute to the study, based on their experiences and knowledge of learner support. This is further elucidated in section 1.7.

1.4.2 Data Collection

Data can be described as the actual happening amongst a particular group of people in a particular social setting or place (Holliday, 2002:69). As stated before, Holliday (2002:67) describes data as a “body of experience” that happens. Data collection has a dual purpose namely that it is collected to reveal aspects of a specific situation, setting or place and gives researchers an idea of what is happening (Mertens,2010:351; Holliday,2002:79).

According to Ary, Jacobs and Razavieh (2006:174), a number of data collection strategies are available for qualitative investigations and therefore the data should be collected strategically from various individuals and sources. In this study, the researcher made use of multiple data collection strategies. This will now be discussed in further detail.

1.4.2.1 Data collection strategies

A wide variety of data collection strategies were employed to answer the research problem in this study. The researcher in this study were the primary research instrument. According to Mertens,(2010:366 and 249; Freebody, 2003:37 and Snape et al.,2003:5),the researcher in a qualitative study is the primary or key data collection instrument as the researcher collects all data for the study. These authors point out that the researcher decides on questions for interviews and questionnaires.

The researcher made use of semi-structured interviews, participant observations, questionnaires and a literature review to collect data for this study. The implementation of these data collection strategies were discussed in Chapter 4, section 4.2.4. A detailed description of these data collection devices will now be provided.

1.4.2.2 Participant Observation

Observation is one of the most frequently used research techniques because it enables the researcher to gain firsthand experience by observing what is taking place in it's actual, natural setting (Creswell,2005:211, Ritchie,2003(a):35 and Henning,2004:85). Atkinson and Hammersley,(1998:111) and Ritchie, (2003(a):35) agree, and state that observation grants the observer the “advantage of drawing onto

the phenomenological complexity of the world”; meaning that the researcher has first-hand experience of what the participant is saying and doing. The researcher is able to note body language and other cues that gives meaning to what the participants is saying (Angrosino, 2008:161). In Chapter 4, section 4.2.4.1, the researcher described how she made use of participant observation to detect how effective ILSTs are functioning at the present moment and what challenges schools experience with the establishment thereof.

Recent evidence suggests that observation gives the researcher the opportunity to experience reality in its natural setting (Maree,2007:85; Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2007:395). Angrosino,(2008:162), Mertens,(2010:352) and Struwig et al.,(2001:100) investigated naturalistic observation and confirmed that the researcher should not interfere with the people under observation, but should adapt to events as they occur. Struwig et al., (2001:100) endorsed this by stating that events within the research field should remain unchanged to such a degree that participants are able to continue with their everyday lives, unaware of anyone observing them.

During observation, the researcher gains much insight of the phenomenon under study as observation allows a humanistic and interpretive approach (Atkinson et al.,1998:111). Strydom, (2005(a):275), Ritchie, (2003(a):35) and Henning, (2004:85) reviewed the literature on observation and found that researchers are able to understand participants much better, once actions, words, non-verbal cues and expressions are observed. According to Creswell,(2003:186), Strydom,(2005(a):283-284) and Mertens, (2010:352), the following may be regarded as the positive characteristics of observation:

- Researchers have first-hand experience with participants and become part of their lives and daily routine.
- Researchers can record information as it is revealed.
- Unusual aspects can be noticed during observation.
- It is useful in exploring topics that may be uncomfortable for participants to discuss.
- Observation focuses on the everyday life and natural experiences of participants.

Keeping these positive characteristics in mind, one should be mindful of the disadvantages of observations. These disadvantages are:

- Researchers may be seen as intruders into the personal space of the participants
- Confidential information may be observed that cannot be reported by the researcher.
- Researchers may lack good observational skills.

The primary data collection instruments within this study were the researcher and the co-researcher. The researcher and co-researcher visited schools as sites of research. Prior to any observation, the researcher needed to establish the purpose and focus of observation. The purpose and focus of observation will be to gather data, enabling the researcher to answer the research question (Gay et al.,2000:296). According to Cohen et al., (2007:397), Fielding,(2004:254), Ritchie,(2003(a):35), Mertens,(2010:352) and Angrosino, (2008:161), the purpose of observation is to gather data on:

- The physical environment and its organization.
- The organization of people.
- The interactions that are taking place, and
- The resources and programme settings.

From the above, it is evident that observation grants the researcher the opportunity to collect and gain evidence.

For the purpose of this study, the researcher made use of participant observation to develop a good understanding regarding the ILST at all participating schools. In Chapter 4, section 4.2.4.1, mention is made that the researcher and co-researcher assumed the roles of participant observers, meaning they observed the interactions of ILST members and participated in ILST discussions. The researcher decided on this type of observation as it could be conducted in a work environment, where the researcher became part of the setting (Lichtman, 2010:172). Participant observation enabled the researcher and co-researcher to work with the research participants for prolonged periods, obtaining their perceptions and observing their actions, feelings,

thoughts and beliefs of the phenomenon (Springer, 2010:389; Kruger and Yorke,2010:301).

The researcher and co-researcher has spent prolonged periods in the natural setting and became involved in the experiences of participants in order to gather data (Creswell, 2003:185; Lichtman, 2010:172). The researcher and co-researcher interacted with the research participants, thus being participants and observers, and focused on the objectives and goals derived from the main aim and focus of the study (Springer, 2010:389; Jones and Somekh,2011:133).

The results of this study were based on what the researcher and co-researcher has observed. The researcher became actively involved in on-site activities in order to understand and give meaning to the perspectives of participants. The researcher and co-researcher made field notes on an observation schedule (See Appendix G for Observation Schedule)during, or soon after the observation to record what has been observed (Creswell, 2005:212; Lichtman,2010:172; Creswell, 2003:185).

Gay et al., (2000:232) and Henning,(2004:81) describe field notes as a detailed description of what observers have heard, seen and experienced during their observation. These notes should be written soon after the observation so as to capture data as it occurred. The researcher in this study will incorporate the field notes during data analysis, to gain a better understanding of participants' views and perspectives.

Observations were done at the 30 participating schools identified in Sampling, section 1.7. The researcher selected sites that have the potential to produce rich information. Multiple observations were done over a prolonged period to obtain the best understanding and view of the participants concerning their Institutional Level Support Teams (ILSTs). Questionnaires were distributed after observations were completed. The following section will focus on the second data collection device, questionnaires.

1.4.2.3 Questionnaires

The rationale of a questionnaire is to find truths and views about a phenomenon from people who experience this phenomenon (Delport, 2005(a):166).The Oxford

Dictionary describes a questionnaire as a list of questions seeking information about peoples' opinions. A questionnaire is a self-report data collection instrument.

The questionnaire can be administered in the absence of the researcher. It is a flexible, versatile and widely used instrument for the collection of data and information. It is an essential part of any research process because it enables the researcher to collect an enormous amount of data quickly and easily (Johnson and Green, 2007:170; Mertens, 2010:352).

The content and organization of a questionnaire will correspond to the research objectives of a study (Johnson, et al., 2007:170). The researcher must know precisely what information needs to be obtained by means of the questionnaire (Delpont,2002(a):170). Open-ended and closed-ended questions can be included in a questionnaire. Struwig et al., (2001:192) state that open ended questions allow the participant to answer questions in their own words and express their feelings and thoughts. Mertens, (2010:372) agrees, and states that the questionnaire permits exploratory and unstructured responses. In Chapter 4, section 4.2.4.3 mention is made that questionnaires consisted of open-ended questions. Questions posed in the questionnaire had a direct bearing on the topic and aim of this investigation. (See Appendix I and J for Questionnaires).

Maree, (2007:161) and Mertens, (2010:352) express the following advantages of questionnaires:

- a) It can be completed anonymously.
- b) It is an inexpensive data collection method.
- c) Data can be analysed and compared easily.
- d) An enormous amount of data can be gathered.

In contrast to the advantages of questionnaires, disadvantages or challenges emerge during the administration of questionnaires. Mertens, (2010:352) state the following disadvantages:

- a) Questionnaires can be very impersonal.
- b) The researcher might not get questionnaires back from research participants.

- c) Respondents may limit their feedback by not sharing the full story.

In this study, the researcher made use of questionnaires using open ended questions. This allowed those completing the questions to answer in their own words and to express their feelings. Questionnaires were delivered to the 30 participating schools. School Principals, Deputy Principals, educators and members of the ILST and members of the DBST completed the questionnaires. (See Questionnaires, Appendix I and J.

The third data collection device, semi-structured interviews, will now be discussed,.

1.4.2.4 Semi-structured interviews

An interview is a two-way, face-to-face conversation or interaction between an interviewer and an interviewee. Interviews are therefore conversations with a specific goal or purpose (Legard, Keenan and Ward, (2003:142); Creswell: (2003:189), Maree, (2007:87); Greeff, (2005:287). These authors regard interviews as the most powerful and common means by which the researcher tries to understand individual experiences and gain useful information.

During an interview, interviewees are granted the opportunity to share their personal experiences. Interviewees should not hesitate to speak and share information and knowledge. In fact, they should feel free to share their ideas, confer opinions and make suggestions (Creswell, 2005:15, Legard et al., 2003:141).

Qualitative research interviews consist of three types of interviews. They can be open-ended, semi-structured or structured (Thomas, 2013:194). For the purpose of this study, semi-structured interviews were employed. Struwig et al., (2001:198) state that semi-structured interviews can be described as a combination of structured and unstructured interviews. Semi-structured interviews cover a particular part of interest, while allowing plasticity in the range and depth of the interview. (Greeff, 2005:292, Legard et al., 2003:139).

According to Struwig et al., (2001:86) and Greeff, (2005:296), semi-structured interviews are versatile and flexible because the interviews can be adapted to the

situation, context or individual. This flexible characteristic of an interview allows the researcher to obtain multiple views of the phenomenon under study.

Legard et al., (2003:141-142) state that semi-structured interviews are interactive and generative in nature. Information, knowledge and thoughts are created by the interaction between the interviewer and interviewee. Interviewees may share ideas on particular topics and provide suggestions for challenges arising during the interview.

Semi-structured interviews pose questions in a systematic and consistent manner to collect data (Struwig et al., 2001:198; Greeff, 2005:287). The order of questions may be changed as the way in which the interviewer phrases the questions and probe the interviewee to discuss issues beyond the confines of the interview questions (Legard et al., 2003:152; Arthur et al., 2003:111 and Struwig et al., 2001:98).

In this study, open-ended questions were asked so that participants are able to voice their experiences and opinions without constraint. This granted the researcher the opportunity to probe further where necessary. The researcher conducted individual interviews, with ILST co-ordinators, DBST members as well as members of the community at a time that suited the participant.

During an interview, the interviewer may detect the participants' thoughts, beliefs, knowledge, reasoning, motivation and feelings regarding the phenomenon under study. Furthermore, the researcher may clarify answers to verify that what he has heard is actually what the interviewee meant to say. This interaction between the interviewee and interviewer allows the social situation to be transformed into text, meaning that whatever the interviewee shares with the interviewer, is transformed into text by means of transcriptions (Greeff, 2005:296). This goal-driven conversation, where data is transformed into text, paves the way for good relations between the interviewer and interviewee.

Qualitative research encourages a relationship to develop between the researcher and research participant. This relationship can grow further during interviews. The to and fro movement of questions and answers in the interview between the researcher and research participant is conducive to a healthy relationship and good rapport (Greeff, 2005:287; Legard et al., 2003:156-157).

Establishing good rapport between the researcher and the participants is very important within a qualitative study, since good relationships between the researcher and the participant contribute to obtaining rich data. The mutual understanding between the interviewer and interviewee should pave the way for both parties to provide relevant information (Greeff, 2005:296). The giving and receiving of information may assist the researcher to gain meaning and understanding of the phenomenon under study. The researcher is then able to construct a holistic picture of the phenomenon and view the situation from the view of the participant.

Greeff,(2005:296) elaborates further and states that, in semi- structured interviews, the interviewer may use an interview schedule. An interview schedule may be described as a written questionnaire. Legard, et al., (2003:141) agrees with the use of an interview schedule, yet he recommends that the interview schedule should be used as a guide and not dictate the interview.

Additionally, Greeff, (2005:296) explains that the interview schedule allows the researcher to prepare himself for the interview and that the researcher knows the precise aim and goal with the interview. The researcher may give the interview schedule to the interviewer to read in preparation for the interview.

After reading the interview schedule, the interviewee may decide which questions he wishes to answer at a specific stage. Here the flexibility of semi–structured interviews is evident. The interviewee plays a strong role in determining how the interview will proceed, but the researcher ultimately decides how much deviation is acceptable (Greeff, 2005:297).

At the end of the interview, the researcher should write down his impressions, emotions, preconceptions and prejudices of the interview (Greeff, 2005:297–298, Legard et al., 2003:141). These notations are known as field notes.

Field notes minimise the loss of data, and help the researcher remember and explore the process of the interview. Field notes are also consulted when the researcher is writing his final product. Transcriptions and analyses of the interview should be done as soon as possible after the interview. During analysis, coding may be applied and tentative themes may emerge (Greeff, 2005:299).

For the purpose of this study, the researcher made use of one-to-one semi-structured interviews with the ILST co-ordinators at school level to collect data. Furthermore, the researcher conducted interviews with DBST members, as well as members of the community actively involved in learner support activities. Semi-structured interviews were beneficial as the researcher obtained in-depth information regarding the phenomenon under study. An interview schedule was prepared for the interviews and served as guide. (See Appendix K for Interview Schedule).

The interviewer explained the purpose and process of the interviews to all participants prior to the interview and interviews were audio-taped for transcription purposes (Greeff, 2005:298 and Legard ,et al., 2003:142). Brief notes were taken during the interview in the event of tape recorder malfunction.

In conclusion, semi-structured interviews were arranged with ILST co-ordinators, DBST members and with members of the community involved in learner support activities. The ILST co-ordinator of the school was approached to be interviewed because this individual is actively involved with the management and implementation of learner support at the school. Chapter 4, section 4.2.4.2 provides a detailed discussion on the execution of semi-structured interviews within this study.

1.4.3 Literature review

A literature review is a systematic process of identifying, evaluating and blending previous research relating to a specific research question (Punch, 2009:95). Creswell, (2003:30) and Struwig et al., (2001:34-35) describe a literature review as the background to the research problem under study. Furthermore, they state that a literature review gives direction regarding who has been writing about the research problem, what is written about the phenomenon under study, and what is the important issue to explore within this phenomenon.

McMillan and Schumacher (2010:73) agree and state that a literature review is vital as it establishes links between existing knowledge and the research problem under study. Mertens, (2010:89) and Fouché and Delpont (2005(b):124) regard a literature review as a valuable source for knowledge expansion.

In this study, a comprehensive literature review was conducted to present a coherent overall picture for this research. The literature review consisted of recently published textbooks, journal articles, documents, reports, newspaper articles, theses and dissertations, as well as electronic databases.

The literature review focused on the following:

- a) Bronfenbrenner's eco-systemic theory in collaboration with Inclusive Education in South Africa.
- b) Implementation of learner support structures at school level, such as the Institutional Level Support Team, supporting learners experiencing barriers to learning.

This enabled the researcher to gain better insight into the importance of a systematic approach to learner support and intervention.

1.5 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

The unstructured characteristics of qualitative research compels the qualitative researcher to be aware of ethical considerations (Lewis,2003:66). Ethics can be described as a set of morals and principles, which offers rules and regulations regarding the most correct research conduct (Strydom,2005(c):57 and Struwig et al., 2001:66). Qualitative research demands ethical responsibility from it's researchers, as people are the object of the study (Strydom, 2005(c):56).

Researchers in the social sciences experience research ethics as complex, continuously occurring elements. Ethics provide researchers with a code of moral conduct on how to carry out research and collect data in a morally acceptable fashion (Struwig et al., 2001:66). It guides the entire research process from planning the research, to conducting the research and the use of research finding (Mertens, 2010:336). Mouton, (2001:239) and Cohen and Manion (1994:359) state that researchers have a moral responsibility towards research participants on whom they depend during their search for the truth. From this statement, it is obvious that researchers should consider the effect of research on their participants.

In this study, the main aim and purpose of the research was explained and given in writing to the research participants before commencing with observations, the distribution of questionnaires and the initiation of interviews. Attention was given to the required ethical measures for this study. The researcher ensured confidentiality and avoided any harm befalling the research participant.

The researcher applied for ethical clearance from the Research Ethics Committee-Human (REC-H) committee of the Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University. Permission was granted and an ethics clearance reference number **H12-EDU-ERE 13** was allocated (See Appendix A). The researcher then applied for consent to conduct research at schools in the Uitenhage District from the Department of Education. Additionally she requested permission from the individual research participants involved in this study. In Chapter 4, section 4.2.2 the researcher elaborates extensively on the steps followed to ensure that the researcher adheres to the ethical rules laid down by the Research Ethics Committee of the Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University (NMMU). (See Appendix A and B).

Informed consent and confidentiality, important ethical aspects, will now be discussed.

1.5.1 Informed Consent

Informed consent is a critical component of ethical considerations within qualitative research (Lewis,2003:66). Silverman, (2000:201) describes informed consent as providing sufficient information on the research to possible participants. This is important to the participant before he/she agrees to participate in the research. Informed consent must be obtained from research participants in any research (Lewis,2003:66-67 and Henning,2004:73). Participants must be informed that involvement in the research is voluntary and that they may withdraw from this research at any given time (Lewis,2003:66-67 and Struwig et al., 2001:67).

Participants must be aware that they may negotiate their participation, withdrawal or their refusal to continue with participation as soon as they experience a sense of discomfort or embarrassment (Lewis,2003:66-67, Creswell,2003:64 and Struwig et al.,2001:68). Furthermore, participants must know that there will be no negative consequences for them if they should decide to withdraw. The right of the participant

to make his own judgement and choices should thus be respected. Henning, (2004:73) and Creswell, (2003:64-65) suggest the use of an informed consent form which guarantees that the participant understands the nature, intention and purpose of the research.

For the purpose of this study, informed consent was obtained. People agreeing to participate voluntarily were required to complete an informed consent form. Information regarding the research was provided verbally and in written form. A detailed written explanation of the study was given to participants to ensure that they understood what the study was all about and that they acknowledged the procedures of the study. The signature of the research participant on the informed consent form endorsed participation and served as supportive evidence of informed consent (Bogdan et al., 2003:43 and Oishi, 2003:205). (See Appendix F for Informed Consent Form). The execution of ethical considerations will be addressed in detail in Chapter 4, section 4.2.2.

1.5.2 Confidentiality

During a research study, it is expected from the researcher to respect the privacy of the participants. Confidentiality assures participants that their information will not be obtainable by anyone who is not involved in the study (Bogdan et al. 2003:45).

If confidentiality cannot be guaranteed, participants should be made aware of such a risk in advance. It is difficult to guarantee confidentiality, especially in a study where participants have to be measured at more than one point. In such a case, researchers can still offer anonymity. After the data has been collected, participants may be offered the opportunity to destroy any data they wish to remain private (Neuman, 2000:437).

The researcher in this study emphasized to participants that their ideas are valued and what they said during the research process will remain confidential. The researcher made use of a "Promise of Confidentiality" form. Furthermore, anonymity was ensured as the research participants were not requested to disclose their names or the names of their schools when answering questions or completing questionnaires. See "Promise of Confidentiality", included in Informed consent Form, Appendix F.

1.6 VALIDITY AND RELIABILITY

1.6.1 Validity

There is a close correlation between validity and reliability. According to Neuman (2003:186) validity and reliability are complementary, yet at times may be in conflict with each other. Validity, according to Barbie (1989:G8) is a descriptive term used to describe a measure that accurately reflects the concepts that it is intended to measure. Struwig et al., (2001:143) refer to validity as trustworthiness and credibility.

Neuman (2003:185) agrees and states that validity is truthful, and therefore an accurate account is given regarding the phenomena. In Chapter 4, section 4.3 the researcher mentioned that the assistance of the co-researcher will be requested to establish a true reflection of what participants say. It is important to know that the validity of a measure cannot always be proven but we can rely on its relative validity (Barbie, 1989:G8 and Baker, 1988:119). There are, however, measurements researchers can apply to ensure the validity of their research results.

In this regard, Struwig et al., (2001:144) differentiate between diverse forms of validity to be well thought-out in qualitative research. They are:

- Descriptive validity.
- Interpretive validity.

Descriptive validity requires that information provided should be factually accurate and comprehensive. The co-researcher should assist the researcher to ensure that descriptive data is valid. The researcher in this study collaborated with the co-researcher in order to ensure that data collected was a true reflection of the research participants' communications.

Interpretive validity refers to the accurate recording of events or of research participants' behaviour. Eliciting the participants' comments on the researcher's interpretation of their communication is important for the interpretive validity of the results. The researcher verified and scrutinized her understanding of what was conveyed by the participants. The researcher indicated this intention in section 1.4.1 (Type of research).

1.6.2 Reliability

In qualitative research, reliability is similar to consistency or dependability of the research results (Struwig et al., 2001:133 and Neuman, 2003:184). Reliability in qualitative research can be addressed by means of triangulation (Struwig et al. 2001:134).

Gibbs (2007:93) states that there are several techniques that address the validity or accuracy of research to eliminate mistakes and to generate information rich results. Triangulation, commonly known as “cross examination”, is one such technique.

Holliday (2002:76) describes triangulation as a technique that increases the validity of the research by obtaining and comparing multiple views of the same phenomenon. This view is shared by Hesse-Biber and Leavy (2006:66) who state that “triangulation refers to the using of various data sources within the same study”. Triangulation attempts to secure an in-depth understanding of the phenomenon. It is not a tool or strategy of validation; it facilitates validation and is an alternative to validation (Denzin and Lincoln, 2000:5). According to Struwig et al., (2001:18-19) and Gibbs (2007:94) there are various forms of triangulation:

- Data triangulation.
- Research triangulation.

Data triangulation includes various people, times and places. Interviews, observations, and questionnaires are compared to endorse data or information. Data triangulation were done by the researcher in this study by comparing the data gathered by means of participant observation, semi-structured interviews and questionnaires. By using various data collection methods, the researchers was able to gain a holistic picture of the phenomenon (Struwig et al., 2001:18-19).

In this study the researcher performed data triangulation by comparing data obtained from various sources, at different times and at different places. In so doing, the researcher were able to provide supportive evidence for the collected data.

Researcher triangulation promotes the use of a co-researcher in a study. Co-researchers are able to add alternative perspectives and reduce the limitations of the

study (Thomas, 2013:146). The co-researcher provided information relative to the study. During the consensus meeting data were closely scrutinised by the researcher and co-researcher. The co-researcher were actively involved as an independent qualitative coder, assisting the researcher.

The researcher made use of a co-researcher during this research. The co-researcher were present during observations and assisted with the analysis of data. Chapter 4, section 4.2.4 confirms such practices when mention is made that the co-researcher will assist the researcher in gathering adequate information and assist the researcher with data analysis.

1.6.3 Trustworthiness

As stated before, Struwig et al., (2001:143) refer to validity as trustworthiness. De Vos (2002:351), De Vos (2005:346-347), Poggenpoel (1998:348-351), and Lichtman (2010:228) cite Lincoln and Guba (1985) in proposing four measurements to ensure trustworthiness in a qualitative study. These measures are credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability. These will now be discussed.

Credibility – A qualitative study is credible when it represents accurate descriptions or interpretations of the research participants. People that experienced a similar situation will be capable of judging the credibility of the study based on recognisable descriptions.

In this study, credibility were attained with regards to the researcher's interpretations of the data. The co-researcher were actively involved in the interpretation of research results obtained from schools and at district level. Furthermore the researcher asked the participants to comment on their interpretation of data, as mentioned in the section on interpretive validity and discussed in section 1.6.1.

Transferability – Transferability refers to the degree of applicability of a study to other similar contexts or settings. If a qualitative study is transferable, the results can be applied to other contexts and settings. To demonstrate the transferability of a study, the researcher must present sufficient descriptive data to allow comparison between two or more settings. Data triangulation can strengthen the transferability of a study.

Two perspectives relative to transferability are appropriate for qualitative research. The first perspective believes that qualitative research is unique. It is conducted in a naturalistic setting and therefore it is less amenable or generalizable. Each study has a particular researcher, within a particular setting and with a particular participant. Transferability is thus not relevant to all qualitative research. The second perspective argues that the transferability of a qualitative study rests with the reader who will make the transfer, rather than with the original researcher.

For the purpose of this study, the researcher made no claims about the transferability of the study, but leaves it to the reader to decide whether it is transferable to similar situations.

Dependability – Dependability is the alternative to reliability. It emphasises the responsibility of the researcher to describe the changes that occurred in the research settings and how these changes affected the way the researcher approached the study. The researcher accounts for changing conditions of the research phenomena as well as the change in the research design. Change occurs due to an increased understanding of the research phenomena.

Confirmability refers to the degree to which the research results can be confirmed by another researcher. It is a strategy that ensures neutrality. Qualitative research increases the worth of results, by prolonged contact with research participants. The researcher and co-researcher has spent prolonged periods in the research field, gathering data.

Confirmability is achieved when credibility and transferability are established. In this study, confirmability were obtained by appointing and using a co-researcher to assist with data gathering and analysis.

In order to ensure that the results of this study are trustworthy, the researcher utilised Guba's model of trustworthiness. The researcher focussed purely on the data obtained from the participants in order to maintain objectivity and put aside personal beliefs and experienced gained through her work environment.

1.7 SAMPLING

Sampling can be described as a selection process whereby actual data sources are selected from a larger set of possibilities (Given,2008:799). Sampling is of paramount importance to the qualitative researcher. According to Pienaar (2005:19), sampling is concerned with gaining access to relevant evidence about the phenomena. Williams (2003:23) agrees that the sample must be able to contribute to the research and give the researcher access to special perspectives and experiences. In qualitative research, sampling is used to draw information from potential sources. Samples in qualitative research must serve the purpose of a specific set of research purposes (Struwig et al., 2001:109).

In this study, the researcher made use of a combination of convenience sampling as well as purposive and judgement sampling. The researcher focused on the co-ordinator and members of the Institutional Level Support Team at the identified schools in the Uitenhage District, since the co-ordinator and members would provide the researcher with specific data regarding the support team at school. Participants were able to provide information regarding the establishment of Institutional Level Support Teams (ILSTs). In addition, they were able to describe whether or not they experienced problems with the establishment of this support team at school level. In Chapter 4, section 4.2.3 mention is made that the researcher selected certain participants for the use of purposive, convenience and judgement sampling.

At school and community level information were obtained from educators, members and co-ordinators of the Institutional Level Support Team, Deputy Principals, School Principals, and other professionals within the community. At district level, information were obtained from DBST members, Senior Education Specialists (SES), Deputy Chief Education Specialists (DCES) and other relevant professionals actively involved in learner support.

Each of the identified sampling techniques for this study will now be discussed.

1.7.1 Convenience Sampling

In convenience sampling, also commonly known as accidental or opportunity sampling, the researcher makes use of available subjects. A group of subjects is

chosen based on availability and accessibility (McMillan and Schumacher., 2010: 137; Somekh and Lewin, 2005:219). According to Strydom and Venter (2002:207), these participants are close to the researcher and are able to make a positive contribution to the understanding of the phenomenon being studied.

Therefore, convenience sampling is commonly used due to practical constraints, efficiency and accessibility (Mertens, 2010:326). According to Punch (2009:163), convenience sampling saves time and money.

As Senior Education Specialist (SES), employed at the Uitenhage District Office, I made use of convenience sampling since I have easy access to schools, educators and district officials in the Uitenhage District. Members of the Institutional Level Support Team (ILST) and District Based Support Team (DBST) are in close proximity to me and therefore readily available as I work with the officials on a daily basis and visit schools in our district regularly, as part of my duties. The functioning of the ILSTs is one of my core responsibilities.

1.7.2 Purposive and Judgement Sampling

In purposive sampling, also commonly known as deliberate sampling, the population of eligible data sources is defined, based on the researcher's knowledge of the sample group (McMillan et al., 2010:138). Qualitative researchers use their judgement, knowledge and experience of the sample population to select a specific sample (Ary, et al., 2006:174).

Qualitative researchers are interested in specific cases, people and situations. Purposive sampling is therefore frequently used by qualitative researchers (Ritchie, et al., 2003(b):78-79). Purposive sampling provides an in-depth understanding and meaning to what is being studied. (Ritchie, et al., 2003(b):78-79). In this regard, Cresswell (2007) points out that a small number of sources are selected for intense analysis and an in-depth interpretation of information.

In purposive sampling, the researcher selects specific participants who will be informative about the research topic (McMillan et al., 2010:138). The participants are handpicked and desirable as they have a specific experience and understanding of

the phenomenon under study (Somekh et al., 2005:21; Henning, 2004:71; Ritchie et al., 2003 (b):79). These samples can provide rich detail and can maximise the data of the researcher (Strydom and Delport, 2005(b):329). Struwig et al., (2001:122) state that a purposive sample attempts to provide an information rich sample, meaning that participants have experienced specific events and has specific characteristics.

For the purpose of this study, the researcher made use of her experience to select a particular sample. She selected specific individuals who were able to provide her with relevant data to learn and understand the phenomenon under study. Selected participants must adhere to set criteria, based on their experience and interactions with the ILST at their schools, to be part of the sample group. The set criteria are as follows:

- Participants must be knowledgeable regarding the ILST at their school, as they will then be able to provide information rich data.
- Participants must have experienced the establishment of ILSTs at school, as they will then be able to share personal experiences, perspectives, thoughts and challenges encountered during the establishment of ILSTs at their schools.
- Participants must be an educator at the participating school. This educator should be involved in the activities of the ILST at their school.
- Participants must be a member of the ILST, supporting learners experiencing barriers to learning.
- Participants must be the Deputy Principal at the participating schools, assisting and supporting the activities of the ILST.
- Participants must be the School Principal at the participating schools, supporting the efforts of the ILST.
- Participants must be an ILST co-ordinator at participating schools, co-ordinating the activities of the ILST.
- At District Level participants must be part of the DBST.
- Participants within the community must be actively involved in learner support activities.

1.8 DATA ANALYSIS

Gibbs, (2007:1) describes data analysis as a transformation process whereby data is changed into meaningful concepts. It is a process of making sense of data by ordering, structuring, consolidating and interpreting information (De Vos, 2005:333). Spencer, Ritchie and O'Conner (2003:200) agree and state that data analysis initiates the interpretation of data. Qualitative data analysis is an ongoing, rigorous and dynamic process (Gibbs, 2002:2 and Henning, 2004:217).

De Vos, (2005:334) and Cresswell, (1998:142) agree that data analysis and interpretation can be seen as a spiral image. The researcher moves in analytical circles, entering with data made up of texts and images and exits the spiral with an account or narrative. This process refers to the hermeneutics discussed in the section on methodology, section 1.4.1.

According to Creswell,(2003:198) and Hesse-Biber et al.,(2006:349), qualitative data analysis is a continuous reflection on data, asking analytical questions and writing comments, as the researcher codes concepts and identifies common themes. In Chapter 4, section 4.3 mention is made that the researcher made use of a coding process by means of clustering similar data. Data analysis requires analytical skills as data needs to be organised systematically and significant patterns must be identified (Henning, 2004:10; Bogdan and Biklen, (1992:153). It commences with the collection and reading of data and then the breaking down of words, sentences and paragraphs into clear understandable and discrete parts (Gibbs, 2002:1-4). The data is organised into key themes and categories (Spencer et al., 2003:217)

Organising data systematically into significant patterns allows the researcher to identify possible common themes and categories (Spencer et al., 2003:217). Ploeg (1999: extract) agrees and declares that qualitative data analysis is concerned with the analysis of codes, themes, and patterns in data.

Concurrent data collection and analysis can be regarded as good practice. In this regard, Henning (2004:217) and Struwig et al.,(2001:169) agree that qualitative data analysis can take place throughout data collection as it is less distinct than quantitative research. The researcher is able to reflect on notes, ideas and connections within the

data. At the same time, meaning is gained from the data which enables researchers to increase their understanding of the research problem (Henning, 2004:127).

During data analysis the researcher writes notes on what is learned; this is known as the researcher's reflective notes. The writing of reflective notes is commonly known as memoing (Gibbs, 2007:30). It is good to engage in memoing as it assists the researcher to interpret and understand the data (Henning, 2004:132). Memoing is a manner of theorizing and commenting on data (Gibbs, 2007:30). In this study the researcher will utilise reflective notes during data analysis.

In this study an audio-tape were used to record interview data, which were then transcribed. Once all interviews was transcribed the data were analysed to create meaning by ordering, structuring, consolidating, and interpreting the data. Data were organised and synthesized by means of a coding process. Tesch's step-by-step process were used to identify the common themes in the data (See determining common themes, section 1.8.2). The co-researcher were actively involved in the entire process.

1.8.1 Coding

Coding is an essential part of data analysis as data is physically separated by dividing the data into small units or segments of meaning (Henning, 2004:105). Coding can be described as a process of organizing, identifying and recording data.

According to McMillan et al., (2010:359), Henning (2004:105) and Springer (2010: 383), the purpose of coding is to identify common themes or segments in data. A segment contains one idea or a relevant piece of information. Segments are then named or labelled with a code. Codes are applied to emerging themes and categories (De Vos, 2005:338). Codes may take the form of abbreviations of key words, coloured dots or numbers (De Vos, 2005:338). In coding, data is broken down, conceptualised and put together in new ways. This process may lead to a better understanding of data and information.

Developing a coding system involves several steps. Researchers need to identify and record regularities and patterns in texts and link regularities to a name or label. All text

about the same central idea is coded with the same name or label (Gibbs, 2007:38). Gibbs (2007:41) and Hesse-Biber et al., (2006:348) suggest the following basic questions to ask during the process of coding:

- a) What is happening?
- b) What are people undertaking?
- c) What is the person saying?
- d) What do these actions and statements take for granted?
- e) How do structure and context serve to support, maintain, impede or change these actions and statements?

Words and phrases representing topics and patterns should be written down in code memos (Bogdan, et al.,1992:166). These words and phrases are coding categories or memos. Code memos are thoughts about the codes and are frequently used in the coding process, as it provides clarity and direction during coding (Henning,2004:132 and Gibbs,2007:30). A list of coding categories needs to be developed after data has been collected (Bogdan et al.,1992:166).

As stated above, coding is the breaking down of data into units or segments of meaning, but these need to be brought back together to establish connections and possible common themes. Coding can be seen as a gateway to the identification of possible common themes. Determining common themes will now be discussed.

1.8.2 Determining common themes

Rubin and Rubin (1995:251) state that in the final stage of analysis, the researcher will identify common themes. Tesch (1990:87) describes the process of determining common themes as the clustering of common segments. Once coding is done, the data is grouped into segments of meaning and then they can be grouped into common themes (Henning, 2004:105). In Chapter 4, section 4.3 mention is made that the researcher and co-researcher read data more than once to gain a holistic picture of the data. Data were then broken into segments of meaning and transformed into common themes. After determining common themes, themes was put together to build an integrated explanation of results.

Tesch (1990:90–96) suggests the following step-by-step process to follow when determining common themes:

- It begins with a thorough reading by the researcher to obtain a holistic understanding of the whole.
- The researcher reads transcriptions and asks pertinent questions such as, “What is this about?”. This activity is accompanied by memoing, the writing of possible themes in the margin. This is done with all other transcripts.
- A list of common emerging themes must then be compiled. Similar themes are grouped together.
- The listed common themes must then be given names, labels or codes. Relevant codes are then written next to appropriate segments or units of the text.
- Unitizing or segmentation occurs and the data converts into themes, theme configuration occurs to reduce the number of themes, if necessary; and
- The data belonging to each category must then be assembled to perform the analysis of the categories.

Holliday (2002:103–106) and Henning (2004:105-106) complement the viewpoint of Tesch and suggest the following when determining common themes in qualitative research:

- The researcher should identify a common storyline or theme, which grows out of the data.
- The themes should then be named according to the category to which they would belong.
- Relevant questions should then be asked:
 - a) What do they say together?
 - b) What do they say about each other?
 - c) How do they address the research question?
 - d) How do these categories link with what I already know about the research question?

In this study the co-researcher were actively involved in the whole process of data analysis. All data gathered by means of interviews, observations and questionnaires were closely scrutinised by the researcher and co researcher. In this study, the step-by-step process for data analysis and the determining of common themes suggested by Tesch, Holiday and Henning, were applied.

1.9 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Donald, Lazarus and Lolwana (2002:387) describe a theory as a configuration that makes connections between observations and information. Anfara and Mertz (2006:xiv) cites Kerlinger (1986) in defining theory as a set of interrelated configurations, definitions and suggestions that present a systemic view of a phenomenon by specifying relationships between variables, with the purpose of defining and predicting the phenomenon.

Theories support results and are always developing as people engage with them. As a study progresses, so does the use of their theory (Struwig et al., 2001:13 and 17). Donald et al., (2002:38) agree and state that theories are not fixed but develop as people engage with them. The researcher approaches the phenomenon with a set of ideas or framework that examines a specific situation (Anfara et al., 2006:xxi). Furthermore, Anfara et al., (2006:xxi) define a theoretical framework as a theory of social processes that can be applied to understand a certain phenomenon.

The theoretical framework of this study was based on the principles of Inclusive Education as well as Bronfenbrenner's eco-systemic theory. These systems or approaches were selected for this study as both Inclusive Education and Bronfenbrenner's eco-systemic theory provide guiding principles on how learner support should be constructed to assist learners experiencing barriers to learning, as discussed in Chapter 2, section 2.6.

As stated before, the goal of this study was to provide guiding principles for the effective establishment and functioning of Institutional Level Support Teams (ILSTs) at Primary Schools within the Uitenhage District. Schools must understand the interconnectedness between the learner and the multiple systems that are linked to the learner from an eco-systemic perspective (Swart and Pettipher, 2005(a):9). An

eco-systemic approach to learner support can be beneficial for the effective implementation of learner support at school level. Guiding principles in Chapter 5 clearly indicated that parents, the school and the community need to work in close collaboration with each other for the effective establishment and functioning of ILSTs.

The interconnectedness of systems is clearly recognisable within the Education White Paper 6: Special Needs Education: Building an Inclusive Education and Training System. It proposes a model of interrelated support provisioning to all learners (Department of Education, 2001:29). Support provisioning should therefore take cognisance that internal and external factors may contribute to learning difficulties.

Providing learner support from an eco-systemic perspective gives understanding and insight into holistic learner needs. Classrooms and schools are seen as part of the social system of the learner within a broader social context (Donald et al., 2002:57–58). Inclusive Education endeavours to protect and fulfil the needs of all learners, especially those learners experiencing barriers to learning (Chamber,2001:12; Jamieson and Proudlock ,2009:4).

Chapter 2 contained a literature review on Inclusive Education and Bronfenbrenner's eco-systemic theory. Chapter 3 contained a literature review on learner support and the establishment of learner support teams at all schools which relates directly to this investigation. Learner support strategies derived from these theories informed the empirical investigation of Chapter 4, which focused on the provision of supportive guiding principles for the effective establishment and functioning of Institutional Level Support Teams at Primary Schools in the Uitenhage District as discussed in Chapter 5.

1.10 EXPLANATION OF CONCEPTS IN THE STUDY

1.10.1 Institutional Level Support Teams

According to the Education White Paper 6- Special Needs Education: Building an Inclusive Education and Training System, an Institutional Level Support Team (ILST) needs to be established at all schools, as indicated in section 1.1 (Department of Education,2001:48). Their primary responsibility is to put co-ordinated learner and

educator support mechanisms in place (Department of Education, 2011 (b):34). This team is also seen as an “internal” support team within schools. The ILST should provide support by identifying and addressing learner, educator and school needs (Department on Education, 2001:29). Class educators should consult the ILST when they experience challenges with learners as this team is collectively responsible for support to learners (Landsberg, 2005:67).

The ILST is made up of educators, School Management Team (SMT), School Principals, Deputy Principals, parents and other professionals involved in learner support at the school. According to the SIAS (Screening, Identification, Assessment and Support), all stakeholders have a specific role and responsibility to fulfil in the ILST. (Department of Education, 2007; Landsberg, 2005:67). The ILST is to be supported by the District Based Support Team (DBST). The DBST will provide educational support and curriculum adaptation and assessment (Department of Education, 2001:29).

A detailed discussion on ILSTs will be presented in Chapter 3, section 3.3.

1.10.2 District Based Support Teams

The District Based Support Team (DBST) can be described as the core support provider at district level, who have the responsibility to promote Inclusive Education through training, curriculum support, distribution of resources and identifying and addressing barriers to learning (Department of Education, 2001:34; Landsberg, 2005:63).

As stated above, this team should support the ILST. They must provide indirect support to learners by supporting educators and the Institutional Level Support Team. The key focus areas of the District Based Support Teams is to: (Department of Education, 2005 (a):18).

- a) Strengthen the support capacity of schools.
- b) Identify barriers to learning and address the diverse needs of learners.
- c) Promote Inclusive Education.

A detailed discussion on the DBST will be presented in Chapter 3.

1.10.3 Barriers to learning

According to the Concise Oxford Dictionary, an educational barrier can be described as anything that prevents learning progress or success. A barrier to learning may prevent a learner from accessing teaching and learning. Barriers to learning can be located within the learner, within the school, within the education system and within the broader social, economic and political spheres (Department of Education, 2011 (b):34.). Some of these barriers are:

- a) A rigid curriculum.
- b) Incorrect language of learning and teaching.
- c) Inadequate and unsuitable intervention and support structures.
- d) Limited availability to basic services.
- e) Poverty and under development.
- f) The non-intervention of parents.
- g) Negative stance to learners experiencing challenges.
- h) Medical conditions

Barriers to learning and development will be addressed in the Mainstream Education Section where provision will be made for low to moderate support needs.

1.10.4 Mainstream Schools / Ordinary Public Schools

In terms of the South African Schools Act (1996), as discussed in Chapter 2, section 2.4.3, a public school may be an ordinary public school or a public school for learners with special education needs (Section 12 (3)). The local ordinary school would be the school closest to where the learner lives. Ordinary Public Schools should admit learners with Special Educational Needs where this is reasonably practical (Department of Education, Manual for School Management). Within this study the school will include the entire teaching and non-teaching staff, including the School Principal, School Management Team (SMT), School Governing Body (SGB), Institutional Level Support Teams and educators. That is all those involved in the education of all children.

1.10.5 Inclusive Education

The Bill of Rights promulgates the human right to basic education. In line with our Constitution, which respects the rights of all and recognises our diverse nation, South Africa embarked on an Inclusive system of Education and Training.

Donald, Lazarus and Lolwana (1997:20) refer to Inclusive Education as a basic principle due to the educational rights of all children, including those learners experiencing barriers to learning. Inclusive Education commits itself to the provision of education for all learners according to their individual needs. It demands a school culture that welcomes and accepts learner diversity (Swart et al., 2005 (a):19; Mitchell,2008:27).

Inclusive Education advocates that every child matters, whatever the background, ability or disability. This system acknowledges that all learners have a right to basic education and therefore grants all learners that opportunity to access the curriculum.

All stakeholders, parents, educators, District Officials and Non-Governmental Organizations (NGO) must accept responsibility for education to ensure quality education for all. The implementation of the new educational approach is clearly defined in the Education White Paper 6, which states that the education system must adapt to learner needs, therefore learners do not need to respond to the system.

A detailed discussion on Inclusive Education will follow in Chapter 2, sections 2.2 to 2.4.

1.11 PROGRAMME OF THE STUDY

The programme of the study is as follows:

CHAPTER ONE

This chapter provided a general introduction and background to the study, where the problem and sub-problems were stated. Then, the aim of the study and the research methodology, the ethical considerations anticipated for the research as well as validity and reliability were discussed. A discussion on the theoretical framework underpinning

this study followed. Sampling and data analysis were discussed. In the last section of this chapter, the key concepts and the programme of the study were clarified.

CHAPTER TWO

This chapter contained a literature review on the Inclusive Education Policy in South-Africa as well as Bronfenbrenner's eco-systemic theory.

CHAPTER THREE

This chapter contained a literature review on learner support. Furthermore, this chapter focused on the establishment of learner support teams, commonly known as Institutional Level Support Teams (ILSTs) at school level.

CHAPTER FOUR

This chapter contained a description of the execution of the empirical research and a discussion of the results of the research.

CHAPTER FIVE

This chapter provided guiding principles for the effective establishment and functioning of the Institutional Level Support Teams at schools in the Uitenhage District.

CHAPTER SIX

This chapter contained the summary, conclusions and recommendations of the study.

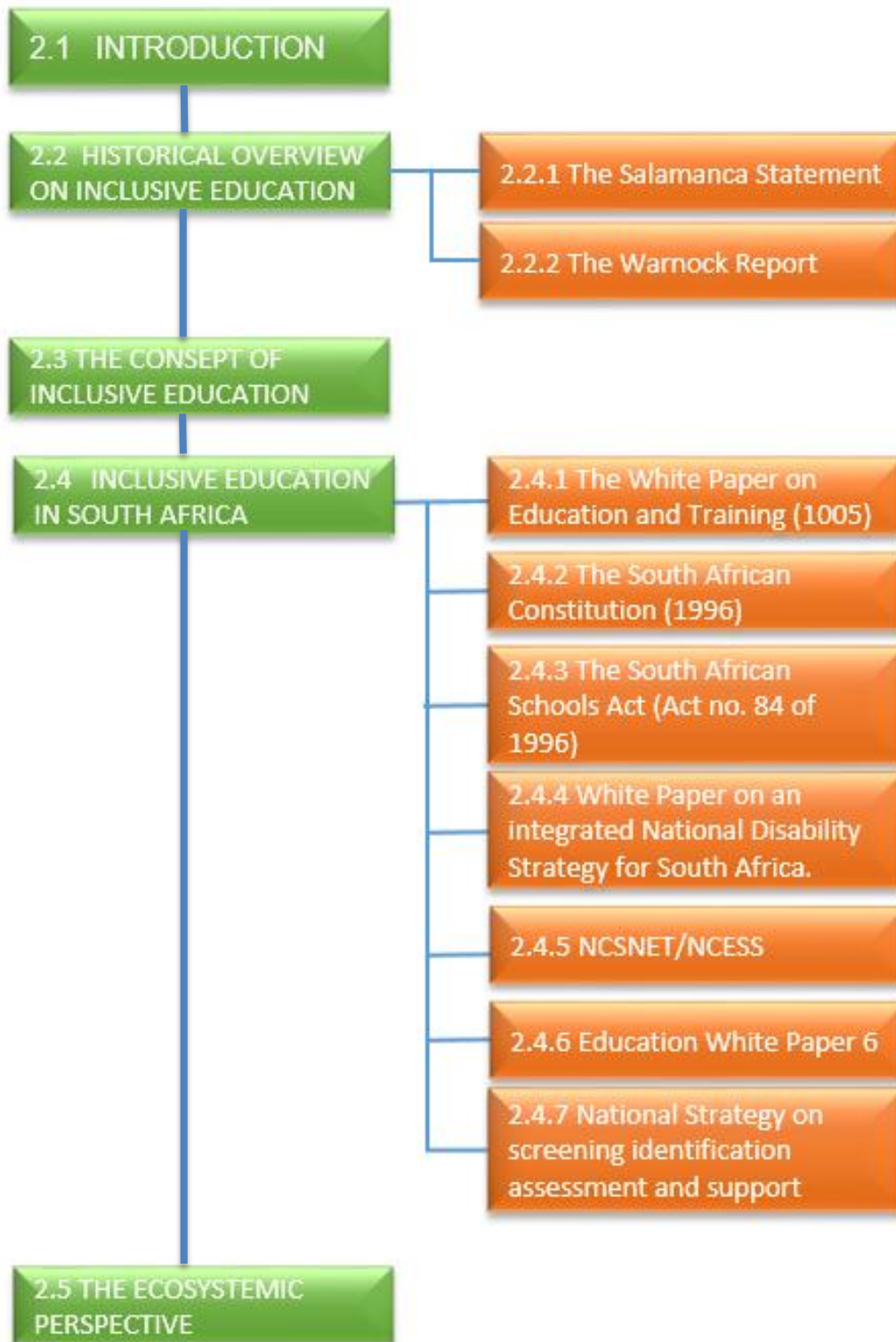
1.12 SUMMARY

The following were discussed in this chapter:

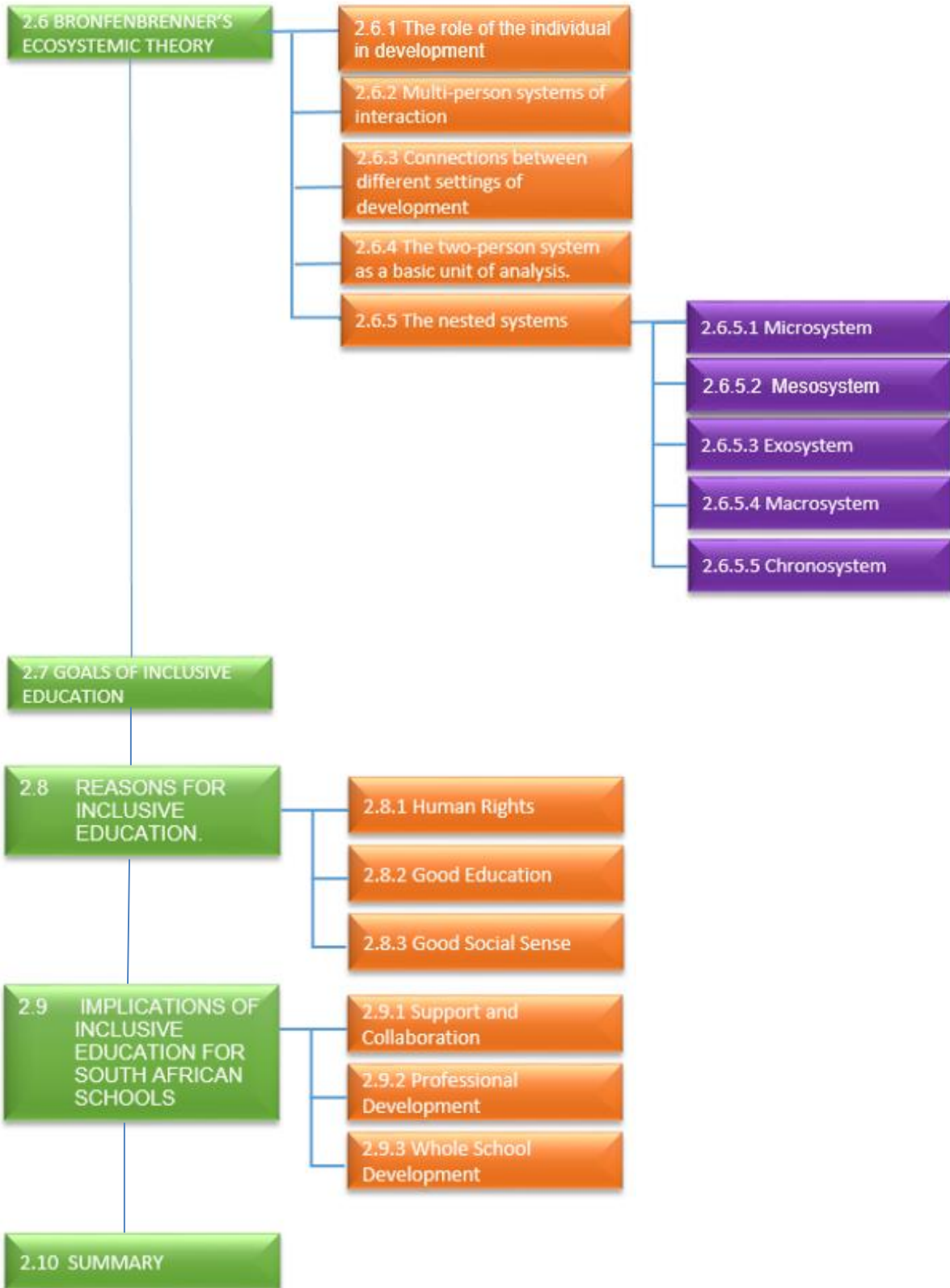
- The problem statement and the aim of the study.
- The design and methodology applied in this study.
- The ethical considerations anticipated for the research as well as the validity and reliability of the study.
- The theoretical framework underlying the study.

- Sampling, with specific reference to convenience, purposive and judgement sampling, on how relevant evidence about the phenomenon will be gathered.
- Data analysis and coding where data is divided into small units of meaning.
- The final stage of data analysis, namely determining common themes, is also discussed.
- In the last section of this chapter the key concepts used in this study are clarified and the study programme is discussed.

**CHAPTER 2 OUTLINE:
INCLUSIVE EDUCATION AND BRONFENBRENNER'S
ECO-SYSTEMIC THEORY**



Continue on next page.



CHAPTER 2

INCLUSIVE EDUCATION AND BRONFENBRENNER'S

ECO-SYSTEMIC THEORY

2.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents the relevant literature on policies and practices regarding the implementation of Inclusive Education in South Africa, as well as Bronfenbrenner's eco-systemic theory, which forms the theoretical framework of this study. This is necessary for the study since ILSTs are embedded in Inclusive Education and also because different systems and sub-systems influence the work of the ILST, as indicated in Chapter 4 and 5. Reference is made to education policies and practises before and after 1994. This information is of paramount importance for this study as it elucidates the transition and the implementation of an Inclusive Education system, which necessitates the establishment and functioning of ILSTs at schools.

The development of an Inclusive Education system is imperative for the South African society as all learners have equal value, equal opportunity, self-reliance and independence (Lomofsky and Lazarus, 2001:303; Engelbrecht, 1999:15). The South African Federal Council on Disability (SAFCD) proposed the development of a single Inclusive Education system, as they believed that education should be available to all learners irrespective of their disability or learning difficulty (Engelbrecht, 1999:15).

From 1990 to 1994, influential reports and policy development came into being in South Africa, focusing on the universal principle of a human right to basic education (Lomofsky et al.,2001:303). These reports, in conjunction with the Constitution of South Africa and the South African Schools Act, commit themselves to promote, protect and fulfil the needs of all learners, especially those experiencing barriers to learning. (Chamber, 2001:12, Jamieson and Proudlock, 2009:4).

The Constitution of South Africa incorporates the Bill of Rights that specifies the human right to basic education as mentioned in Chapter 1. Therefore, based on our Constitution which respects the rights of all and recognises our diverse nation, South

Africa embarked on a unitary system of education and training, with the heralding in of its young democracy in 1994.

The South African Constitution protects all children from any form of discrimination, therefore the Ministry of Education is compelled to provide education that is appropriate to the needs of all children (Jamieson et al., 2009: 5; Engelbrecht, 2006:254; Lomofsky et al., 2001:304,). This principle remains part of the various policy documents in the Department of Education, including the Education White Paper 6 – Building an Inclusive Education and Training System (Department of Education, 2001).

2.2 HISTORICAL OVERVIEW ON INCLUSIVE EDUCATION

To comprehend the concept of Inclusive Education in its totality, the following section will provide a brief historical overview on how Inclusive Education came into being. There are several significant international events in the evolution of Inclusive Education. Below is a list of some of those events in order to provide this overview:

- 1948 – The Universal Declaration of Human Rights ensures the rights to free elementary education for all children.
- 1960 – The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) Convention against Discrimination in Education.
- 1989 – World Declaration on Education for All (Jomtien)
- 1993 – The United Nations Standard Rules on the Equalisation of Opportunities for Persons with Disabilities.
- 1994 – The Salamanca Statement and Framework for Action on Special Needs Education.
- 2000 – World Education Forum’s Framework for Action and the Millennium Development Goals.
- 2001 – UNESCO launched its Education for All Flagship Programme on the right to education for persons with disabilities.

The above-mentioned documents will not all be discussed for the purpose and scope of this study. The following documents will now be discussed, highlighting their impact on Inclusive Education.

- The Salamanca Statement
- The Warnock Report.

2.2.1 The Salamanca Statement

Arguably, the most significant international event in the field of Special Education is the Salamanca World Conference on Special Education, held at Salamanca, Spain, in June 1994. More than 300 representatives from 92 governments and 25 organizations gathered at this World Conference. At this event governments were urged to adopt and recommit themselves to the principle of Inclusive Education (Miles and Singal, 2008:8).

The document resulting from this conference, the Salamanca Statement, affirms international commitment to Inclusive Education. This conference paved the way for an Inclusive Education system in South Africa. Inclusive Education argues that all learners should have access to schools and that schools should be able to serve all children, addressing the diverse needs of all learners especially those learners with special educational needs, (Thomas and Vaughan, 2004:32; Mitchell,2008:28; UNESCO,1994:14-20).

Ainscow and César, (2006(a):231) reviewed the literature on The Salamanca Statement further and found that inclusive schools are the most effective means to oppose discriminatory attitudes, build an inclusive society and achieve quality education for all. The Salamanca Statement called for inclusion to be the worldwide norm.

The Salamanca Statement proclaims the following:

- Every child has a right to education.
- All children should be granted the opportunity to reach their potential and maintain an acceptable level of achievement.
- Every child has exclusive qualities, interests, aptitudes and learning needs.
- Education should accommodate learner diversity, through Inclusive Education.
- Learner support and intervention should be provided to all learners, creating schools as supportive centres of quality teaching and learning.

- Learners with special educational needs must have access to regular schools that are capable of meeting the diverse needs of all learners within a child-centred approach.
- Inclusive schools are the most effective means of fighting discriminatory attitudes and building an inclusive society, where all learners feel welcomed.

(Miles et al., 2008:8 and UNESCO, 1994:15)

The Salamanca Statement is regarded as the most important international document for special needs in education (Ainscow et al., 2010:402). It reaffirms the right of every individual to education. As stated before, the Salamanca Statement believes that each learner has unique characteristics, interests, abilities, disabilities and learning characteristics. This principle is endorsed in the Warnock Report and serves as a solid argument for the inclusion of all learners in mainstream education, irrespective of the fact that they have certain challenges that hamper learning.

2.2.2 The Warnock Report

Inclusive Education promotes the maximum participation of all learners at school, as stated in Chapter 1. However, Inclusive Education does not mean that all learners with disabilities will be part of mainstream education. It does recognise that all learners are entitled to belong in a school, providing appropriate educational support to each learner (Swart, et al. 2005(a):4, Knowles, 2006:11). This is confirmed in the Warnock Report. According to Child (2004:274), this report is regarded as the most influential report on special education within Inclusive Education. This view is supported by Donald et al., (1997:20) and he elaborated further by stating that the educational needs of learners will vary according to their individual needs. This principle is evident in the implementation of Inclusive Education.

These international events paved the way for an education system that embraces the universal principle of the human right to basic education, parity and the recognition of the rights of parents, educators and all learners, and those with disabilities. This system, known as Inclusive Education, will now be discussed.

2.3 THE CONCEPT OF INCLUSIVE EDUCATION

Defining the concept of Inclusive Education can be complex, as people interpret Inclusive Education differently. Ainscow and Cesar, (2006 (a):233), Lorenz, (2002:1), Armstrong, Armstrong and Spandagou (2010:29) and Swart et al. (2005(a):3) state that many definitions for the concept of Inclusive Education have evolved. Armstrong et al., (2010:29) state that the concept “inclusion” means different things to different people.

Inclusive Education can be described as a process of addressing and responding to learner diversity through creating an environment for inclusive learning practices. The creation of inclusive learning practices may result in an increase in learner participation in all learning activities (Blamires and Moore, 2004:21, Naicker, 2007:19 and Donald, Lazarus and Lolwana, 2010:16).

Topping and Maloney, (2005:32) agree and elaborate further by stating that Inclusive Education is an opportunity for all learners to participate fully in all educational activities that occur in the school community. In addition to these views, Evans (2007:8) describes Inclusive Education as a way of life whereby all learners are valued in a learning environment irrespective of race, class, gender, background, attainment or disability. Bornman and Rose (2010:20) agree and state that Inclusive Education promotes equal participation and non-discrimination within a single education system.

Irrespective of the multiple perspectives used to describe Inclusive Education, Swart et al. (2005(a):4) and Green (2001:4) identify the following commonalities in Inclusive Education:

- It is a pledge to building a just and democratic society.
- It is a pledge to building an equitable (fair and just) education system.
- Expose mainstream education to learner diversity.

Undoubtedly, Inclusive Education is about equal opportunities for all learners, irrespective their age, gender, ethnicity, attainment and background (Ofsted.2000:4) from Gina Knowles (2006:11).

According to Donald et al., (1997:20), Inclusive Education refers to a “broad philosophical and principled position in relation to the educational rights of all children”. Inclusion is a worldwide principle and has a worldwide agenda. The term “inclusion” has become a national and international buzz word (Swart et al., 2005(a):3–4). Inclusion in the international arena is viewed as a positive response to pupil diversity.

Furthermore, Inclusive Education is a process of establishing positive learning opportunities for all (Cole, 2004:40; South Africa, International Conference on Education,2008:11). It is a progressive, continuous movement in educational activities, creating equal opportunities for all learners. In this process, schools welcome and cater for learner diversity (Lorenz, 2002:104).

Additionally, Inclusive Education commits itself to the provision of education for all learners according to their individual needs. As mentioned in Chapter 1, section 1.10.5 Inclusive Education demands a school culture that welcomes learner diversity (Swart et al. 2005 (a):19; Mitchell,2008:27). The school culture needs to adapt and change in order to create systems and structures that develop and support a flexible curriculum where adaptations to teaching and learning is evident in the goal to meet the individual needs of all learners.

The main emphasis of Inclusive Education is to make it possible for all learners to access the curriculum. The National Curriculum Statements (NCS) contribute positively in realising Inclusive Education. The National Curriculum Statement (NCS) has flexible features, enabling educators to deal with the diverse needs in their classrooms. Furthermore, Inclusive Education acknowledges and respects differences in learners. Therefore, Inclusive Education in close collaboration with the NCS strives to maximise the participation of learners in all learning activities and so minimize barriers to learning (Knowles, 2006:18).

The National Curriculum Statement (NCS) establishes three principles that are of paramount importance when considering an inclusive approach to education. They are:

- Setting suitable learning challenges.
- Responding to the diverse needs of all learners.

- Overcoming possible barriers to learning and assessment for all
(Knowles, 2006:18; Evans, 2007:2).

The National Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statements (CAPS) and the guidelines for responding to learner diversity in the classroom through Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement (2011) states that inclusivity should be a central part in the organization, planning and teaching at all schools (Department of Education, 2011(a):3). This can only happen if educators have a sound knowledge regarding identifying and addressing barriers to learning. Inclusivity can be assured when barriers are identified and addressed by the support structures within the school, such as the Institutional Level Support Team (ILST), District Based Support Team (DBST), parents and communities (Department of Education, 2011(a):3).

The National Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statements (CAPS) are standard-based instruction designed in such a way that it assists educators in planning for the diverse learner needs in their classrooms. Clarification notes are provided that assist educators to differentiate instruction to accommodate all students, and thus promote inclusive practices (Department of Education, 2011).

Lomofsky et al., (2001:306) maintain that Inclusive Education is based on a value system that recognises and celebrates diversity and concerns itself with the respect of human right. Inclusive Education is therefore inseparable from the way in which communities lives together (South Africa, International Conference on Education, 2008:6).

According to Lomofsky et al., (2001:306), inclusion in South Africa strives to create an inclusive society. Similarly, Topping et al., (2005:42–43) believe inclusion must be at the heart of any community which celebrates diversity and strives for equal opportunities for all. It is about the values and principles which nurture society.

Inclusive Education gained visibility when it became a rights issue for people with disabilities. Inclusion is a moral issue of human rights as embodied in the Salamanca Statement. It emphasised the equality and full citizenship for all and that all learners will have access to education (Green, 2001:4 and Swart et al., 2005(a):4). This is confirmed in the Warnock Report, as discussed in Section 2.2.2.

Inclusive Education requires that educators, parents, schools and communities identify and overcome any barrier that hinders learners' ability to achieve their full potential. It involves different ways of meeting the diverse learner needs, including the specific needs of learners with barriers to learning and development. Mitchell (2008:27) depicts Inclusive Education as a multi-component strategy or a mega-strategy, where different role players, specifically educators and parents, need to work in close collaboration with each other to meet the diverse needs of all learners. Engelbrecht, (2006:257) and Swart et al. (2005(a):3) have the same opinion and state that educators, the implementers or foot soldiers of inclusive practices at school level, need to fully comprehend Inclusive Education and they need to work in close collaboration with all stakeholders, in order to make informed decisions and choices with regards to effective learner support and intervention.

According to Engelbrecht (2006:257), Inclusive Education implies a redefinition of educator roles in mainstream schools. It is expected that educators accept a collaborative role, envisaging an inclusive classroom that accommodates learner diversity. Previous studies have reported that successful inclusion requires each educator to accept full responsibility for the teaching and learning of all learners at the school and in the classrooms (Lorenz, 2002:43). Lomofsky et al., (2001: 306) highlights that educators are responsible for the education of all learners and the curriculum adaptations required to suit the needs of all learners. It is for this reason that educators need to maximise the active participation of all learners in the educational culture and curriculum of their respective schools.

An inclusive school is one in which the teaching, learning, achievement, attitudes and well being of each learner matters. Inclusive schools show their ethos and willingness to offer new opportunities to all pupils who may experience difficulties. The school teaches and preaches education for all and promotes tolerance and understanding at their school. In inclusive schools, learners assist each other on a continuous basis and collaborative work is encouraged (Lorenz, 2002:39).

In order to become an inclusive school, schools should focus on:

- Changing the attitudes towards learners experiencing barriers to learning.
- Acquire resources to guarantee effective policy implementation.

- Making the school environment accessible for all and making the school conducive to Inclusive Education learning practices.
- Improving physical access through the provision of lifts and ramps for easy access of disabled students as assistive devices.
- Everyone is made to feel welcome.
- Children help each other.
- The school has close links with the community, is involved in the work and activities of the local community, and the community has strong links with the school (Lorenz, 2002:11; Knowles, 2006:13).

This notion of an inclusive school is echoed by a systemic approach in education. Lazarus, Daniels and Engelbrecht (1999:53) state that a systems approach to human development emphasises the self in society and the way the different aspects of everyday life create life experiences. The environment in which a learner finds himself from micro to macro level as well as the interrelatedness between various systems is emphasised (Lazarus et al., 1999:57-62) Development of the learner should be studied holistically so as to comprehend the holistic development of the learner.

A systemic approach to Inclusive Education addresses the educational needs of all learners in a supportive learning environment. This is evident in Bronfenbrenner bio-eco-systemic theory as discussed in Section 2.6. Donald, Lazarus and Lolwana (2002:23) maintain that Inclusive Education emphasises that the learning environment of the learner should meet the needs of all learners in a normal and inclusive environment.

Engelbrecht, (2006:255-257) draws our attention to a systemic approach, where learner support and intervention strategies and structures are orientated towards building the capacity of the learning environment of the learner to respond to the needs of learners as well as to the full range of barriers to learning. Furthermore, it is expected from all role players within a systemic approach to share and build on their existing knowledge in order to increase the inclusive capacity of the school. The principle of community psychology plays a pivotal role in sharing and building on existing knowledge.

It is necessary here, to clarify what is meant by community psychology. Community psychology refers directly to the eco-systemic point of view, meaning that all systems need to work together towards a common goal. Furthermore, community psychology refers to respect for all and an acceptance of differences amongst people and communities, as well as a pledge to avail societal resources to all, irrespective of dissimilarities between individuals. (Visser, 2007:108-110).

For the purpose of this study, access to societal resources for learner support and intervention is the most important component within community psychology. The use of resources within the community will enable ILST members to share and build on existing knowledge. Therefore, ILST members need to collaborate regularly with community members in their effort to support learners experiencing barriers. For the duration of collaboration, knowledge will be shared and resources within the community will be used optimally, to facilitate learner support and intervention.

According to Nel, Lazarus and Daniels, (2010:S22), community psychology understands and responds to the psychosocial challenges within education, within the school, and within communities. This means that community psychology focuses on the well-being of all learners and people at school and within communities. Community psychology takes into account social conditions, such as poverty, housing challenges, transport difficulties and the literacy level of all learners and individuals. Health promotion has become very important within community psychology.

Health promotion highlights the physical, mental, social, environmental, economic and spiritual welfare of all people. Nel, et al., (2010:S22) explained health promotion further by stating that health promotion concerns itself with the holistic well-being of all people. These character traits of both community psychology and health promotion encapsulate the principles of Inclusive Education.

It is clear that Inclusive Education is a complex and multifaceted concept. The way in which it is defined can be linked to the context and perspective in which it is used (Engelbrecht and Green, 2007(a):6). The following section will describe Inclusive Education in South Africa, looking at the context and perspective in which it is used.

2.4 INCLUSIVE EDUCATION IN SOUTH AFRICA

The researcher will concentrate on the period after 1994, when South Africa experienced a holistic transformation, with specific reference to changes within education and the development of Inclusive Education policies and practices. Preceding 1994, educational reviews reveal massive deprivation of educational provisioning for the majority of South African citizens (Department of Education, 1997(b):21). Subsequent to 1994, the general education system was transformed into one unitary, non-racial department (Lomofsky et al., 2001:303). A unified national education department was established in the new dispensation.

It is evident that international trends has influenced educational thinking in South Africa. National and International policies, principles and guidelines paved the way for an Inclusive Education and Training System in South Africa (Lomofsky et al., 2001:308; Naicker, 2007:12). Inclusive Education in South Africa has a firm foundation in the South African Constitution of 1996 and The South African Schools Act 84 of 1996. These policies are evidence of legislation giving flesh to the principles of Inclusive Education.

In South Africa, significant policies and documents on Inclusive Education appeared after 1994. These policies and documents emphasise the right to basic education. Some of the important documents will be mentioned and some of them discussed for the purpose of this study. These documents will indicate how Inclusive Education was introduced in an effort to give credibility to a democratic South Africa in which the rights of all learners are taken into consideration.

- The White Paper on Education and Training (1995)
- The South African Constitution (1996).
- The South African Schools Act (Act No. 84 of 1996.)
- White Paper on an Integrated National Disability Strategy for South Africa (Department of Education, 1997).
- National Commission on Special Needs in Education and Training (NCSNET) and National Committee for Education Support Services (NCESS) - 1997.
- Education White Paper 6 – Special Needs Education. Building an Inclusive Education and Training System – July 2001.

- Conceptual guidelines for the implementation of Inclusive Education – 2002.
- Conceptual and operational guidelines for the implementation of Inclusive Education: District-based support teams – 2003.
- Conceptual and operational guidelines for the implementation of Inclusive Education: Full Service Schools - 2003.
- Conceptual and operational guidelines for district-based support teams – 2005.
- Guidelines for Inclusive Learning Programmes - 2005.
- Conceptual and Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of Inclusive Education: Special Schools as Resource Centres - 2005.
- National Strategy on Screening, Identification, Assessment and Support-2008
- Guidelines for Full-service / Inclusive Schools – 2009.
- Guidelines for Inclusive Teaching and Learning- 2010.
- Support and adaptations for learners who experience barriers in assessment – 2010.
- Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS) Foundation and Intermediate Phase – 2011.
- Guidelines for responding to learner diversity in the classroom through curriculum and assessment policy statements - 2011.

The importance of some of the above mentioned documents will now be explored, in order to stress the important role played by Inclusive Education in which Institutional Level Support Teams are embedded as mentioned earlier in this chapter.

2.4.1 White Paper on Education and Training (1995)

The White Paper brings about change in South African educational policy, which is in line with international trends. It provides a framework for educational transformation, envisaging change that will meet the diverse needs of all learners (Department of Education, 1997(b):43).

The White Paper identifies four key areas of concern:

- Education should ensure that all learners are lifelong learners.
- To redress the educational inequalities of the past.

- All learners should be granted learning opportunities and resources must be provided to all.
- Education must be of good quality (Department of Education, 1997(b):43).

Within the White Paper, the Department of Education presented essential initiatives responding to the diverse needs of learners. These initiatives involve the following programmes:

- a) The Culture of Teaching and Learning (COLT), cultivating teaching and learning at schools.
- b) The National Qualifications Framework (NQF) is designed towards Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL).
- c) Curriculum 2005 based on an Outcomes Based Education (OBE) approach. Outcomes Based Education is inclusive in nature, as it emphasises the process needed by learners to achieve the required outcome.
- d) The new Language Policy, which recognises the twelve official languages including Sign Language (Swart et al. 2005 (a):17; Lomofsky et al., 2001:308).

The White Paper on Education and Training (1995) endeavoured to uncover and remove possible barriers to learning, which is a characteristic of Inclusive Education. The White Paper on Education and Training and The South African Constitution (1996) constructed a paradigm shift towards Inclusive Education in South Africa.

2.4.2 The South African Constitution (1996)

The Constitution of South Africa (Act 108 of 1996) contains the Bill of Rights which emphasises the importance of democracy. Human rights and social justice for all learners are emphasised, as well as the optimum participation and social integration of all learners (Nel, Lazarus and Daniels, 2010:S21). This document has a significant impact on educational policies and the implementation thereof. Within the South African Constitution the state recognises:

- The basic human right to education

- A single, Inclusive Education system for all learners.
- All learners to access the curriculum, enabling them to participate in the learning process.
- That children have a basic right to family and parental care (Department of Education, 1997(a):25; Nel, et al., 2010:S21; Landsberg,2005:62).

2.4.3 The South African Schools Act (Act No. 84 of 1996)

The South African Schools Act of 1996 embodies the principles of the Constitution of South Africa. A key feature of the South African Schools Act is the emphasis on the right of all learners to access basic and quality education (Department of Education,1997(a):32; Bornman et al., 2010:25; Landsberg, 2005:62). In response to the need for educational reform, the Ministry of Education announced an “Education Renewal Strategy” for South Africa (Department of Education 1997(a):24).

The Act provides important mechanisms for the implementation of an education system that addresses the diverse needs of all learners (Department of Education, 1997(b):32; Department of Education, 1997(b):43). The Act dictates that all learners, irrespective of their disabilities, should have equal opportunities in education. If need be, additional support must be provided to learners experiencing barriers to learning. Schools must be resourced to fulfil this obligation towards all learners (Chamber, 2001:17).

In order to implement the expectations of the South African Constitution and The South African Schools Act, the Ministry of Education appointed the National Commission on Special Needs in Education and Training (NCSNET) and National Committee for Education Support Services (NCESS). The NCSNET and NCESS will be discussed in Section 2.4.5.

2.4.4 White Paper on an Integrated National Disability Strategy for South Africa (Department of Education, 1997)

The *White Paper on an Integrated National Disability Strategy (INDS)* emphasises the need to develop a holistic educational model based on the principle of human rights. It promotes the recognition and acceptance of people with disabilities as equal

members of their communities. Furthermore, it argues that people with disabilities are as entitled to all facets of society as are the rest of society (Department of Education, 1997(b):46). Therefore, it was suggested that it might not be in the best interest of communities to separate those with disabilities (Engelbrecht and Green, 2007(a):3). Communities must accommodate the diverse needs of all (Swart et al. 2005(a): 17). In addition, Mothata (2000:6) states that the Strategy strives to accomplish:

- The development of an integrated support system for people with disabilities.
- Capacity building that will increase government ability to implement the recommendations of this document.
- Continuous advocacy, aimed at changing the attitudes of society towards those with disabilities.

This document proposes equity for all learners with disabilities. It implies the availability of learner support structures within an inclusive learning environment. To accomplish this, change needs to occur in many spheres of service delivery. A multi-disciplinary team approach needs to be accepted. Various stakeholders, including education, health, parents and other professionals need to embrace their responsibility towards people with disabilities (Bornman et al., 2010:25). A detailed exposition on the roles and responsibilities of all role players within the SIAS process will be given in Chapter 3, section 3.7.1.

In addition, this document has very important implications for the recommendations made by the National Commission on Special Needs in Education and Training (NCSNET) and the National Committee for Education Support Services (NCESS), with regards to Inclusive Education. Their contribution towards Inclusive Education will be discussed in the following section.

2.4.5 National Commission on Special Needs in Education and Training (NCSNET) and National Committee for Education Support Services (NCESS)

In October 1996, the South African Ministry of Education appointed the National Commission on Special Needs in Education and Training (NCSNET), the National Committee for Education Support Services (NCESS), and others to reflect on a break

away from traditional special needs education to barriers to learning and development (Stofle and Green, 2007:54; Department of Education, 2002:6; Muthukrishna and Schoeman, 2000:315; Landsberg, 2005:62). Lomofsky, et al., (2001:305) share the same viewpoint and elaborated by stating that the initiatives by the South African Ministry of Education echoed the philosophies of international policies and principles. In addition to this, the Minister of Education wanted to ensure that the education system in South Africa responds to the diverse needs of all learners (Department of Education, 1997(b):1; Nel, et al., 2010:S20; Muthukrishna, et al., 2000:324).

According to Waghid and Engelbrecht, (2002:21) and Muthukrishna, et al., (2000:326), the NCSNET and NCESS acknowledged the complexity of learner needs and envisaged an education system that would accommodate learner diversity, through inclusive and supportive measures, enabling all learners to access education and reach their full potential. With such a vision in mind, all learners will be actively involved in educational opportunities. Inclusive and supportive centres of learning will enable learners to develop themselves, reach their full potential and prepare themselves for social integration as equal members of the society (Department of Education:1997(b):131; Muthukrishna, et al., 2000:326-327; Chamber, 2001:17).

In order to accomplish this vision of enabling all learners to access education and to reach their full potential, the NCSNET and NCESS proposed the following amendments:

- Change from an individual approach to a systemic approach in education.
- Schools should reflect an inclusive ethos which embraces learner diversity and enable all learners to participate actively in the education process.
- The education system should address factors which lead to learning breakdown.
- A holistic approach to school development, facilitating a positive attitude towards teaching and learning.
- A flexible curriculum, which responds to learner diversity.
- Accept the principles and values of the Constitution of South Africa and the White Papers on Education and Training.
- Human rights and social justice for all learners.

- Active participation and social integration of all members in communities.
- Equal access to education and curriculum for all children of school-going age. (Chamber, 2001:17; Muthukrishna, 2002:2; Waghid et al., 2002:21; Muthukrishna, et al., 2000:328).

Furthermore, the report stressed the need for a paradigm shift in learner support towards a systemic approach, whereby various stakeholders will be actively involved in learner support and intervention, which will enable learners to access education and receive the support they need to reach their full potential (Muthukrishna, et al., 2000:327).

Inclusive Education practices in South Africa progressed with the completion of recommendations by the National Commission on Special Education Needs and Training (NCSNET) and the National Committee for Education Support Services (NCESS) at the end of 1997, as these formed the conceptual framework for the National Education White Paper 6: Special Needs Education, Building an Inclusive Education and Training System.

The committees reported the following:

- Under the apartheid education system, learners experiencing barriers to learning was called Learners with Special Educational Needs (LSEN).
- Special education was for a small number of learners in special classes in mainstream schools or special schools.
- Learners with disabilities were in special schools or never attended school, prior to the new education system.
- The curriculum could not respond to the diverse needs of learners, hence the large amount of out-of-school youth (Department of Education, 2001:5-7)

The Ministry of Education responded to the recommendations of these commissions. In light of the results a new policy was put on the table. This new policy aimed to promote education for all and foster the development of Inclusive Education. This policy is called Education White Paper 6 – Special Needs Education. Building an Inclusive Education and Training System (Muthukrishna, et al., 2000:326).

2.4.6 Education White Paper 6 – Special Needs Education. Building an Inclusive Education and Training System

Education White Paper 6 contains evidence of legislation giving flesh to the principles of inclusion in South Africa (Bornman, et al., 2010:25). A number of documents and studies reported that the Education White Paper 6 aims to create a systemic education system in South Africa in line with international trends, where transformational change in education is evident (Department of Education, 1997(b):43; Engelbrecht, 2006:253). Moreover, this policy document paves the way for all learners to participate actively in educational activities, reach their full potential and become equal, active members of society (Department of Education, 2001:5-7; Department of Education, 1997(b):43).

Inclusive Education in South Africa embraces the values of equality and human rights; therefore the unfair, unjust education system prior to 1994 had to change into a system that gives equal opportunities to all (Engelbrecht, 2006:253; Department of Education, 2002:4). The Department of Education changed the policies of education to ensure that the vision, values and principles that inform education are recognised (Department of Education, 2002:4; Department of Education, 1997(b):43).

Education White Paper 6 notes four key areas:

- All learners should become part of a lifelong learning process.
- Recognition that inequalities existed and that there is a need to redress the inequalities.
- All learners must have equal educational opportunities.
- Education must be of a good quality (Department of Education, 2001:43).

Lomofsky et al., (2001:308) state that Education White Paper 6: Building an Inclusive Education and Training System (2001) introduced the following initiatives and outlines six strategies for establishing an Inclusive Education. These are:

- Advocacy and information programmes that supports the Inclusive Education model.
- The improvement and conversion of Special Schools to Resource Centres becoming part of the District Based Support Teams (DBSTs)..
- The conversion of mainstream primary schools to Full-Service Schools.

- The establishment of District Based Support Teams, to afford support services to Special Schools, Full Service Schools and other schools within district.
- Enlighten School Management Teams (SMTs), School Governing Bodies (SGBs) and educators on the Inclusive Education model and accentuate the importance of early identification and intervention.
- The mobilization of disabled children and out-of-school youth (Department of Education, 2001:7-8; Stofile, et al., 2007:55).

For the purpose of this study, the other documents mentioned in section 2.4 will not be discussed in detail as their relevant content is encapsulated in other sections discussed in this chapter. Chapter 3, section 3.7, will elaborate further on some of these documents. The National Strategy on Screening, Identification, Assessment and Support will now be discussed.

2.4.7 National Strategy on Screening, Identification, Assessment and Support (2008)

When Education White Paper 6: Special Needs Education, Building an Inclusive Education and Training System was approved, the Department of Education had to design a plan to implement this paper. One component of the implementation of Inclusive Education is the National Strategy on Screening, Identification, Assessment and Support (SIAS). In 2008, SIAS was released. SIAS aims to respond to the diverse needs of all learners within the schooling system and to facilitate school access for children who were marginalised or totally excluded (Department of Education, 2008; Bornman et al., 2010:37).

The National Strategy on Screening, Identification, Assessment and Support introduces new roles and responsibilities to various stakeholders involved in the scholastic career of the child. It acknowledges the central role played by educators, parents, Special Schools as Resource Centres, Full Service Schools, communities, District Based Support Teams and Institutional Level Support Teams (Department of Education, 2008). Screening, Identification, Assessment and Support (SIAS) will be discussed in detail in Chapter 3.

Inclusive Education must be structured and function in such a manner that it accommodates learner diversity and needs. Therefore inclusion is more than just educators and learners working together at school (Bornman et al., 2010:9). The theoretical framework of this study, which is Bronfenbrenner's eco systemic theory, indicates that learners are linked to different organisms and their environment and therefore all stakeholders have a responsibility towards all learners, especially those experiencing scholastic challenges.

According to Quality Education for All, (Department of Education, 1997 (c):11), it is believed that a complex and dynamic relationship exists between the individual learner, his family, the school, the community and the broader society. According to Swart, et al., (2005(a):10) and Bronfenbrenner,(1972:51), Bronfenbrenner's eco systemic theory of development emphasises the interaction between a learner's development and the social context in which the learner finds himself. In addition to this, Bornman et al., (2010:9) highlights the importance of Bronfenbrenner's eco systemic theory, where emphasis is placed on various systems working in close collaboration with each other, in supporting all learners. Furthermore, this theory demonstrates that whatever happens in the one system, affects all other systems.

Inclusive practices call for the different systems to work in close collaboration with each other in their endeavour to support learners experiencing scholastic challenges. Partnerships should be established between parents, educators, learners, schools and the broader community (Department of Education, 1997(c)):131).

Therefore, in order to understand and support learners experiencing barriers to learning effectively, one cannot separate the broader social context and the systems within it, including the learner (Swart et al., 2005 (a):10).

2.5 THE ECO-SYSTEMIC PERSPECTIVE: UNDERSTANDING THE INTERACTION BETWEEN INDIVIDUALS AND CONTEXTS

In order to create a contextual understanding of Inclusive Education, it is essential and useful to understand the social processes of learning that go hand-in-hand with particular contexts. Inclusive Education addresses social life in its totality and does not concentrate on education only (Swart, et al., 2005(a):9; Engelbrecht, (1999:3). The

use of an eco-systemic perspective could be valuable in understanding inclusive practices.

An eco-systemic approach emphasises that human experiences and actions occur in everyday life as part of the holistic development of the learner (Engelbrecht, 1999:3). An old Chinese proverb “It takes a whole village to raise a child” is evident within a systemic approach to learner support. With such an approach in mind, educators may gain a better understanding of Inclusive Education, with specific reference to learner support and intervention.

A deep-rooted association and mutual understating exist between the environment and the person. It involves a reciprocal and dynamic relationship between the two variables (Hook, 2009:502, Bornman, et al., 2010:9). Swart, et al., (2005(a):10) agree and state that what happens in one system affects other systems. If a major disruption should occur in one part of the system, the entire system may be disturbed (Donald, et al., 2010:37). In other words, all systems are essential in the development of the learner or the person and therefore the system is greater than its parts (Donald, et al., 2010:36; Swart, et al., 2005(a):12; Green, 2001:8).

Inclusive Education is constructed and constrained by various factors and systems operating at different levels (Singal, 2006:240). The various levels within the system influence one another on a continuous basis (Engelbrecht, et al., 1999:4). Change and development in one level has an effect on other levels (Green, 2001:8). Consequently Bronfenbrenner’s eco systemic theory is applicable to this study.

Bronfenbrenner believe that the individual learner is part of a complex, interrelated network of contexts, which may influence the learner’s ability to make scholastic progress (Bronfenbrenner, 1972:16). Bornman, et al., (2010:9) agree and state that the child should be regarded as part of the community, as well as part of the home and school context. Furthermore, Bronfenbrenner explains the interrelatedness and reciprocity between various contexts, and how these contexts (home, school and communities) influence a person’s development (Bronfenbrenner, 1972:16).

Development involves a reciprocal and dynamic relationship between systems in which each developing person is significantly affected by interactions between the

overlapping systems. The different levels of systems in the whole social context influence one another in a continuous process (Engelbrecht, et al., 1999:4). The interconnectedness of these systems influence and shape individuals on a continuous basis (Singal, 2006:240).

Bronfenbrenner's eco-systemic theory of human development is explanatory of systemic influences on child development. He argues that various factors, those in close proximity to the child, representing the microsystem and those factors that do not influence the child directly the macrosystem, may affect the child in one way or another (Swart, et al., 2005(a):9). The system in close proximity to the child is encapsulated within the micro and meso-system.

The layers of interacting systems can be distinguished as microsystems, mesosystems, exosystems, macrosystems and chronosystems (Singal, 2006:240; Swart, et al., 2005(a):10). Donald, et al., (2010:37) elaborate further by stating that the systems affect and are affected by each other. Different levels and groups of people are interactive systems where the functioning of the whole is dependent on the interaction between all parts. The interdependence between its parts forms the system as a whole. In the next section the researcher will discuss Bronfenbrenner's eco-systemic theory.

2.6 BRONFENBRENNER'S ECO SYSTEMIC THEORY

Inclusive Education recognises that individuals are linked to various systems, such as parents, schools and communities, within its social context and that these various systems need to work together to establish effective teaching and learning (Department of Education, 2001:16).

Bronfenbrenner acknowledges the equally important role of both the environment of development and the developing person. For him, development is effectively the continuous interaction between the environment (social setting) and the individual. In this situation a mutual understanding must exist between the individual and his environment (Hook, 2009:501-502).

According to Hook, (2009:502) and Donald, et al., (2010:32), Bronfenbrenner believed that the social context of a learner has an intense influence on how the learner develops. In addition to this, he proposed that the developing learner always exists within a unique set of social, political, historical and ideological circumstances. Therefore, the social context of any learner will have a profound impact on how they learn and how they attach meaning to various ideas and concepts.

Knowles, (2006:37) and Hook, (2009:502) mention that Bronfenbrenner defined development as the individual's growing understanding of his environment, his relation to it as well as his growing capacity to learn and sustain his environment. Furthermore, Bronfenbrenner believed that the environment is not a static element that affects all people in the same fashion but rather that it is evolutionary.

2.6.1 The role of the individual in development

Milieu or context is an important factor in any growth and development. The learner must portray proactive characteristic within his growth and development in his context. According to Hook, (2009:502) the learner is not merely tabula rasa on which his environment makes its impact, but is rather a growing dynamic person who moves gradually into his environment, moulding and reforming his or her social milieu or context.

2.6.2 Multi-person system of interaction

According to Hook (2009:502-505) and Swart et al.,(2005(a):10), Bronfenbrenner perceives the development of the learner in terms of systems, where systems are interconnected to each other and form an eco-systemic chain of interrelatedness. The eco-systemic theory can be described as a chain of interacting layers resulting in change, growth and development. Each layer can be associated with a different environment or system of development (Hook, 2009:505).

The layers of interacting systems can be distinguished as microsystems, mesosystems, exosystems, macrosystems and chronosystems (Singal, 2006:240, Swart et al., 2005(a):10; Hook, 2009:505). Green (2001:8) agrees with this viewpoint and explains further that each individual person is influenced by multiple systems that

work together on a continuous basis and therefore the person or learner is able to develop holistically. A detailed discussion on the four eco-systemic will follow in section 2.6.5.

Bronfenbrenner's understanding of the influence of context or milieu on the developing person is not only systemic, he also recognises that influences are constant agents of change, within the environment. Therefore, Bronfenbrenner understands the human being as a multi-person, meaning that people are part of multiple systems, where factors beyond the immediate setting of the learner or person, may have an influence on the learner or the person (Hook, 2009:503). It is therefore true that interconnections between various settings are of paramount importance for effective development.

2.6.3 Connections between different settings of development

For effective education to take place at school level, all relevant stakeholders must be actively involved in the learning process. These stakeholders include parents, educators, learners, communities and other professionals (Riffel, 2011:2). Hook, (2009:503) agrees and believe effective relationships, communication and collaboration should exist between all stakeholders to encourage joint participation in the learning process and so enhance the effective implementation of learner support at school level.

2.6.4 The two-person system as a basic unit of analysis

Hook, (2009:502-504) found that Bronfenbrenner's basic unit of analysis is the two-person system. This means that the two-person system is a dynamic arrangement or relationship within systems featuring a give-and-take relationship within the systems. This relationship is holistic in nature, enabling every part to be as important as the other. Donald et al., (2010:36) agrees with Hook (2009:502-504) and elaborates further by stating that if the relationship within the entire system is in equilibrium, the endurance of the entire system can be guaranteed. In this reciprocal relationship all parties have an effect on its outcome. If one undergoes a process of development, the other will follow suit.

Bronfenbrenner believed that the growth and development of the child occurs within the nested systems, where the child exists within layers of social interactions. Several studies have reported that the four eco-systems are called the microsystem, mesosystem, exosystem and macrosystem (Pillay and Di Terlizzi, 2009:495). All of these systems interact within the chronosystem. Each system will now be discussed in detail.

2.6.5 The four nested systems

2.6.5.1 *Microsystem*

The microsystem is the immediate environment that directly affects the learner. It can be regarded as the closest to the child (Bornman et al., 2010:9). The microsystem encompasses the people with whom the learner comes into direct contact on a regular basis. Several studies such as Hook, (2009:505), Donald, et al., (2010:40) and Swart, et al., (2005(a):10) have reported that, within the microsystem, face-to-face, bi-directional relationships exist between the learner and the inhabitants of the microsystem. Inhabitants include parents, educators, caregivers, families and friends. The family is regarded as the learner's primary microsystem.

Swart, et al., (2005(a):11) agree with the above mentioned viewpoints and elaborates further on the microsystem by stating that the microsystem is characterised by individuals closest to the learner's life. The interactions that occur in the micro-system are the most important aspects in shaping the child's growth and development (Donald, et al., 2010:40). The close face-to-face, long term relationships are called proximal interactions. The proximal interactions can be identified in reciprocal relationships between families, peer groups, classrooms, schools and local communities (Donald, et al., 2010:40; Knowles, 2006:35). In addition, the microsystem includes concrete settings such as the school, home, after-care facilities and the school playground (Hook, 2009:505).

Green (2001:7) reviewed the literature on the microsystem and found that as much as the learner's life is shaped by these microsystems, the very same microsystems may also impose constraints on the learner. This means that within the microsystem, learners may be granted opportunities and challenges. Challenges within the

microsystem correlate with the explanation of the concept barriers to learning, as discussed in Chapter 1, section 1.10.3. According to the description of barriers to learning, these barriers may be located within the learner and within the school. Other barriers may include poverty or the non-involvement of parents in the life of the child. These barriers to learning will be addressed within the Inclusive Education system.

The implementation of the Inclusive Education system lies with the entire school community. It includes learners, parents, educators, School Governing Body (SGB), School Management Team (SMT), the Institutional Level Support Team (ILST), relevant stakeholders and other professionals. Inclusive Education requires that all systems work in close collaboration with each other. No system is able to work in isolation as all systems are interacting dimensions, influencing each other on a continuous basis. At school level, all systems need to work in close collaboration with each other to ensure effective teaching and learning. A detailed discussion on whole school development will follow in Chapter 3 Section, 3.3.5.

Part of the microsystem at school level is the ILST. *According to White Paper 6, Special Needs Education, Building an Inclusive Education and Training System*, an ILST must be established at all schools (Department of Education, 2001:48). According to Lazarus, Daniels and Engelbrecht, (1999:52-53), ILSTs are responsible for managing the process of addressing barriers to learning and development at school level. The ILST must identify, assess and design an Individualised Support Plan (ISP) as discussed in Chapter 3, section 3.7.

Hook, (2009:505) draw our attention to the fact that each microsystem influences the learner's growth and development in one way or another. The following system, commonly known as the mesosystem, takes a broader overview of the developmental context by looking at interrelations amongst the microsystems. A detailed discussion on the mesosystem will now follow.

2.6.5.2 Mesosystem

Bornman et al., (2010:9) define the mesosystem as the interconnections of microsystems. In addition to this, Donald et al., (2010:40) describes the mesosystem as a continuous interaction and communication between the microsystem and the

mesosystem. Bornman, et al., (2010:9) and Donald et al., (2010:40) regard the mesosystem as an extension of the microsystem that embraces specific social structures affecting the immediate setting of the learner. In the mesosystem specific people are not described, but rather a description is given of the communication and relationship between people. Hook, (2009:505-506) and Swart, et al., (2005(a):11) highlight that the mesosystem is formed whenever the developing person, in this study the learner, moves into a new setting.

The interactions of the microsystem are now expanded to the mesosystem which includes the school, extended families and peer groups. The mesosystem accommodates linkages and interconnections between the various facets of the microsystems. Swart, et al., (2005(a):11) believes that the family, school and peer group should interact with each other on a continuous basis. This means that the various microsystems will change on a continuous basis.

Donald, et al., (2010:40) and Knowles, (2006:36) indicate that whatever happens within the family or peer group can have a profound influence on the scholastic development of the child and vice versa. Parents and teachers can collaborate in educational planning for the child (Hook, 2009:505). Pienaar (2013:183) states that educators are important role players in the micro- en mesosystem of the child. The eco-systemic model assumes that learner development is enhanced within the mesosystem if the relevant relationships are positive and compatible (McWhirter, et al., 2007:17).

In the mesosystem, the learner is affected directly by whatever happens within the system; however within the exosystem the learner is affected indirectly. This system will now be discussed in detail.

2.6.5.3 Exosystem

Visser, (2007:107) describe the exosystem as the social system beyond the learner's immediate environment that may affect him in one way or another, such as the community. Swart, et al., (2005(a):11) and Bornman, et al., (2010:9) state that the learner is not directly involved as an active participant within the system but may be influenced by events in the system affecting people in close relationship to the learner.

This means that whatever happens to those people in close proximity to the learner may have a direct influence on the learner. This means that although the learner is not directly involved, he is indirectly affected due to his attachment to people in proximal relationships with him.

Examples of an exosystem factor may include public policy decisions regarding educational standards, educator's wages, parent's workplace and health care related issues. As stated earlier, systems are interrelated and therefore the exosystem will influence the macro system in a particular manner. A detailed discussion on the macrosystem will now follow.

2.6.5.4 *Macrosystem*

Hook, (2009:506) and Visser, (2007:107) have reported that the macrosystem refers to social and economic structures as well as to values, attitudes, beliefs and ideologies of communities. The macrosystem is regarded as the blueprint in the system of a particular society and culture, as it encompasses policy development and implementation. According to Swart, et al., (2005(a):12) these policy developments within the macrosystem may influence all other social systems.

Bornman, et al., (2010:9) indicated that this system is the furthest away from the child. Hook, (2009:506) and Knowles, (2006:36) stated that the micro-, meso- and exosystem are the concrete manifestations of the macrosystem.

The responsibility of the macrosystem includes the passing of laws such as the legislation promoting Inclusive Education practices in South African Schools. Education White Paper 6 recognises the right of all learners to access education. Previously, children with special educational needs would either be placed at Special Schools because of their disability or live in isolation at home. These children were marginalised from their communities as they were not given the opportunity to attend a school (Department of Education, 2001:4). In order to support these learners within mainstream education by means of Inclusive Education, the effective establishment and functioning of Institutional Level Support Teams (ILSTs) are of utmost importance.

In order to comprehend child development, holistically and within certain time-frames we need to discuss and understand Bronfenbrenner's last system namely, the chronosystem.

2.6.5.5 Chronosystem

Bronfenbrenner refers to the developmental time-frames as the chronosystem (Hook, 2009:507). These time-frames cross through the interactions between various systems and their influence on the developing individual (Swart, et al., 2005(a):12 and McWhirter, et al., 2007:19). According to Hook, (2009:507) time is applied in two ways within the eco-systemic system. It entails the pattern of environmental events over the life span and it refers to the position of the learner at a given time.

The value of Bronfenbrenner's theory lies in the understanding that the various levels within the system influence each other on a continuous basis so that the whole is more than the sum of its parts. In addition, each layer has an impact on other layers in an interdependent way (Donald, et al. 2010:39; Pillay et al., 2009:495; Visser, 2007:108).

In Bronfenbrenner's eco-systemic model, the learner is an active participant in his own growth and development. Furthermore, he believes that the environment does not simply impact on the child, but rather that the learner is a growing dynamic person who moves gradually into his environment, moulding and reforming his or her social milieu or context (Hook, 2009:502; Swart, et al., 2005(a):12).

In summary, the eco-systemic theory suggests

- 1) Individuals and their environments are in continuous mutual interaction, and therefore constantly changing.
- 2) Individuals are active participants in their development. This means that the individual has an influence on the environment in which he develops.
- 3) This model assumes that changes in one system may influence other systems (McWhirter, et al., 2007:19).

An eco-systemic approach provides a frame of reference for understanding Inclusive Education. As stated before, a systemic approach to Inclusive Education may enable all relevant stakeholders to address the educational needs of all learners. Here the

ILST play a pivotal role. Institutional level support teams (ILSTs) need to ensure that parents (representing the home), the school and the community work in close collaboration with each other in addressing the educational needs of all learners. Inclusive Education, therefore, needs to have specific goals, which will now be discussed.

2.7 THE GOALS OF INCLUSIVE EDUCATION

According to Education White Paper 6, the core objectives of Inclusive Education are to build an education system that provides good quality education for all. To accomplish this, the Department of Education envisages the following:

- Strengthen the weaknesses in the “old” education system.
- Mobilise out-of-school youth and provide more opportunities for learners to be educated.
- Support learners, educators and the whole education system to meet the needs of all learners.
- Understand the barriers in the system that prevent learners to succeed (Department of Education, 2001:6-8).

Inclusive Education enables all learners to be in a school, enabling all learners to achieve their full potential. Furthermore, a larger group of the society is able to access education.

2.8 REASONS FOR INCLUSIVE EDUCATION

The Centre for Studies on Inclusive Education (CSIE,2013) provides us with Ten Reasons for Inclusion. For the purpose of this study the ten reasons have been divided into three sub-headings, namely:

- Human rights
- Good Education
- Good Social Sense.

The three sub-headings will now be discussed individually.

2.8.1 Human Rights

As mentioned before, Inclusive Education embraces the principles of the South African Constitution. Chamber, (2001:3) and Engelbrecht and Green, (2007(a):4) indicated that Inclusive Education believes that education is a human right, and that all children have the right to basic education. Therefore, Inclusive Education promotes the right to learn and live together.

In an inclusive environment, learners support each other positively whilst learning from one another. In doing so, a supportive and caring school community is developed where learners build respect for one another. Engelbrecht, (2006:256) and Engelbrecht, et al., (2007(a):4-5) believe that Inclusive Education in South Africa is based on a human rights approach as it strives to ensure that all individuals are enabled to become competent citizens in a changing and diverse society.

Similarly, Inclusive Education brings an end to segregation and discrimination. It embraces diversity and breaks down any form of segregation or discrimination. According to Chamber (2001:13), children should not be discriminated against due to their disability. There is no legitimate reason for separating disabled learners from their non-disabled peers. In doing so, disabled learners are prohibited from interactive experiences with their regular peers.

Research shows that learners and young people with disabilities make better intellectual, behavioural and social progress when they are in an integrated learning environment (South Africa, International Conference on Education, 2008:9 and Chambers, 2001:13). The emerging themes from the above-mentioned information can be summarised as follows:

- All children have the right to learn.
- No discrimination against children because of their disability or learning challenge.
- Children belong together irrespective of disabilities.

This human right to education needs to be characterised by good education.

2.8.2 Good Education

Engelbrecht, et al., (2007(a):83) indicated that Inclusive Education recognises that learners require a good education that caters for the diverse needs of learner. Appropriate learning and teaching practices need to be established to cater for learner diversity. Furthermore, effective support to educators and learners needs to be in place in an effort to meet the diverse needs of all learners (Engelbrecht, et al., 2007(a):84). Research indicates that learners do better academically and socially in integrated settings rather than in isolated environments.

There is no teaching or care in a Special School that cannot take place in an inclusive school. Engelbrecht, et al., (2007(a):83) and Booth and Ainscow, (2002:1) believe that within inclusive schools barriers to learning are removed, development and participation occurs and learners and educators experience continuous educational development and support. Therefore, Inclusive Education strives to achieve education for all, where school communities celebrate diversity, full participation of all learners in the education system and equal distribution of educational resources (Waghid, et al., 2002:21).

According to Ainscow, Booth and Dyson, (2006:1) and Booth, et al., (2002:6), educators should design effective teaching and learning lessons to ensure educational development. Teaching strategies and differentiated instruction should be used to encourage the participation of all learners within the school. Given the necessary commitment and support, Inclusive Education is a more efficient use of education resources.

From the above-mentioned argument, it is evident that the actualisation of learner and educator support is of the utmost importance for Inclusive Education if this format wants to be regarded as good education. Good education can be promoted and achieved with the effective establishment and functioning of ILSTs, as the core responsibility of ILSTs is to identify and address learner, educator and institutional needs. Policy documents such as Education White Paper 6: Special Needs Education and the Salamanca Statement aim to achieve good education for all learners (Ainscow, et al., 2010:402). A detailed discussion on learner support will follow in

Chapter 3. The last sub-section on reasons for Inclusive Education will now be discussed.

2.8.3 Good social sense

Inclusive Education makes good social sense as learners are taught to live and learn with one another (Ainscow, et al., 2006(a):1). Ainscow, et al., (2006(a):23) elaborate further and state that true inclusive practices promote equity, active participation, community involvement, compassion, respect for diversity, sustainability and entitlement. Parental and community involvement can make a positive contribution in the life and development of the school and the learner (Knowles, 2006:30).

Schools can contribute positively to the development of good social sense by fostering social unity. In an inclusive setting, differently enabled learners are granted the opportunity to interact and develop relationships with able-body learners in the community. Learners are made aware that communities consist of people with various abilities and disabilities. Here ILSTs can make a positive contribution in teaching educators how to deal with learners with various disabilities in the classroom. The example set by educators will be followed by learners within the classroom and the school. Exposing learners to people with disabilities will reduce their fear of them and allow learners to understand people that are differently abled (Chamber, 2001:13). Segregation teaches children to be fearful and ignorant and breeds prejudice. In contrast, Inclusive Education teaches learners to understand and accept human differences.

The development of friendships with peers in the community may increase the self-esteem of those with disabilities. Only inclusion has the potential to build friendships, respect and understanding within the school and community. Therefore, schools must plan and structure activities that encourage friendships between non-disabled and disabled learners.

2.9 IMPLICATIONS OF INCLUSIVE EDUCATION FOR SOUTH AFRICAN SCHOOLS

Concerns and challenges are not unusual human reactions to the introduction of change. Educational change requires change in the school culture and organization. This does not happen easily, as it demands from all stakeholders at school to possess knowledge and skills in educational reform and, in this study, it requires educators to adopt an Inclusive Educational policy at school level (Swart et al., 2005(a):19). According to Swart, et al., (2005(a):19) the following elements are essential for the successful implementation of Inclusive Education. They are as follows, namely:

- Support and Collaboration
- Professional Development
- Whole-school developmental approach.

These elements will now be discussed in detail.

2.9.1 Support and Collaboration

Booth, et al., (2002:6) describe support as all the activities that increase the capacity of the school and the learners to respond to the diverse needs of all learners. To achieve optimal learner support and intervention, stakeholders need to work and collaborate with each other on a continuous basis.

According to Stofile, et al., (2007:58), Swart, et al., (2005(a):19) and Swart, et al., (2001:34) collaboration is of utmost importance for an Inclusive Education system as it is a critical element in responding to learner diversity. Swart, et al., (2001:34) fully agree with this point of view and explain collaboration further by stating that it is essential for learner support as stakeholders and professionals are required to work closely with each other on a continuous basis towards a common goal. Collaboration enables all educators to participate in the planning and developing of Individual Support Plans (ISP) for support and intervention (Landsberg, 2005:66). Since collaboration is deemed important, the researcher will now indicate the characteristics of collaboration.

Swart, et al., (2005(a):19), Swart et al., (2005(b):228-230) and Engelbrecht, (2007(b):176) identify six characteristics of collaboration, namely:

- That it is charitable.
- It requires uniformity among parties.
- It is based on shared goals.
- Collaboration encourages shared responsibilities and decision making powers.
- Collaborators should share their ideas and resources.
- Collaborators share the accountability for outcomes.

Engelbrecht, (2007(b):176) and Knowles, (2006:30) believe that close collaboration and interaction amongst educators need to be established to address learner needs. Learner needs are unique and therefore collaboration is necessary to provide effective and efficient support.

This notion of support is endorsed within the Education White Paper 6 as it recommends the establishment of ILSTs as a structure for effective learner support. Collaboration and learner support within ILSTs will be discussed in detail in Chapter 3.

Given commitment and support, Inclusive Education can develop educators professionally and positively, enhancing their knowledge and understanding with regards to individual learner needs

2.9.2 Professional Development

Bourke, (2009:817-818) and Joyner, (2000:385-386) describe professional development within education as initiatives intended to improve the capacity of educators throughout their careers. Professional development in Inclusive Education goes a step further and aims at:

- Elaborating and building on learner support to all learners.
- Developing educators in collaborative processes and
- Orientating the whole school community to embrace learner diversity through accepting differences amongst learners.

The importance of professional development increases because of the new challenges educators need to face as systems become more inclusive (UNESCO, 2001:42).

Engelbrecht, et al., (2007(a):7) and Swart, et al., (2005(a):20) indicated that educators, believing every child matters in their classroom, need to know how to collaborate and operate independently to the benefit of all learners in their classrooms. They have to establish a network of support to collaborate and support each other while catering for learner diversity. Educators need to facilitate positive relationships with all stakeholders involved in individual learner support.

Educators who have not been sufficiently exposed to inclusive practices are not likely to support inclusion. Educators need to be fully aware as to what is expected from them and understand what Inclusive Education is all about. They need continuous training and support to teach learners with special educational needs, who are not able to cope with the demands of mainstream education (Department of Education, 2001:13; Stofile, et al, 2007:57).

According to Landsberg, (2005:61) teachers are of the opinion that successful inclusion requires the following professional development and support:

- Educators should be trained continuously on inclusive practices.
- Educators are in need of educator-assistants, supporting them in teaching a diversity of learners.
- Educators are in need of effective learner support material and assistive devices to accommodate learners experiencing barriers to learning.
- Teacher-pupil ratio should be reduced to 20:1 to accommodate learner diversity.

The professional developmental needs mentioned above should be addressed by the ILST in close collaboration with the District Based Support Team and other professionals within the community. These developmental needs were affirmed by research results in Chapter 4. A detailed discussion in this regard can be found in Chapters 4 and 5.

It is evident from the above that professional development provides educators with knowledge and skills to accommodate learners who have special academic, behavioural and other instructional needs. Professional development goes hand-in-hand with whole school developmental approach (Swart ,et al., 2005(a):20).

2.9.3 Whole-school developmental approach

Whole school development means a transformation in the school culture, including academic and otherwise (Education for All, 2008:43). Whole school development focuses on professional and organizational development of the school to provide quality and innovative education. The school culture with its policies and practices are important elements in whole school development (Engelbrecht, et al., 2007(a): 84; Booth, et al., 2002:8).School culture is at the heart of whole school development and improvement.

For effective change towards inclusive policies and practices, a whole school development approach is central to creating a successful inclusive school. Whole school development within an inclusive school will be ongoing and comprehensive, as a number of factors may be influenced during this transformation period of the school. The school needs to engage all stakeholders within the school community to embrace inclusive policies and practices (Bourke, 2009:819).

Whole school development towards inclusive practices will bring about changes:

- in the enrolment policy of learners,
- in support structures and activities to all learners,
- in the roles and responsibilities of all stakeholders, including learners, educators, parents and other professionals
- in proactive and effective teaching and learning practices (Swart, et al., 2001:33; Bourke, 2009:819).

Whole school development is an important aspect of leadership and management as it may lead to the implementation of successful inclusive practices. The importance of a whole-school developmental approach for the effective establishment and functioning of ILSTs will be discussed in Chapter 3, section 3.3.5.

2.10 SUMMARY

This chapter has provided a literature review on Inclusive Education. A historical overview of educational policies and practices after 1994 were discussed.

In addition, concepts relating to Inclusive Education, the implementation thereof, as well as the reasons for Inclusive Education were discussed. Important documents influencing Inclusive Education were reviewed. Prerequisites for successful inclusion were pointed out in this study.

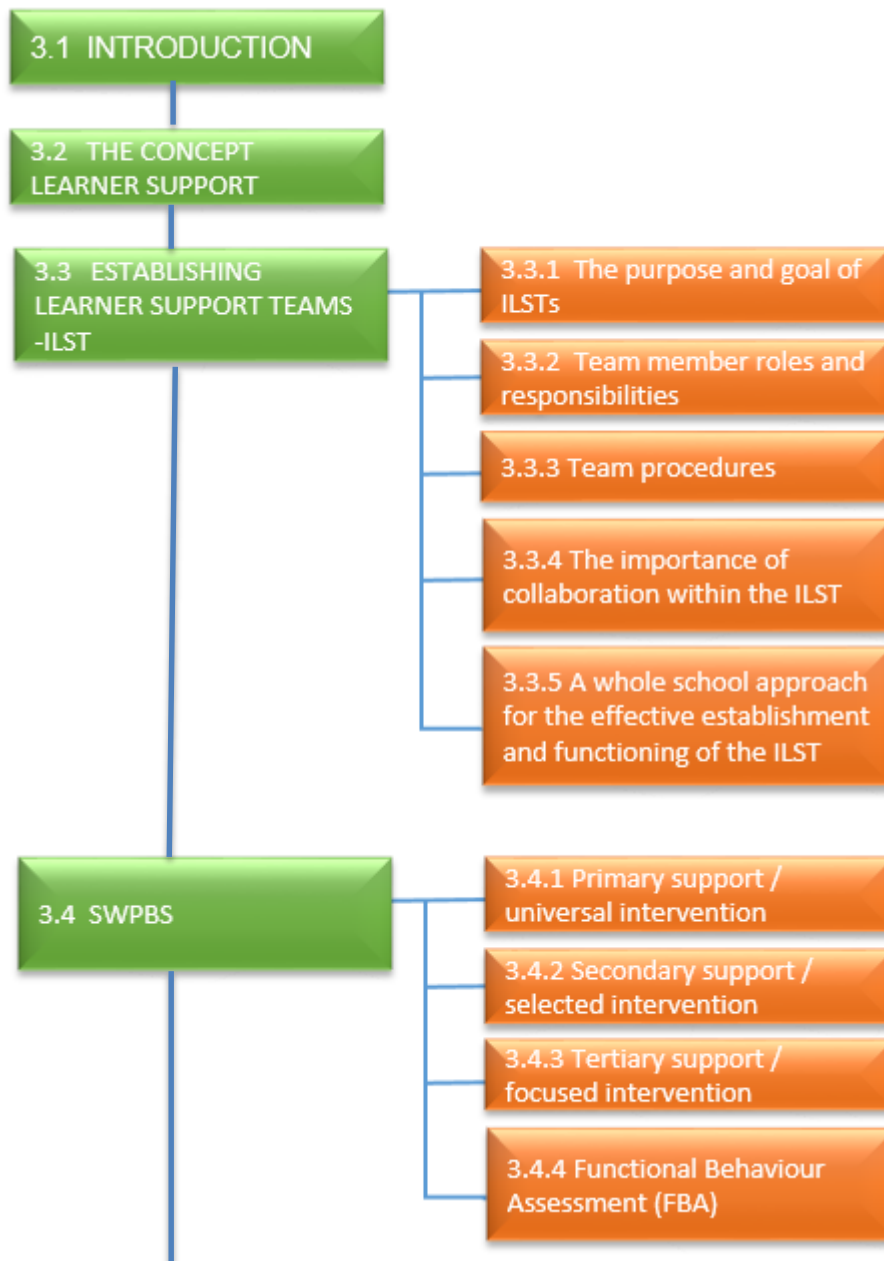
Furthermore, the importance of an eco-systemic perspective was examined. A deeper understanding was gained regarding the interaction between the individual and his context.

In this chapter it became evident that Inclusive Education is a constitutional imperative in South Africa as it is the most appropriate strategy to address learner diversity (Stofile, et al, 2007:63). The implementation of the inclusive policies will be a real challenge in terms of the resources they require. Inclusion should be regarded as a policy that we need to fight for with hard work and determination. Inclusive Education presents many exciting opportunities as well as challenges for education in this country (Lomofsky, et al., 2001:313; Stofile, et al., 2007:63). Furthermore, the theoretical framework of this study, Bronfenbrenner's eco-systyemic theory identifies the interdependence, interactions and interrelatedness of various systems, as part of the individual learner.

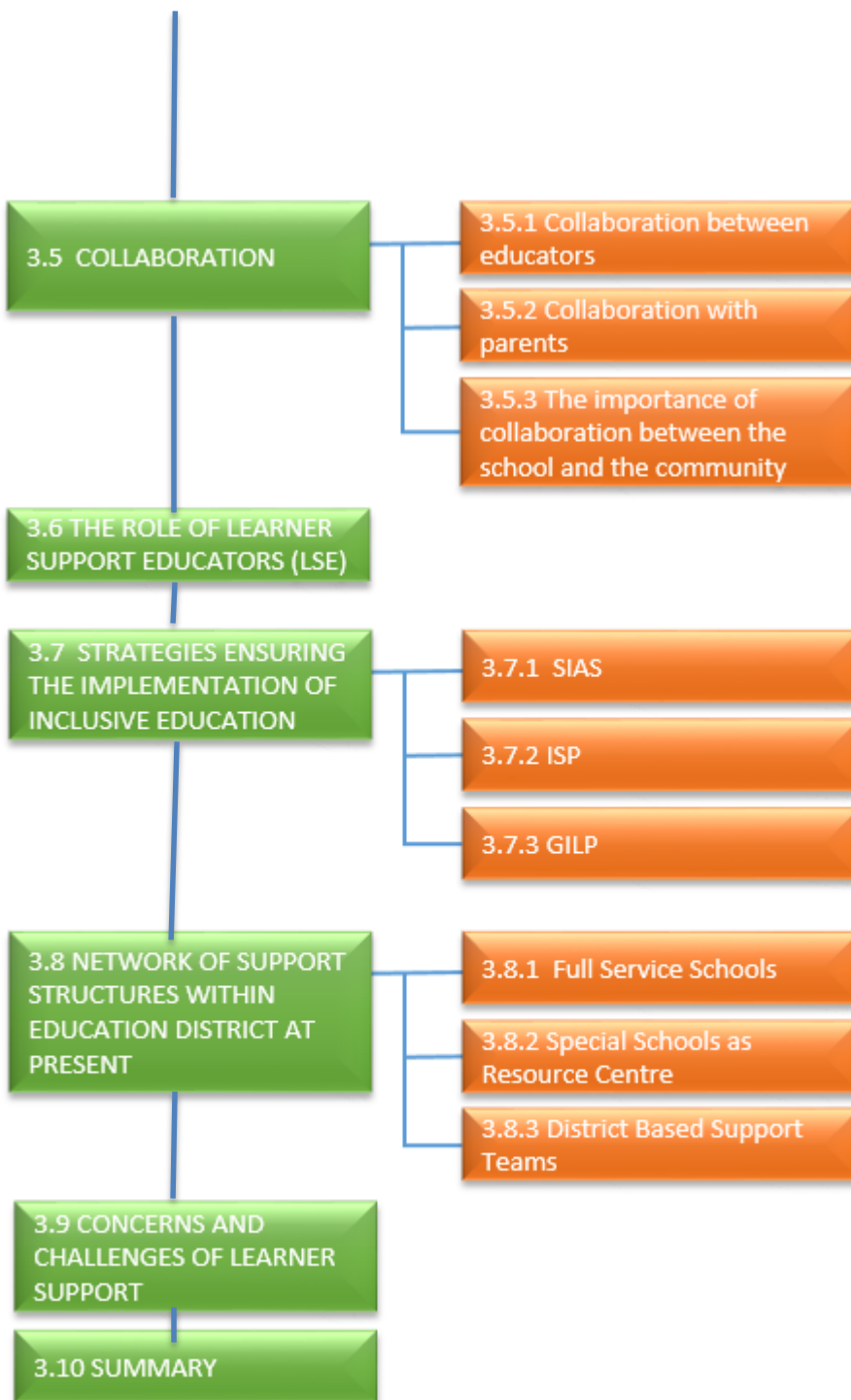
In essence, Chapter 2 provides a literature review on aspects relating to the theoretical framework of this study, which is Bronfenbrenner's eco-systemic theory and Inclusive Education. The following chapter, Chapter 3, consists of a literature review on learner support within an inclusive, holistic, integrated support structure.

CHAPTER 3 OUTLINE:

LEARNER SUPPORT WITHIN AN INCLUSIVE, HOLISTIC, INTEGRATED SUPPORT STRUCTURE



Continue on next page



CHAPTER 3

LEARNER SUPPORT WITHIN AN INCLUSIVE, HOLISTIC, INTEGRATED SUPPORT STRUCTURE

3.1 INTRODUCTION

As indicated in Chapter 2, section 2.6, it is clear that a systemic approach to learner support within an Inclusive Education setting is of paramount importance. This chapter will present a literature review on learner support within a holistic integrated support structure. Muthukrishna, et al. 2000:324, acknowledges that within an eco-systemic approach, a dynamic relationship exists between the learner, the school, the parents and the community. Therefore learner support needs to be rendered within a holistic, integrated support structure.

Engelbrecht, (1999:4) and Muthukrishna, et al., (2000:324) agree that each individual learner is located within a complex network of interesting contexts, all of which influence the extent to which the learner can perform socially and academically. The eco-systemic approach to learner support system depends on the tenet that contextual factors such as poverty, language and health may impact barriers to learning. This implies that these barriers are not confined within the learner alone, but that they may be caused by the school, within the education system and within the broader social, economic and political contexts. In other words barriers to learning may appear in the micro-, meso-, exo-, macro and/or chronosystem.

As mentioned in Chapter 2, section 2.4.6, the Education White Paper 6 introduces a systemic approach to learner support within an inclusive, integrated support system, recommended by the NCSNET and NCESS (Department of Education, Manual for School Management, 0-9: 643; Donald, et al., 1997:26; Landsberg, 2005:62). A systemic approach to learner support acknowledges the pivotal role of various stakeholders in decision making regarding learner support and intervention (Department of Education, Manual for School Management, 0-9: 644 – 645; Department of Education, 2001:7; Department of Education,2007:3). Within a systems

approach, collaboration is required between various stakeholders as part of the social system (Landsberg, 2005:62, Waghid et al., 2002:23).

Interaction and collaboration between the various levels within the system will provide greater insight and understanding in supporting learners who experience barriers and challenges. The effective establishment and functioning of ILST requires that learner support incorporates all levels of the system in an effort to support learners successfully and resourcefully (Johnson et al., 2007:162; Donald et al., 1997:26; Engelbrecht et al., 2001(b): 81). By doing this parents, the school and the community will facilitate a holistic approach to learner support.

The changing roles and responsibilities of parents, the school and the community are evident in the National Strategy on Screening, Identification, Assessment and Support (SIAS). This strategy will be discussed later in this chapter. Within SIAS it is evident that a team approach to learner support needs to be established between parents, the school and the broader community.

It is therefore necessary to explain the concept Learner Support. A detailed discussion on the concept will now follow.

3.2 THE CONCEPT LEARNER SUPPORT

Mortier, Hunt, Desimpel and Van Hove, 2009:337-338, define learner support as a variety of strategies, activities and adaptations provided by various stakeholders with the intention of optimising or increasing the learning capacity of a learner. Within an integrated, holistic, inclusive approach to education, learner support needs to respond to learner diversity within the classroom, thereby ensuring that all learners access education (Muthukrishna, 2002:3).

Therefore, effective learner support needs to employ various strategies, activities and adaptations to address learner diversity within the classroom. By doing this, all learners will be granted the opportunity to participate actively in educational activities and achieve their full potential within mainstream education.

The purpose and goal of learner support is twofold, namely to:

- prevent learners from experiencing learning difficulties.
- work actively towards enhancing the well being and academic progress of all learners.

The abovementioned definition and purpose of learner support indicates that inclusive practices within the classroom can enhance the supportive actions and initiatives at school level. Screening, Identification, Assessment and Support (SIAS), as discussed in Chapter 2, section 2.4.7, should be utilised to determine that level of support needed by learners to overcome their barriers to learning and so increase the scholastic performance of all learners. It is therefore evident that learner support should be rendered according to the level of support needed by learners.

The Education White Paper 6 (2001) endorses and makes provision for learner support to be rendered holistically and according to learner requirements. Learner needs should be addressed at home, at school and within the community. Bronfenbrenner's eco-systemic theory, as discussed in Chapter 2, section 2.6, indicates that all levels within a system need to work together in providing support to learners. This way learner needs will be dealt with and the quality of learner support will be increased.

Consequently, support is not only about the educator in the classroom helping the learner to cope with education demands or the parent at home assisting the learner; it includes support provided by non-educators, School Governing Bodies (SGB's), caregivers, guardians, families, peers and other professionals within the community (Department of Education, 2009:21).

Apart from a multi-disciplinary team approach to learner support, the class educator must be at the centre of all support rendered to the learner (Landsberg, 2005:67). According to the SIAS document, the class educator is the first assessor, since the educator will be the first person to identify that the learner may experience challenges within the classroom. This is endorsed by the SIAS process. The SIAS document was discussed in chapter 2, section 2.4.7.

According to the SIAS process the class educator initiates the learning support process at school level. The process moves from the class educator (Stage 1 of SIAS),

to the ILST for further intervention and support (Stage 2 of SIAS). The learner is referred to the District Based Support Team (DBST) if no progress is made by the learner after the ILST intervention. The SIAS process will be discussed in detail later in this Chapter, in section 3.7.1.

For the purpose of this study, learner support will concern itself with the educational support for all learners in need of support and intervention. Educational support should utilise a systemic approach, enabling the system to respond to the full range of learner needs.

The Institutional Level Support Team (ILST) is an important strategy for the delivery of support to learners in need of additional support at school level. The establishment of learner support teams at schools. (ILSTs) will now be discussed.

3.3 ESTABLISHING LEARNER SUPPORT TEAMS AT SCHOOLS, COMMONLY KNOWN AS INSTITUTIONAL LEVEL SUPPORT TEAMS (ILSTs)

Learner support teams, commonly known as Institutional Level Support Teams (ILSTs), must be established at all schools to identify and support learners experiencing barriers to learning, as mentioned in Chapter 1, sections 1.1 and 1.1.0.5 (Department of Education, 2001:48; Department of Education, 2003(d):15, 50). ILSTs recognises the need and importance of collaboration between the different systems for effective learner support and intervention, as mentioned in Bronfenbrenner's eco-systemic theory, discussed in Chapter 2, section 2.6.5,.

Daniels, (2010:637) and Department of Education, (2003(d):15, 50) state that the ILST should provide support within the school to learners, educators and parents. Landsberg, (2005:66) and Muthukrishna, (2001:48) agree with this viewpoint and state that the ILST is one of the strategies being used to implement inclusive practices. Learner support teams are not new to our education system. These teams were previously known by various names, for example, Didactical Aid Teams (DAT) and Assistance Teams. The difference between these teams and the Institutional Level Support Team (ILST) is that the latter focuses on empowering educators to develop

intervention strategies within the ILST for effective learner support. Learner support will thus not only respond to challenges, but render support on a continuous basis.

In addition, the Education White Paper 6 states that schools need to establish Institutional Level Support Teams to co-ordinate and deal with learner, educator and institutional needs on a continuous basis (Department of Education, 2001:29). The purpose and goal of Institutional Level Support Teams will now be discussed.

3.3.1 Purpose and goals of Institutional Level Support Teams

As mentioned before, the purpose and goal of the ILST is to address the various needs of learners, educators and schools at large, and to offer support in the teaching and learning process (Department of Education, 2001:48). ILSTs should assist in identifying and addressing barriers to learning within the school, through collective problem solving strategies (Lomofsky, et al., 2001:313, Landsberg, 2005:66; Department of Education, 2003(b):38). In addition to this, the ILST is to collaborate with relevant stakeholders in helping schools and educators develop school and classroom support (Johnson, et al., 2007:163, Landsberg,2005:67; Department of Education, 2003(b):39).

It is therefore evident that ILSTs need to identify specific learner, educator and institutional needs to co-ordinate efforts to address these needs (Johnson, et al., 2007:163; Donald, et al., 1997:26; Department of Education, 2009:19). Strategies and structures need to be developed to address and overcome these needs and possible barriers to learning (Landsberg, 2005:67; Department of Education, 2007:113).

The intention of ILSTs therefore is to put structures in place that is part of the ongoing functioning of the institution, rather than a group only called into being in response to a crisis (Johnson, et al., 2007:163). The ILST should identify resources within and outside the school that can be used to support learners experiencing challenges.

3.3.2 Team member roles and responsibilities

It is becoming increasingly difficult to ignore the important role educators play in learner support and intervention. According to Donald, et al. (1997:27) and the Department of Education, (2007:114), members of the ILST should include educators

who are willing and interested in improving their skills in learner support and who have acquired expertise through recognised in-service training.

An additional requirement to educators within the ILST is that they should be able to work effectively within a group setting. These educators must have skills in collaborating, problem solving and essential knowledge regarding identification and intervention of learning barriers (Department of Education, 2003(b):40). Furthermore, these educators must be innovative, pro-active and competent in their teaching methodologies, thus accommodating learner diversity within the classroom (Landsberg, 2005:66; Department of Education, 2008:88).

In addition to the educator component of the ILST, representatives from the School Management Team (SMT) and School Governing Body (SGB) should be included in the ILST (Department of Education, 2003 (b):40). Johnson, et al., (2007:163), Donald, et al., (1997:26) and Landsberg, (2005:67) agree with this viewpoint and state that the inclusion of the SMT and SGB within the ILST helps to convey the message that learner support is an important and central school activity.

Admittedly, the Institutional Level Support Team (ILST) is composed primarily of educators in the school but can also include parents, learners, and professional within the community (Johnson, et al., 2007(b):163; Department of Education, 2001:49; Department of Education, 2003:40). It is for this reason that a co-ordinator for the ILST must be appointed.

A co-ordinator or a Learner Support Educator (LSE) should be identified to take responsibility for the organization of this team. In addition, this person should serve the needs of the team (Landsberg, 2005:67; Department of Education, 2009:19). The co-ordinator should link the ILST with other school-based structures and processes to avoid duplication and to create harmony within the school (Department of Education, 2009:19). Furthermore, the co-ordinator should evaluate and monitor the work of the team. A detailed discussion on the LSE will follow in section 3.6. The size and procedures of the team will be determined by the needs of the school (Landsberg, 2005:67). Subsequently, the next section will focus on the procedures to be followed by the ILST at each school.

3.3.3 Team Procedures

According to Landsberg (2005:67) and the Department of Education (2009:20), the ILST should meet on a regular basis to identify and discuss institutional needs, which include learner and educator needs. These needs should be identified by the entire ILST team, which includes the School Management Team (SMT), School Governing Body (SBG) educators, community members and professionals within the community. After identifying these needs the ILST, in collaboration with relevant stakeholders, must design an intervention strategy to address the needs (Donald, et al., 1997:26; Department of Education, 2009:20). Consequently, the ILST should organise regular support intervention sessions so that support can reach those educators and learners most in need of it.

Regular support intervention sessions within the ILST are a means of sharing expertise and encouraging team-based collaboration across a wide range of role players (Johnson, et al., 2007:162). Donald, et al. (1997:27) agree with this viewpoint and state that skilled professionals should be part of the ILST so as to ensure that expertise is shared and the best possible intervention and support is agreed upon. For instance, skilled professionals within communities such as doctors, psychologists, health professionals, social workers, educators with expertise and others with specialised qualifications should be incorporated into the ILST.

Furthermore, Engelbrecht, (2001(a):23, 43) state that the ILST needs to embrace a community-based approach, meaning that resources within the community should be utilized optimally to support those learners experiencing challenges. The care and nurturing of all learners will be the responsibility of the entire community (Knowles, 2006:12). The mesosystem of Bronfenbrenner's eco-systemic theory clearly states that the communication and relationships between the various facets of the microsystem can have a profound effect on the scholastic and social development of the learner. For instance, this community-based approach within the ILST, where relationships are formed and where there is constant communication between all stakeholders involved in learner support, will enhance the general development of the learner. The meso- and exosystem is clearly discussed in great detail in Chapter 2, section.2.6.5.2.

In addition, this idea of a community-based approach to learner support can be strengthened when various departments embrace their responsibility regarding learner health and welfare. Here the DBST will play a pivotal role. The DBST should utilize the services of various government departments and other professionals, enhancing a community-based approach (Department of Education, 2009:21).

The ILST must make regular and adequate contact with the DBST or professionals within their communities to enhance a community-based approach to learner support through regular collaboration with all relevant parties (Donald et al., 1997:26). The DBST must build the capacity of the ILST to identify and address barriers to learning and to use the available resources at their disposal (Daniels, 2010:638; Department of Education, 2001:47). The close collaboration between the ILST, DBST and other professionals should facilitate the development of expertise within the ILST (Department of Education, 2003(b):24; Donald et al., 1997:26).

The close collaboration, as well as the regular and adequate contact with the DBST, will undoubtedly, strengthen the ILST (Johnson et al., 2007:163; Department of Education, 2001:29). An empowered ILST will be able to generate innovative solutions to their challenges, with the DBST and other professionals as consultants to the ILST (Daniels, 2010:638). The DBST is of paramount importance in developing inclusive practices at schools and to support principals and educators when they are in need of curriculum and institutional development (Bornman, et al. 2010:11; Landsberg, 2005:67; Department of Education, 2003(b):24). A detailed discussion on the DBST will follow later in this chapter, in section 3.8.3.

The interconnectedness between the ILST and DBST illustrates the importance of collaboration. Regular collaboration between the ILST and DBST may contribute towards effective learner support and intervention.

3.3.4 The importance of collaboration within the Institutional Level Support Team (ILST)

Collaboration is of paramount importance for effective learner support within the ILST, as this body aims to provide comprehensive and holistic support to institutions,

learners and educators. A holistic approach to learner support uses a diverse approach for learner support in solving challenges.

Collaboration with the following stakeholders would be to the advantage of the Institutional Level Support Team (ILST). It is evident that within the systems approach, various stakeholders must be part of the collaboration, such as:

- a) Department of Health
- b) Department of Social Development (Welfare)
- c) Office of the Status of Disabled Persons.
- d) Department of Justice.
- e) Department of Correctional Services.
- f) District Based Support Team (DBST).
- g) Members of the SGB, educators and learners.
- h) Parents and care-givers
- i) Other professionals and
- j) Community-based Organisations

(Department of Education, 2003(b):22).

Collaboration will be discussed in section 3.5 of this chapter.

3.3.5 A whole-school approach for the effective establishment and functioning of the ILST

All initiatives within the ILST aim to improve the capacity of educators and go hand-in-hand with the development and growth of the entire school. Creating an inclusive school based on a holistic framework within an integrated support structure requires a whole-school approach, which includes the entire system of the school as an organization (Engelbrecht, 2001(a):33).

In any organization there are essential parts that make up the organization. Each of the essential parts of a school needs to function effectively in order to facilitate positive development of the schools as a whole (Donald, et al., 1997:85).

The School Management Team (SMT) and School Governing Body (SGB), as structures within the school as an organization and in collaboration with the ILST, are responsible for the implementation of inclusive policies at school level. Their belief in, and commitment to, inclusion are critical, as they decide on the in-service training needs for educators and the needs of the school in general (Bornman, et al., 2010:11).

Where a systemic approach is followed, support is provided to all stakeholders involved in whole school development. The School Management Teams (SMT), School Governing Body (SGB), educators, parents, learners, and others in the community are supported during whole school development, where the purpose may be to create an inclusive ethos within the school. The ILST plays a pivotal role in creating an inclusive ethos, where quality teaching and learning, effective learner support and intervention and quality education is provided for all learners at the school (Muthukrishna, 2002:3-5)

Within the School Management Team, the School Principal is the central figure. This person has many tasks and responsibilities and plays a cardinal role in whole-school development. Research has shown that the successful inclusion of learners who experience barriers to learning depends to a large extent on the ethos and values fostered by School Management Teams and the development of the whole school (Department of Education, 1997:39; Bornman, et al., 2010:11).

In summary, Institutional Level Support Teams (ILSTs) should portray the following:

- A team that is dynamic, innovative and pro-active in supporting learners.
- Facilitation of the development of an inclusive ethos that embraces diversity.
- Committed educators, working together as a team, and consulting the ILST in an effort to overcome scholastic challenges.
- Continuous growth and development within the ILST by means of a whole-school approach.
- Facilitation of support provision and keeping records of interventions.
- Regular consultations with parents to discuss learner progress.
- Coordination of support planning to improve the skills of learner support providers. This includes the activities of the ILST during school time to ensure that the educators are able to provide the necessary support to learners.

- Establishing links and building partnerships with resources within the communities (Landsberg, et al., 2005:67; Department of Education, 2007:114; Muthukrisna, 2002:7; Department of Education, 2009:20).

These characteristics of the ILST are portrayed within School-Wide Positive Behavioural Interventions and Supports (SWPBIS). This is a proactive, team-based approach that develops schools in their totality thereby creating effective schools. Emphasis is placed on the prevention of possible challenges, development of socially acceptable behaviour and the use of a problem solving approach for addressing possible barriers to learning.

3.4 SCHOOL-WIDE POSITIVE BEHAVIOUR SUPPORT (SWPBS)

Pienaar (2013:177- 179) states that disruptive and unacceptable behaviour at school is on the increase, as learners are tangled in emotional and behavioural issues. This phenomenon is prevalent at schools due to environmental and societal issues, which may affect the teaching and learning environment.

School-Wide Positive Behaviour Support (SWPBS) can be used to establish environments conducive to teaching and learning, where problematic behaviour is minimized and learner attainment is increased. SWPBS is a systemic, pro-active behavioural support model, envisaging the prevention and reduction of learning problems and challenging behaviours prior to escalation (Moreno and Bullock, 2011:119; Benedict, Horner and Squires, 2007:175; O'Neil and Stephenson, 2010:66). Riffel (2011:2) agrees with this view and states that SWPBS offers support to learners and can therefore be regarded as an intervention strategy.

The purpose of SWPBS is to:

- Provide learners with opportunities to acquire appropriate behaviours.
- Reduce anti-social behaviour by introducing positive interventions and preventative systems.
- Help educators address challenging behaviours more effectively.
- Improve academic performance, by creating instructional environments (Moreno and Bullock, 2011:119; McCurdy, Kunsch & Reibstein, 2007:12;

Cheney, Lyanns, Flower, Waugh, Iwaszuk, Mielens and Hawken, 2010:152; Pienaar, 2013:180).

Recurrent behavioural challenges faced by educators within the ordinary classroom include absenteeism, slow work tempo, the disturbance of fellow classmates and the disruption of the learning environment (Raymond, 2013:180). Moletsane (2013:75) is of the same opinion regarding challenging behaviours and elaborates further by stating that aggression, fighting, bullying and disruptive behaviours are prevalent within the school environment. He classifies such behaviours as externalising behaviour as some learners need to act out their challenges, which may cause problems at school and in the community. Educators, together with parents can eliminate these negative behaviours by:

- teaching acceptable social skills.
- keeping away from punitive measures.
- laying down rules, regulations and routines that increases positive behaviours.
- establishing expectations with regards to learning and behaviour (Raymond,2013:180-183).

Learners with emotional and behavioural challenges exhibit socially unacceptable behaviour (Moletsane, 2013:76). According to the theoretical framework underpinning this study, namely Bronfenbrenner's eco-systemic theory, it is believed that learner behaviour and learning is determined by multiple spheres of influence (Raymond, 2013:36, 199; Stofile and Raymond, 2013:18-19). An eco-systemic perspective on problem behaviour indicates that problem behaviours are not only a result of challenges within the learner, but is a result of interactions amongst the multiple spheres of influence in the systems in which the learner is directly or indirectly involved (Raymond, 2013:199). An eco-systemic perspective will help us understand the multiple sources of challenging behaviours, as it requires active participation from parents, educators, the whole school and the community to be actively involved in learner support.

The SWPBS acknowledges that parents are important role players in the life of the child, as they are able to provide important information regarding the background, developmental milestones, strengths and weaknesses of the child. The SWPBS

further recognises that parents should be actively involved in the growth and development of the child as they are the primary caregivers of the learner (Pienaar, 2013:182). It is therefore apparent that educators, parents, schools, communities and other professionals actively involved in learner support should work in close collaboration with each other in their endeavour to eliminate unacceptable behaviours and increase learner performance

The SWPBS provides a framework whereby relevant stakeholders within a school based support structure, the ILST in this study, can implement a three-tiered model of behaviour support. This framework builds up from prevention (tier 1) to highly individualised support (tier 3), (see Figure 3.1). It uses a data-decision making framework known as Functional Behaviour Assessment (FBA) to determine behavioural support and intervention (Michigan DoE, 2010:vii; Lewis, Jones, Horner & Sugai, 2010;84). A detail discussion on Functional Behaviour Assessment (FBA) will follow in section 3.4.4.

The following visual presentation illustrates the three-tiered model. Each tier has a specific intervention task in establishing a positive behavioural culture which will be discussed in sections 3.4.1 - 3.4.3.

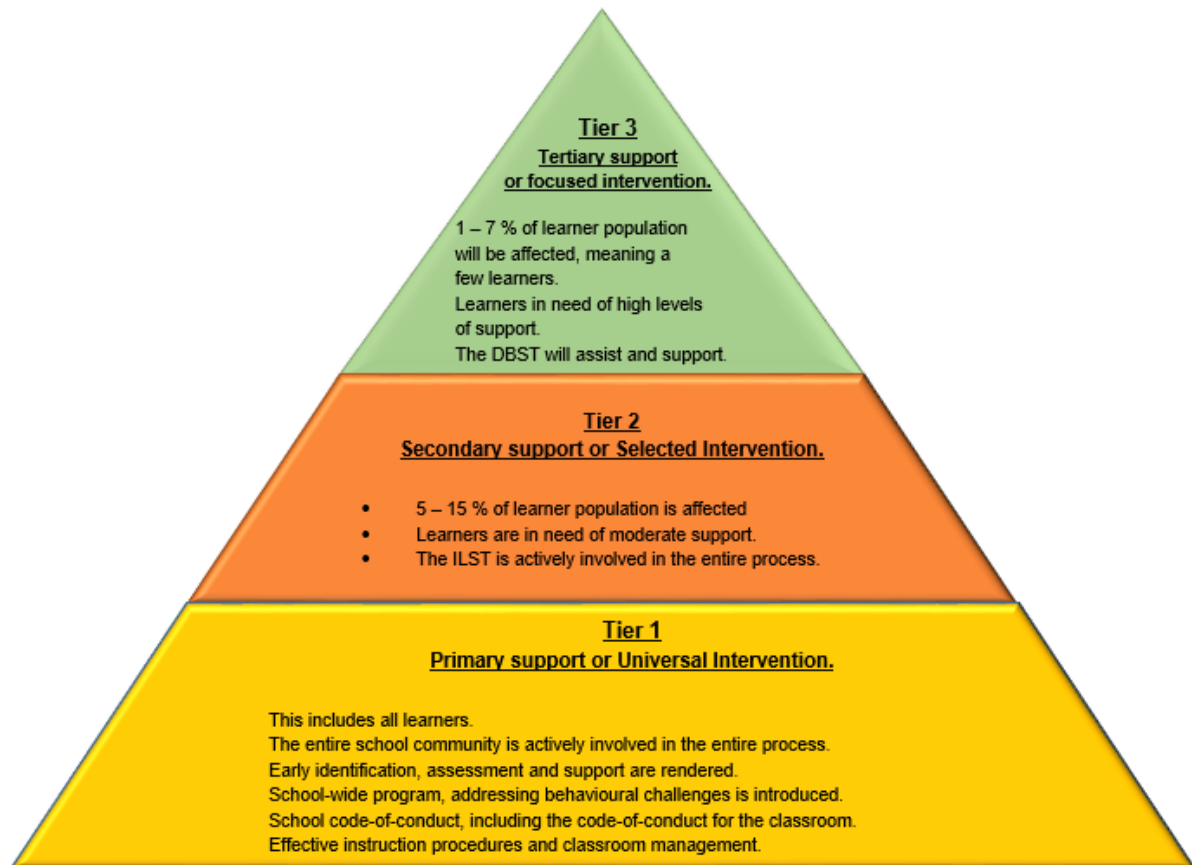


Figure 3.1 Three tiered model of SWPBS

3.4.1 Primary support / Universal intervention

Moreno and Bullock (2011:20) describe Tier 1 of SWPBS as the initial strategy in replacing anti-social behaviour and improving social and scholastic performance as it ensures a solid foundation for the establishment of SWPBS. Tier 1 (see Figure 3.1) is commonly called universal intervention or primary support as it encompasses all learners. Tier 1 influence and address whole-school policies and procedures in reducing under-achievement and inappropriate social behaviour (Benedict, et al., 2007:175; McCurdy, et al, 2007:12; O’Neil and Stephenson, 2010:66).

Tier 1 (see Figure 3.1) is used to teach learners specific pro-social skills for use in the classroom, on the playground and in the community, therefore educators need to fulfil an imperative role in Tier 1. Educators need to be pro-active with the implementation of universal support programmes within the classroom to prevent disharmonious behaviour in the class, on the playground or in the community (Pienaar, 2013:179). They need to interact with all learners on a continuous basis where the rules and

regulations for various settings are clearly defined to learners (Benedict, et al., 2007:175; Lewis, Jones, Horner and Sugai; 2010:85).

In addition to this, educators need to be vigilant of the learning atmosphere within the classroom. The teaching and learning environment should be learner friendly and therefore educators need to make the necessary changes within the classroom to create an environment conducive to teaching and learning. As soon as learners experience a welcoming, positive, learning-friendly environment they may experience a feeling of wanting to learn. The use of classroom-wide positive behaviour support will enable the vast majority of learners to adhere to the classroom code-of-conduct and become effective learners (Pienaar, 2013:179).

Effective learning can be achieved when instruction is delivered efficiently. In this regard Universal Design for Learning (UDL) can be utilised. Universal Design for Learning (UDL) is an instructional framework which can be employed for the planning of instruction within an inclusive classroom (Stofile and Raymond, 2013: 30). According to Moletsane (2013:132-133) South African schools need to make use of innovative approaches such as UDL, within the classroom to address the diverse needs of all learners. By doing this, educators will create classroom climates where all learners are active participants in the learning process. The learning environment within the classrooms should be accessible and usable by all learners within the classroom (Stofile et al.,2013:30).

Universal Design for Learning (UDL) creates classroom climates where the uniqueness of every learner is accepted and where all learners experience a sense of belonging. UDL believes that the school culture, as mentioned in Chapter 1,section 1.10.5 and Chapter 2,section 2.9.3 needs to embrace learner diversity, as it will promote learning within the classroom and the school at large.

In this tier, as indicated in the previous paragraphs, emphasis is placed on the classroom. The physical appearance, design and organization of the classroom should be planned in such a way that it creates an atmosphere conducive to teaching and learning. All educators should therefore do the following in their classrooms:

- Design a rules poster with positive classroom rules.

- Create a classroom schedule or timetable.
- Invent a placard of behavioural expectations for classroom routine.
- Provide warnings before transitions.
- Utilize an acknowledgement system for good or bad behaviour.
- Use of specific verbal praise (Benedict, Horner & Squires, 2007:175; Pienaar, 2013:179)

Another responsibility within Tier 1 (see Figure 3.1) is the teaching of social skills, including the management of anger, frustration, relationship building, the giving and receiving of help and dealing with disappointment within a classroom situation (Pienaar, 2013:184). Teaching learners these social skills will help them function in a socially acceptable manner within the classroom situation. Educators may acknowledge and reward social acceptable behaviour by means of positive feedback, regular reviews on behaviours and an incentive system.

Within this tier, the school based support team, the ILST in this study, reviews universal data on a regular basis. In so doing, the support team is able to monitor the impact of universal support (Tier 1 of Figure 3.1) (Lewis, Jones, Horner and Sugai, 2010:85; McCurdy, et al., 2007: 12). Universal support review is based on data collected from educators with regard to routine discipline information within the classroom. Classroom behaviour conducive to effective teaching and learning requires educators to constantly review their classroom practice to identify strengths and weaknesses in their classrooms (Pienaar, 2013:180). The school support team, the ILST in this study, uses this data to discover the major and minor problem behaviours. Based on their results, the school support team will provide replacement behaviour intervention and support (Lewis, Jones, Horner and Sugai, 2010:85).

When expectations from educators are clearly communicated to learners they act as management strategies to prevent or reduce negative behaviours (Pienaar, 2013:178). It is therefore evident that the goals of Tier 1, (see Figure 3.1) where the foundation is set to prevent or reduce negative behaviours, is to create safe and supportive learning environments, where the emotional and social needs of all learners are addressed (Raymond, 2013:198).

3.4.2 Secondary support / Selected intervention

Should problem behaviour persist regardless of Tier 1 intervention and support and where the Functional Behaviour Assessment (FBA), which will be discussed later in section 3.4.4, has confirmed socially unacceptable behaviours, the support team, the ILST in this study, may consider Tier 2 (see Figure 3.1) interventions and support (Raymond, 2013:203). Tier 2, commonly known as secondary support or selected intervention, selected intervention is rendered to 5-15% of the learner population, which will prevent these learners from developing more serious anti-social behaviour. Specific intervention strategies are employed to address the specific needs of the identified learners (Benedict, et al., 2007:175; McCurdy, et al., 2007:12).

Tier 2 (see Figure 3.1) targets a smaller group of learners focusing on a problematic response to primary intervention strategies. These are learners who did not respond well to universal support strategies but instead portrayed some deficits in social skills. Changes are brought about within the classroom to accommodate these learners and additional social skill intervention and support is offered to these learners. Although these learners are in need of more intervention and support, they remain part of the classroom-wide positive behaviour support programme (O'Neil and Stephenson, 2010:66, Lewis, Jones, Horner and Sugai, 2010:85; Benedict, Horner and Squires, 2007:175).

When Tier 1 and Tier 2 of school-wide positive behaviour intervention and support are in place, the foundation for implementing Tier 3 support is established.

3.4.3 Tertiary support / Focused intervention

Tier 3, (see Figure 3.1) commonly known as tertiary support or focused intervention, provides intensive individualised support to certain learners to prevent them from becoming more involved in unacceptable social behaviour. Tier 3 focuses on the individual needs of 1-7% of the learner population. This small percentage of learners portrays a need for additional support and intervention. These learners, part of Tier 3, display more serious patterns of anti-social behaviours as severe problem behaviours persist irrespective of intervention and support provided in Tier 1 and Tier 2 (Benedict, et al., 2007:175; McCurdy, et al., 2007:13).

Raymond (2013:203) states that in Tier 3 interventions are highly individualised and intensive, they are designed to address individual needs and the services of other professionals may be required to address the needs of these learners (Raymond, 2013:203).

At this level, the collected data for Functional Behaviour Assessment is used to design individualised intervention strategies. The following section will provide an in-depth discussion on Functional Behaviour Assessment (FBA).

3.4.4 Functional Behaviour Assessment (FBA)

The SWPBS requires educators to make use of assessment and ongoing data reviews to identify the support needs of learners. These assessments and reviews are called Functional Behaviour Assessment (FBA). Riffel (2011:3) describes FBA as a means of identifying unacceptable learner behaviour so as to teach the learner appropriate replacement behaviour by using positive interventions. Educators should use FBA from Tiers 1 to 3 (see Figure 3.1) to develop strategies for intervention and support (Lewis, Jones, Horner and Sugai, 2010:84-85). Pienaar (2013:185) states that FBA can be used in Tier 1 to identify factors causing challenges within the classroom. Educators will then be able to introduce preventative measures to reduce negative behaviours.

According to Pienaar (2013:85), FBA can be used for various reasons. He states that FBA can be used to:

- a) determine the reason for inappropriate behaviours.
- b) identify situations causing such behaviours.
- c) assist educators in identifying factors and reasons causing problems in the classroom.
- d) guide educators in considering precautionary measures in preventing anti-social or unacceptable behaviours.

Raymond, (2013:108, 200) agrees with Pienaar's perspective regarding FBA . She states that FBA is concerned with finding out why a learner behaves in a specific manner and believes that the purpose of FBA is to detect the reason for unacceptable

behaviour. For the purpose of this study, educators and ILST members should make use of FBA to design appropriate and effective behavioural intervention and support.

According to the theoretical framework of this study, Bronfenbrenner's eco-systemic theory, intervention and support require the active participation of all stakeholders involved in learner support. The SWPBS requires all role players involved in learner support to collaborate with each other whilst planning for intervention and support. Stakeholders need to collaborate with each other to review the FBA. Collaboration will help stakeholders identify a replacement behaviour that may assist the learner in meeting important needs (Raymond, 2013:201).

As mentioned before, the goal of SWPBS is to create environments conducive to teaching and learning where parents, educators and other relevant stakeholders work in close collaboration with each other to maximise the learning opportunities of all learners (Pienaar, 2013:178; Moletsane, 2013:103). The following section will provide an in-depth discussion on collaboration.

3.5 COLLABORATION

Collaboration can be described as a purposeful engagement where joint planning, decision making and problem solving activities are directed towards a mutual goal. It is through collaboration that collaborators are able to identify where they are and where they would like to be (Ainscow and Sandill, 2010:403).

Swart et al., (2005(b):230) states that collaboration is an evolving process and cannot be achieved overnight. Engelbrecht, (2004:248) agrees and describes collaboration as a dynamic and ongoing process to which each participant brings his unique perspectives, experience and knowledge (Engelbrecht, 200(c)1:23; Swart, et al., 2001:34).

The description of collaboration correlates with effective support provisioning through the Institutional Level Support Team (ILST) (Department of Education, 2009:19). Collaboration is of utmost importance for the effective establishment and functioning of Institutional Level Support Teams (ILSTs) (Waghid et al., 2002:23)

Collaboration and a strong relationship between all relevant stakeholders must exist to use available resources optimally for effective learner support provisioning within a systemic approach.

Local resources within the immediate environment of the child should be drawn on to understand and address barriers to learning within the systemic approach to learner support (Engelbrecht, 2001:81). It is also a critical feature of forming partnerships with parents, the schools, the community and various other professionals to enhance the learning opportunity of the learner (Swart, et al., 2005(b):226). Collaboration within a school community may portray the elements of ubuntu. Ubuntu emphasises respect for each other, collective sharing, obedience, humility, caring, interdependence and humility (Swart, et al., 2005(b):227).

Collaboration within the ILST aims at providing support to learners, educators and the school at large. The ILST will be able to address diversity within the school because collaboration enables educators to share their expertise, skills, knowledge and experiences for the benefit of the team and the school (Department of Education, 2009:16).

Collaboration should encompass parents, caregivers, educators, community members, therapists, health professionals, and other professionals. As a collaborative team, they gather to plan and implement appropriate support programs for learners experiencing barriers to learning (Bornman, et al., 2010:22; Engelbrecht, et al., 2001:23, 34; Engelbrecht, 2004:253). It is an interactive process where individuals work together to solve a common challenge (Boon and Spencer, 2010:88).

During collaboration there is no expert as this is in conflict with the notion of a multi-disciplinary team working together in support of the learner. The aim of the collaboration is to provide comprehensive support, where different perspectives of the problem are discussed and possible solutions are gathered. Swart, et al., (2005(b):229) states that parity occurs when collaborating participants interact as co-equals. Each individual, or part of the collaboration, can contribute positively to the discussion and individuals should talk and listen to one another (Boon, et al., 2010:89; Engelbrecht, 2001(c):24; Swart, et al., 2005(b):229; Department of Education, 2003(c):42). Collaboration requires collaborators to be receptive to the opinions of

others as the success of collaboration is a reciprocal relationship that exists between collaborators.

Collaborators should acquire interpersonal skills when working together as a team, as they need to be good listeners, dependable, cooperative, responsive, patient and flexible. Collaborators need to be approachable, perceptive, thoughtful, empathetic, respectful and knowledgeable about current trends and issues. Furthermore, they need to be coordinative, meaning they should be able to prioritise and manage the full range of expertise available, representing various department and stakeholders (Boon, et al., 2010:91; Department of Education, 2003(c):41; Department of Education, 2003(c):42).

Learner support within an eco-systemic framework necessitates intersectoral collaboration. As mentioned before professionals within various disciplines must share their knowledge and skills. Lemmer and Badenhorst (1997:250) clearly state that within an inclusive and integrated support structure, various departments such as Education, Health, Social Development and Labour will have to work hand-in-hand with each other. Services from professionals must be community based, taking their services to the learners and educators in need. Collaboration between educators are thus very important (Engelbrecht, 2001(c):22; Engelbrecht, 2004:254).

3.5.1 Collaboration between educators

As stated above, collaboration between educators is of utmost importance for learner support. The ILST and general class educators should engage with one another on a continuous basis regarding all aspects of learner support and intervention (Kruger and Yorke, 2010:293). Educators should embrace a team approach for learning support to ensure that learning support is effectively managed and co-ordinated by planning learner support interventions together (Department of Education, 2003(c):15).

Collaborative planning is an essential part of effective collaboration between educators. Educators need to plan together to realise their common goal. It requires time, open and constructive communication and bilateral trust to work towards the communal goal and to strengthen learner support and intervention (Kruger and Yorke, 2010:303).

The advantages of collaboration are tremendous and include effective intervention and support, an inclusive accepting school community, positive learner support and intervention, as well as the growth and development of those involved in collaboration (Kruger and Yorke, 2010:293). In this situation educators will be able to grow and develop whilst learning and working with each other.

During collaboration, educators are exposed to ongoing training and support to address the diverse needs and barriers to learning within the school. This may lead to educators becoming more knowledgeable regarding the various forms of support available within and outside the school (Department of Education, 2009:22).

3.5.2 Collaboration with parents

Teaching goes beyond the classroom and therefore all stakeholders, in particular parents, must be actively involved in the learning activities of their children (Bornman, et al., 2010:10; Donald, et al., 1997:100).

Collaboration with parents is of the utmost importance when trying to support learners, as they are able to provide valuable information regarding the developmental history of the child. Parents and educators must work together to address barriers to teaching and learning (Department of Education, 2009:22). It is imperative that educators collaborate with parents. In so doing, educators will gain a better understanding of the child.

Having a healthy, positive relationship with the parents, in which the parent and educator share the same vision for the learner is one of the cornerstones of positive school achievement and progress (Bornman, et al., 2010:122 and Simpson and Warner, 2010:184).

Parents and educators should:

- Work together in helping the learner towards independence.
- Understand one another's goals for the learner.
- Talk about the learner's activities in and out of school life.
- Decide mutually regarding decisions that have to be made about the learner.

(Department of Education, 2003(c):42).

The benefits of collaboration between the educator and the parent are endless, and a few will be mentioned.

- With collaboration educators and parents are able to support each other in finding ways to support the learner.
- They are able to communicate with each other effectively and efficiently.
- Together they work closely with individual learners to ensure optimal educational opportunities.
- They share developmental knowledge regarding the learner.
- Joint decision making with regards to learner needs and intervention strategies.
- Parents may volunteer support and assistance in many ways (Simpson, et al., 2010:185; Bornman, et al., 2010:122).

Collaboration between the family and the educator brings a sense of security to the family. The family feels that their child is safe and protected at school. Families become aware that their contributions are appreciated and that their suggestions are welcomed. The family recognises that the educator is a caring person who is dedicated to the well being of the learner (Simpson, et al., 2010:185).

Partnerships with parents and educators need to exist as parents need to take their rights and responsibilities with regards to the education of their children seriously (Department of Education, 1997(c):62). Partnerships between the educator and the parent falls within the mesosystem of Bronfenbrenner's eco-systemic theory as discussed in Chapter 2 section 2.6.5.2. The mesosystem includes the relationships between the learner and various stakeholders involved in the education of the child (McWhirter, et al., 2007:17).

3.5.3 The importance of collaboration between the school and the community

According to Donald, et al., (1997:21), learners, educators, parents and others within the community should be actively involved in school activities to enhance community involvement in these activities. The school should collaborate with its community links on a regular basis. Collaboration between schools and the community is very important and should be strengthened because:

- a) Parents should be aware of and understand what takes place in the scholastic lives of their children.
- b) Educators are able to provide parents with professional advice and knowledge that parents may not have.
- c) All stakeholders need to be involved in the decision making structures and processes at the school according to the South African Schools Act.
- d) Schools need to become the centre of community development. They must be a beacon of hope for underdeveloped communities and school facilities should be used for community development (Donald, et al., 1997:21; Swart, et al., 2004(b):81).

Admittedly, the school will influence the community and the community will influence the school. This is a basic eco-systemic understanding.

Community members must have a commitment to effective collaboration. Those participating in collaborative processes must be willing to expand and extend their professional roles and responsibilities and learn more about other disciplines. Daniels (2010:639) agrees and states that the readiness of collaborators to move outside their traditional boundaries to learn from colleagues in other disciplines and sectors influences the entire system.

Collaborators should grow and develop into a dynamic professional learning community, where a reciprocal collaborative approach is adopted and where group members may improve their new leadership roles and responsibilities (Odden, 2009:99-100; Engelbrecht, 2004:254).

3.6 THE ROLE OF LEARNER SUPPORT EDUCATORS (LSEs) WITHIN THE ILST

Learning support educators (LSEs) can be described as those educators with the necessary skills and knowledge to support learners in need of specialised teaching, such as remedial therapists or special needs educators (Walton,2013:130). These educators should have specialised competencies and be innovative in their endeavour to support learners, educators and community members, thus ensuring effective learner support and intervention (Landsberg, 2011:74). Learner support educators are

an integral part of Inclusive Education and have the responsibility to create inclusive school cultures and communities that accept and embrace learner diversity (Kruger et al., 2010:94). Based on this description, it is evident that LSE's should play a fundamental role within ILSTs as they need to facilitate effective learner support and intervention within the school.

According to Landsberg, (2005:65) learning support educators should co-ordinate the work of the ILST. This means that Learning Support Educators (LSE) should co-ordinate the progress of ILST meetings and discussions (Landsberg, 2011:74; Department of Education, 2009:21). Section 3.3 provided a detailed discussion on Institutional Level Support Teams (ILSTs). Within this section, mention is made that the co-ordinator should serve the needs of the team (Landsberg, 2005:67; Department of Education, 2009:19). The co-ordinator should link the ILST with other school-based structures and processes to avoid duplication and to create harmony (Department of Education, 2009:19). As ILSTs address the needs of learners, educators and the school it is understandable that LSEs should augment the professional growth and development of educators in their effort to address the diverse needs of learners within the classroom (Department of Education, 2005(d):12; Department of Education, 1997:vii; Landsberg, 2005:67).

Furthermore, it is expected from the ILST co-ordinator or LSE to evaluate and monitor the work of the support team within the school. Based on these roles and responsibilities of LSEs it is evident that these educators should acquire sufficient skills and knowledge to perform their duty towards all learners within the school.

A learner support educator should possess good collaborative and facilitating skills, as the work of the LSE may include consultation and collaboration with educators, parents and stakeholders within the community, to ensure effective learner support and intervention (Landsberg, 2011:73-74; Department of Education, 2010:21). Close collaboration must exist between the learner support educator, other educators, parents and professionals within the community, as it is expected from the LSEs to liaise with educators, parents and professionals within the community on a regular basis (Department of Education, 2009:21; Department of Education, 2010:21).

3.7 STRATEGIES ENSURING THE IMPLEMENTATION OF INCLUSIVE EDUCATION

3.7.1 Screening, Identification, Assessment and Support (SIAS)

In 2008, the National Department of Education released the National Strategy on Screening, Identification, Assessment and Support (SIAS) that would form part of the implementation of the Education White Paper 6, (Bornman,et.al., 2010:37; Department of Education, 2007:10). This approach to assessment moves away from assessing the intrinsic barriers to learning within the learner, and enables a thorough investigation into the extrinsic, contextual factors contributing to the barriers to learning (Daniels, 2010:637). This is in line with Bronfenbrenner's theory, the theoretical framework of this study, which indicates that all systems within the child's "world" are interrelated and affect each other on a continuous basis. In Chapter 2, section 2.6.5.1 mention was made that no system is able to work in isolation as all systems are interacting dimensions, influencing each other on a continuous basis.

The primary focus of the National Strategy on Screening, Identification, Assessment and Support (SIAS) as support framework will be to facilitate school access for all learners, especially those experiencing barriers to learning (Bornman, et al., 2010:37). The successful implementation of this strategy will ensure that South Africa realises its obligations in respect of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Disabled People (Department of Education, 2008:Introduction). SIAS is one of the key levers for establishing an Inclusive Education and training system (Department of Education, 2007:3).

This process of Screening, Identification, Assessment and Support (SIAS) will assist with the placement of learners in Special Schools (Department of Education, Manual for School Management, 0-9:645). The SIAS process attempts to replace the previous process regarding the identification, assessment and enrolment of learners in Special Schools (Department of Education, 2008:1).

The document moves away from dependence upon standardised and specialist-driven assessments, by giving a central role to learners, parents, community members and teachers. A qualitative assessment of the learner's performance will be compiled as

the focus is on the support needed, rather than on a category of disability (Nel, Lazarus and Daniels, 2010:S22). This means that a qualitative assessment will precede formal assessments. Assessment will be done to determine the levels of support needed by the learner and not only for placement purposes.

The purpose of SIAS is to:

- identify learners at risk.
- determine the level of support needed by the learner
- enable the establishment of support programmes in the form of Individual Support Plans (ISP's) to address barriers to learning
- respond to learner needs, acquiring additional support in order to maximise scholastic participation and inclusion
- assist with the placement of learners at Special Schools
- acknowledge the central role played by parents and educators in learner support
- grant learners experiencing barriers to learning the opportunity to exercise their right to basic education
- enable learners experiencing problems to access the necessary support needed to develop optimally and overcome their barrier to learning
- introduce new roles and responsibilities of all stakeholders (Department of Education, 2007:10; Department of Education, 2008:1 -9,15).

Screening, Identification, Assessment and Support (SIAS) complements the National Curriculum Statements (NCS) (Department of Education, 2007:3). This is evident in the Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS) (Department of Education, 2011(a):3). According to CAPS, inclusivity should be a central part of the organisation, planning and teaching at all schools. This can only happen if educators portray a positive attitude towards Inclusive Education and show they are able to recognise and address barriers to learning. Inclusive Education can happen at all schools when barriers are identified and addressed by all the relevant support structures such as the ILST, the use of the SIAS process within the school community, including the class educator, school management team (SMT), ILST, DBST, SGB's and parents (Department of Education, 2011(a):3)

An innovative contribution of the SIAS document to learner support is that it provides clear indicators to be followed to determine the level of support needed by individual learners (Nel, et.al., 2010:S22; Department of Education, 2007:3; Department of Education, 2001:6 -7). These indicators are visible within the 4 stage process of the SIAS strategy. The four stage SIAS process will be visually presented in Figure 3.2. on the next page.

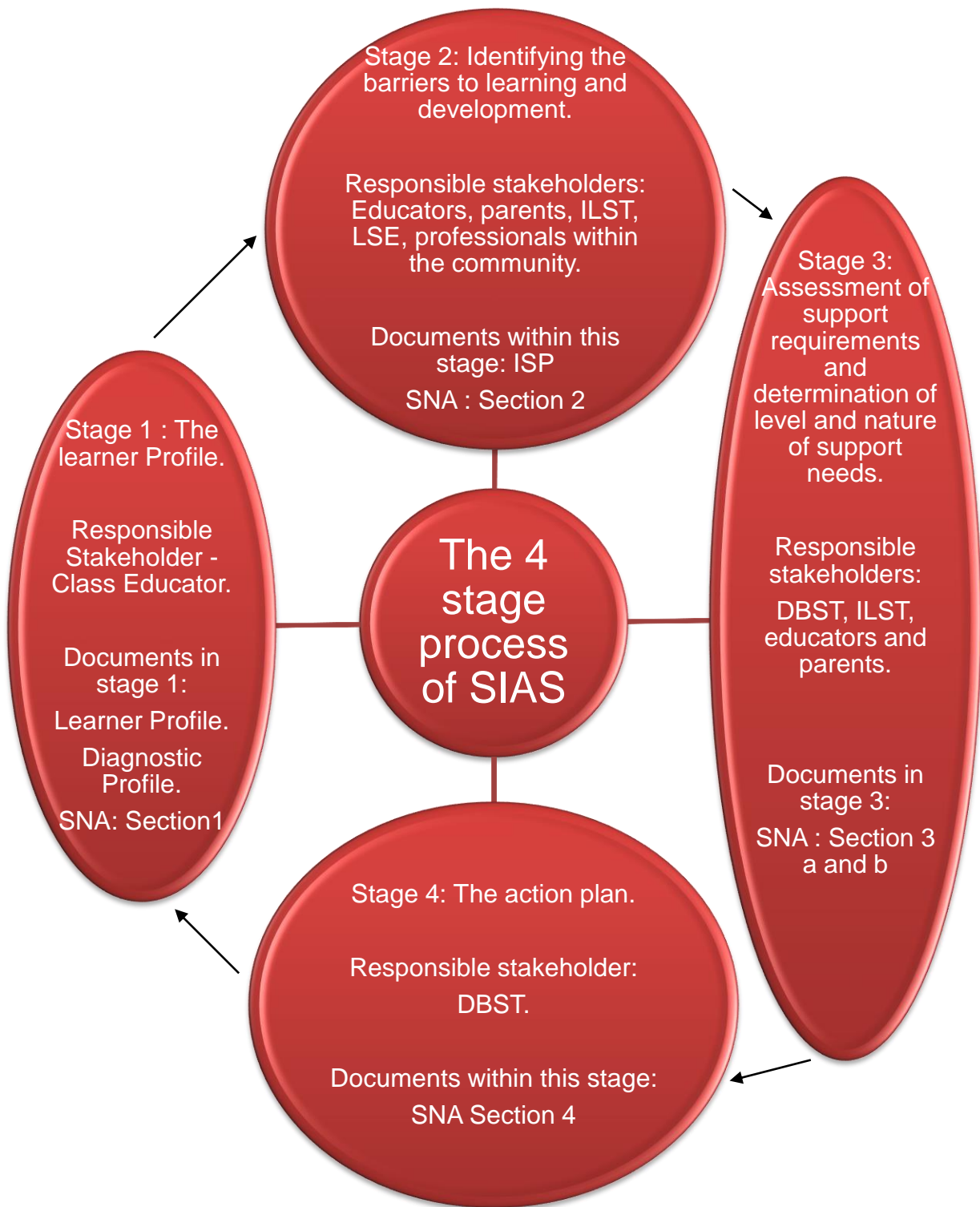


Figure 3.2 The 4 stage process in SIAS

In Stage 1 the class educator is the responsible stakeholder, as indicated in Figure 3.2. In Stage 1 the class educator compiles a learner profile for all learners entering Grade R or Grade 1. This learner profile will include details of the learner's background information and include a historicity interview with parents/caregivers (Nel, Nel and Lebeloane, 2013:74). This background information is captured in Special Needs Assessment (SNA) Section 1. Further documentation within this stage may include a Diagnostic Profile, completed by health professionals. The Diagnostic Profile will indicate medical conditions or impairments (Raymond, 2013:129). Figure 3.2 indicates the documents within the stage. The class educator thus identifies and addresses learner needs in consultation with the parents and caregivers (Department of Education, 2007:15). The important role of the parent is emphasised within the SIAS process.

Previously, parents were given little recognition during the educational journey of their children and were allowed little participation in decision making regarding their children. The critical role which parents need to play in the education and development of learners is now being acknowledged and given official recognition through new legislation and policies such as the South African Schools Act 1996, as discussed in Chapter 2, section 2.4.3 and the National Strategy on Screening, Identification, Assessment and Support (Department of Education, 1997(a):38).

Parental involvement and family support is essential for all learners, but so much more for learners experiencing barriers to learning (Department of Education, 1997(a):102). Parents can provide valuable information regarding the strengths, weaknesses, preferences and clear developmental history of the learner. Furthermore, the parent is able to assist and support the learner at home once they know what to do and how to do it (Landsberg, 2005:67).

Furthermore, in Stage 1, it is expected that the class educators should gather background information on the learner to get an overview of his/her development. This background information includes experiences from birth, family and home conditions and the strengths, goals, aspirations and personality traits (Department of Education, 2007:15; Nel, et al., 2013:74).

Thus the class educator constructs a holistic picture of the child's learning and development. If the class educator has a holistic understanding of the nature of barriers to learning and learner experiences, he is able to assist the learner better. From the above discussion it is evident that Stage 1 of the SIAS is of utmost importance. This stage enables educators and parents to identify and address barriers to learning at an early stage. The early identification of barriers to learning is imperative and cannot be over emphasised. Early identification and intervention of barriers to learning increases the possibility of overcoming the barrier to learning. It improves the general quality of the learner's life at home and at school. The objective of early identification is to enhance the learner's potential for learning and development (Department of Education, 2007:14, Nel et al., 2013:75).

If the class educator detect that intervention and support in Stage 1, is not sufficient for the learner to overcome the barrier to learning, Stage 2 of the SIAS process should be initiated. Stage 2 of the SIAS process applies only to learners who have been identified by the class educator as experiencing barriers to learning. Barriers may be caused by teaching and classroom practices, poor home conditions and other contextual factors (Nel, et al., 2013:74).

In Stage 2, the responsible stakeholder is the Institutional Level Support Team (ILST) in close collaboration with the class educator, LSE's, and professionals within the community (Nel, et al., 2013:74), as indicated in Figure 3.2. The ILST employs a problem solving approach to address learner needs as the class educator consults the ILST for support. This consultation should be a thorough collaboration between the class educator, ILST, parents, care givers and other professionals within the community. During the collaboration learner strengths, weaknesses and support needs are identified. All information is captured in Special Needs Assessment (SNA) Section 2. During this stage an Individual Support Plan (ISP) is designed. A detailed discussion on the ISP will follow in section 3.7.2.

This collaboration strives to find solutions to the barriers the learner is experiencing. Information is gathered regarding the learner's support needs in learning, physical access, health, wellness, and personal care. During this stage, the ILST needs to determine the needs of the school to support the learner and the educator (Raymond, 2013:129). Stage 3 of the SIAS process should commence if the responsible

stakeholders within this stage detect that the support provisioning within this stage is not assisting the learner to overcome the barrier to learning.

During Stage 3, the ILST approaches the DBST for further support and intervention. At this stage, responsible stakeholders as indicated in Figure 3.2, assess the impact of support provisioning and determine the level and nature of support needed by the learner to overcome the barrier to learning (Nel, et al., 2013:74-75). Here formal assessments are done, and the qualitative assessments done in Stage 1 and 2 are reviewed (Department of Education, 2007:17). During this stage the DBST works in close collaboration with the ILST, class educator, parents, care-givers and other professionals within the community. The multi-disciplinary team is now in working and each stakeholder takes responsibility for the implementation of support for the learner. All interventions and support are documented in SNA, Section 3

During Stage 3 the level of support needed and the type of support package needed is determined (Department of Education, 2007:17). The DBST must identify additional support requirements based on the record of intervention by the ILST (Nel, et al., 2013:74-75). Through Stages 1-3, it may become clear that minor adjustments are needed, either at home or at school, to improve the learner's learning and development. It may be an improvement in school effectiveness, home conditions, class educator teaching and planning or collaboration to improve the teaching and learning benefits of all learners. This is in harmony with Bronfenbrenner's ecosystemic theory, which states that different levels of systems in the whole social context influence one another in a continuous process, meaning that one system influences the other, as discussed in Chapter 2, section 2.6.5. For example, if the home condition of a learner improves, his scholastic progress may improve. Stage 4 of the SIAS process will commence if no progress is achieved with the support package from the DBST,.

In Stage 4, the ILST submits a request for additional support to the DBST (Department of Education, 2007:22). The DBST, the responsible stakeholder within this stage, provides the ILST with an action plan for learner support. This action plan needs to respond to the needs of the learner and the educator. The DBST will design this plan of action in conjunction with the ILST and the parents. Within Stage 4, SNA, Section

4 will be completed as indicated in Figure 3.2. The following section will provide a detailed discussion on the Individual Support Plan (ISP).

3.7.2 Individual Support Plan (ISP)

Support in inclusive classrooms is identified and implemented through the establishment of partnerships and collaboration with people who know the learner. They work together for the benefit of the learner and towards a common goal, with the learner as the central point (Mortier, et al., 2009:338). The partnerships in the ILST collaborate to design an Individualised Support Plan (ISP) for the learner.

The ISP is an educational plan designed to meet the individual needs of a learner. It describes the goals and plans the ILST have designed for the specific learner (Bornman, et al., 2010:40). It should comprise of the following components:

- Regular scheduled meetings
- Understanding the current developmental level of the child.
- Identifying appropriate and relevant services and support.
- Evaluating participation in mainstream activities.
- Justifying the use of alternative assessment procedures.
- Justifying the use of alternative assessment standards.
- Determining when the individual educational plan should be implemented.
- Making the necessary arrangements for moving from one school phase to the other.
- Determining how progress will be measured and reported (Bornman,et al.,2010:40, Mortier,et al.,2009:338 and Landsberg,2005:75).

To design an ISP, the strengths and weaknesses of the learner are identified. These strengths and weaknesses are discussed during collaboration of the Institutional Level Support Team (ILST). The ILST is able to identify the educational needs of the learner from the collaboration. The educational needs of the learner determine the specific and measurable goals of the ISP.

Parents should be actively involved in the design of the ISP. It must be reviewed quarterly or annually to update the goals and to ensure that the support rendered

meets the educational needs of the learner. Furthermore, the ISP can be changed at any given time. If members of the ILST, parents or other professionals feel that the learner needs more, less or different support, a meeting can be arranged to discuss the adjustments (Bornman, et al., 2010:40).

An ISP provides information regarding adaptations, be it curriculum adaptation or otherwise, needed for success in an inclusive classroom. An ISP should be planned thoroughly though flexibly so that changes can be made if the initial plan proves to be unsuccessful (Landsberg, 2005:75).

In order to ensure that the planned support is provided and followed up through an ongoing review process, an Individual Support Plan (ISP) form is completed to outline what support will be provided at school level and how it will be monitored. It is completed during Stage 2 of the SIAS process and can be used at the end of the year to determine the progression or retention of the learners (Department of Education, 2008:15). As stated before, parents must be actively involved in the support programme of their child.

3.7.3 Guidelines on Inclusive Teaching and Learning

The Guidelines for Inclusive Teaching and Learning programmes advises educators on the use of the National Curriculum Statements for the purpose of responding to learner diversity within the classroom. These guidelines are part of a programme to make the classroom accessible for all learners (Department of Education, 2010(a):9). Furthermore it provides guidance on curriculum differentiation, learning programmes, work schedules and lesson plans. In the Guidelines on Inclusive Learning and Teaching, strategies are provided for lesson adaptation in each learning area (Nel, et al., 2010:S22).

These programmes ensure that there is sufficient differentiation in curriculum delivery to accommodate learner diversity and that the necessary support structure is in place for learners experiencing barriers to learning (Department of Education, 2005(c):6). Furthermore, these guidelines provide clear direction to educators and other professional staff on how to deal with learner diversity (Department of Education, 2005(c):7).

The purpose of these guidelines is to guide educators on how they could adapt the NCS so that all learners who experience barriers to learning can access the curriculum (Department of Education, 2005(c):8). It explores two key processes:

- a) Curriculum Adaptation, and
- b) Curriculum Differentiation.

Curriculum adaptation is a strategy that can be used to ensure that the curriculum is accessible to all learners. Lessons, activities, and materials are modified to suit the needs of all learners. Differentiation on the other hand caters for the different levels of cognitive ability within a classroom. Educators need to plan their lessons in such a fashion that it caters for learners with complex level needs as well as for the learners with basic level needs (Department of Education, 2010(a):10).

3.8 NETWORK OF SUPPORT STRUCTURES WITHIN THE EDUCATION DISTRICT AT PRESENT

South African policy documents, such as the Education White Paper 6: Special Needs Education, as discussed in Chapter 2, recommends transformative inclusive practices. This document provides essential educational strategies and support structures and systems, in an effort to equip all schools with the necessary support structures to admit and support learners experiencing barriers to learning, who were previously marginalized and excluded from education (Bornman, et al., 2010:25; Waghid, et al., 2002:22).

For this vision to become a reality, appropriate support structures must be available to all learners (Bornman, et al., 2010:37). Support structures such as Full Service Schools, Specials Schools as Resource Centres, Institutional Level Support Teams (ILST) and District Based Support Teams should be available to promote the rights to education for all learners, parents and educators within a systemic framework (Bornman, et al., 2010:25; Waghid, et al., 2002:22).

No assessment will be meaningful if it does not ensure access to support. According to UNESCO, the most important forms of support are available at all schools in the form of learners supporting each other, educators supporting each other, parents

becoming partners in education, and communities supporting their local schools (Bornman, et al., 2010:37).

Support structures will be discussed in detail.

3.8.1 Full Service Schools

A Full Service School is described as a mainstream school that supplies a full range of support needs from low levels of support to more intensive levels of support needs (Department of Education, 2005(d); Swart, 2004(a):239; Daniels, 2010:636).

These institutions are well equipped and resourced to promote a culture that welcomes and accommodates learner diversity (Department of Education, 2009:1). According to Nel, et al.,(2010:S22) and Engelbrecht, 2001(c):17, advice is provided to Full Service Schools as they need to respond to the diverse needs of all learners, irrespective of difficulties or differences they may experience.

Full Service Schools are conceived as a strategy to build an Inclusive Education system. These institutions have the responsibility of providing access to education for learners in need of support (Department of Education, 2009:21; Landsberg, 2005:65).

The role of full-service schools is:

- To provide support in the school to learners and educators with the help, guidance and support of proficient and knowledgeable learning support educators.
- To support the neighbouring schools with available resources.
- To assist the DBST in providing support to neighbouring schools (Landsberg, 2005:65)

3.8.2 Special Schools as Resource Centres

Special Schools are critical in the educational transformation of South Africa towards an Inclusive Education system. The role of Special Schools as Resource Centres within an Inclusive Education setting is regarded a new conceptual framework that moves towards the sharing of expertise and the utilization of community based

resources to determine the level of support needs of the learners (Department of Education, 2005(b):10).

According to Nel, et al., (2010:S22), Special Schools also play a vital role in the DBSTs as Special Schools need to provide expert support and advice to the learner support structure. Special Schools will not only work in close collaboration with the DBST but also with neighbouring schools and other professionals within communities (Department of Education, 2005(b):5; Department of Education, 2001:21; Department of Education, 2005(b):3; Muthukrishna, 2001:49). In this way specialised professional support will be offered to neighbouring schools in need of help and assistance (Landsberg, 2005:65; Swart, 2004(a):238-239). Educators can be trained by the Special Schools to identify barriers to learning, managing inclusive classrooms, development of Individual Support Plans (ISP's), development of learning support material (Landsberg,2005:65) and other support needs.

Additionally Special Schools will support and accommodate learners with high levels of support needs.

3.8.3 District Based Support Teams (DBST)

Muthukrishna (2001:49) describes the District Based Support Team (DBST) as a multi-disciplinary team working together and incorporating all relevant support providers within the community to support the Institutional Level Support Teams (ILST). The DBST should facilitate the use of community resources in addressing needs in the ILSTs, as the philosophy of the DBST should be to share expertise and encourage team-based collaboration across a wide range of role players (Lomofsky, et al., 2001:313; Johnson, et al., 2007:162).

The District Based Support Team (DBST) should consist of a large range of expertise, including those specialists whose job descriptions previously focused on individual therapies (Johnson, et al., 2007:162; Swart, 2004(a):239). Specialist staff from the Department of Health, Social Development, Special Schools and other professionals within the community will be part of the DBST (Johnson, et al., 2007:162; Nel, et al., 2010:S22). The DBST is central to learner support delivery as this team should provide indirect support to learners through the ILST (Johnson, et al., 2007:162).

The core functions of the DBST are to:

- a) Provide support to Institutional Level Support Teams (ILST)
- b) Link institutions with community support systems and provide indirect and direct support to learners.
- c) Support teachers and ILSTs.
- d) Present training programmes and build capacity of educators in identifying possible barriers to learning.
- e) Provide a co-ordinated professional support service that draws on expertise in Special Schools and Full-Service Schools.
- f) Provide a co-ordinated professional support service.
- g) The development and ongoing back-up of support teams in schools
- h) Support teaching and learning, thereby building the capacity of the school to identify and address possible barriers to learning.
- i) Link schools with other support structure within their communities so that needs and barriers may be addressed.
- j) Provide indirect support to learners through supporting educators and school management teams responsible for the full range of learner needs.
- k) Assess support programmes, identify their effectiveness, and advise on modifications if need be (Landsberg,2005:64; Muthukrishna, 2001:49; Engelbrecht, et al., 2001(b):81; Engelbrecht, et al., 1999:16–17; Johnson, et al., 2007:162).

The DBST should build the capacity of the ILST, providing them with the necessary knowledge, skills and confidence to address a range of concerns (Johnson, et al., 2007:162). Psychologists, therapists, remedial educators and others who are members of the DBST are not expected to take individual referrals, but to share their expert knowledge with the local school communities and facilitate a collaborative problem solving approach. The effective functioning of the DBST and ILST require successful collaboration between various structures and departments such as health, social welfare and justice as mentioned in section 3.3.4 (Johnson, et al., 2007:162).

3.9 CONCERNS AND CHALLENGES OF LEARNER SUPPORT

Learner support within an integrated systemic support structure requires a change in view, attitude and approach concerning learner support. Roles and responsibilities of stakeholders need to change to create a supportive environment for learning and teaching (Lomofsky, et al., 2001:312).

The development of an integrated community-based approach aims at building the capacity of all relevant stakeholders of the system to respond to the diverse needs of the learner population. Support interventions should be done by parents, the school and the community to address the diverse needs of the learner population. This support emphasises the need for collaboration between all stakeholders in providing support to centres of teaching and learning (Lomofsky, et al., 2001:313).

This approach for learner support requires educators to accept learners with special educational needs in their classrooms. As stated in Chapter 2, mainstream educators should take responsibility for all learners in their classes, including those who experience barriers to learning (Donald, et al., 1997:20; Landsberg, 2005:68). Educators thus experience challenges in accommodating learners with special educational needs in mainstream classrooms as they are not trained to educate these learners.

Roles and responsibilities for education support professionals have also changed. Traditionally, education support professionals focused on addressing the individual learner to alleviate their differences (Engelbrecht, 2001(c):17; Swart and Pettipher, 2005(a):5; Lomofsky, et al., 2001:305). Their new role necessitates a major emphasis on support within an eco-systemic framework (Engelbrecht, 2001(c):22). They need to be skilled in the systems approach and be able to develop partnerships with other relevant stakeholders. It is therefore apparent that the changed role and responsibility of Education Social Support Services should lead to change in learner support methodologies. Support services should support educators in the system and move away from supporting individual learners.

3.10 SUMMARY

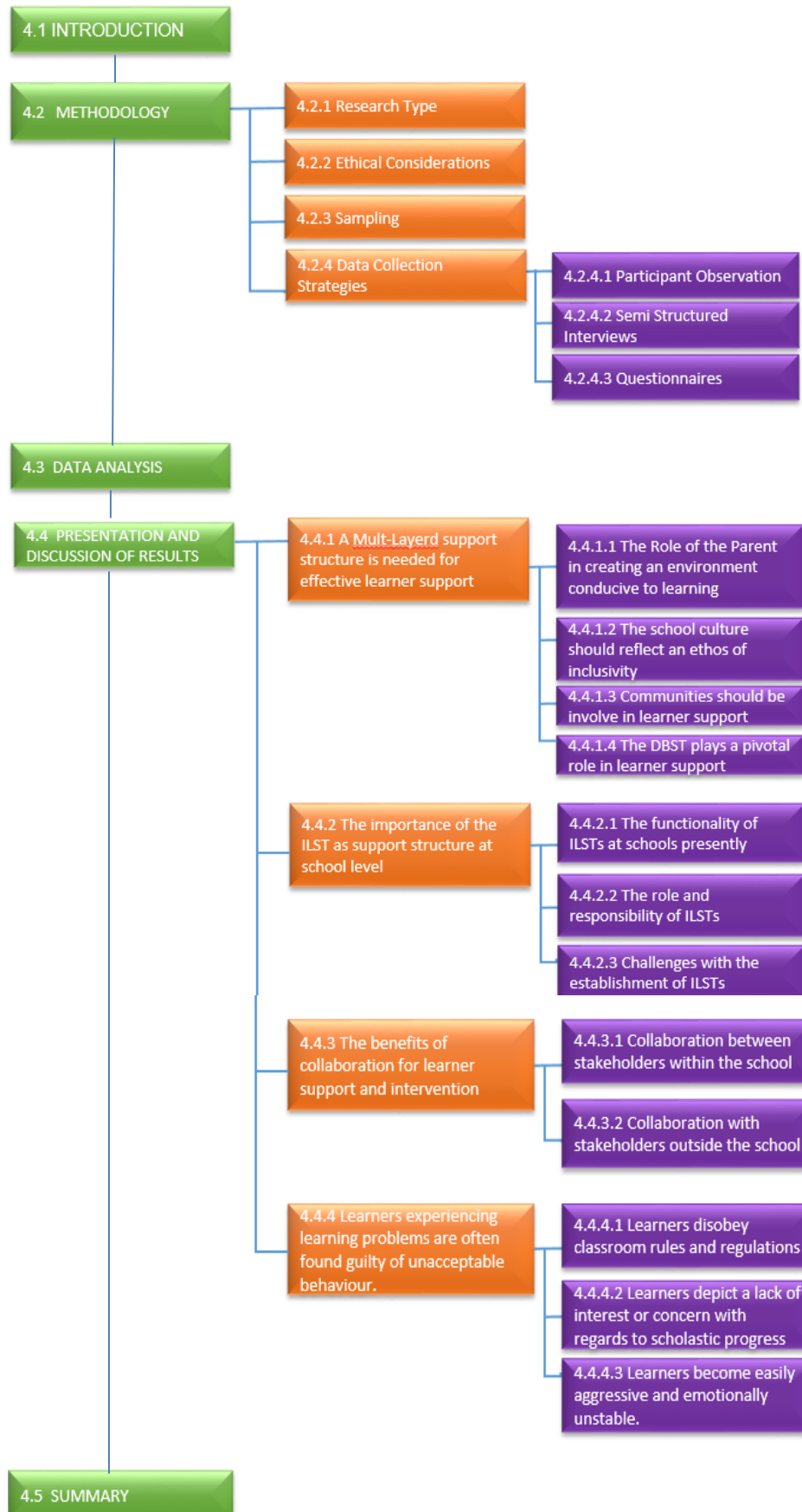
The following was discussed in this chapter:

- A literature review on learner support and the meaning thereof.
- The establishment of learner support teams at South African schools, known as Institutional Level Support Teams (ILST).
- Learner support within a Whole School Development approach.
- Collaboration as an important support strategy for Inclusive Education, where individuals interact about strategies to support educators, learners, schools, families and the community at large.
- The Learner Support Educator (LSE) as facilitator and manager of support within mainstream schools.
- Strategies ensuring the effective implementation of Inclusive Education, with specific reference to the National Strategy on Screening, Identification, Assessment and Support and the Guidelines for Inclusive Teaching and Learning Programmes.
- Network of support structures within districts including Special Schools as Resource Centres, Full Service Schools and the District Based Support Team (DBST).
- The chapter was concluded with the challenges and concerns of learner support within a systemic, integrated support structure.

Chapter 3 provided a literature review on learner support within a holistic, integrated support structure. The following chapter will contain a description of the execution of the empirical research and a discussion of the results of the research.

CHAPTER 4 OUTLINE:

EMPRICAL RESEARCH: EXECUTION AND RESULTS



CHAPTER FOUR

EMPRICAL RESEARCH: EXECUTION AND RESULTS

4.1 INTRODUCTION

Chapter 1 set the scene for what was going to happen during the actual research process. Firstly, the aim of the study and the research methodology were thoroughly explained. Secondly, the data collection instruments used to collect data was explained. The distribution, collection and appointment procedures for data gathering were clearly explained. Lastly, the ethical considerations, sampling techniques, data analysis and strategies to ensure the validity and reliability of the research were discussed.

The aim of this chapter is to provide a description of the execution of the empirical research.

4.2 METHODOLOGY

4.2.1 Research type

According to Holliday (2002:6), education forms part of the social sciences where the ideas, experience, perceptions and feelings of people are studied. A qualitative research approach was deemed necessary for the purpose of this study, as it aims to ascertain supportive guiding principles for the effective establishment and functioning of ILSTs at primary schools within the Uitenhage District. Mertens (2010:235) and Springer (2010:403) agree with this viewpoint and state that qualitative research is the preferred research approach for this study, as it falls within the Social sciences.

Struwig, et al., 2001:17, Kincheloe, 2003:190, Springer, 2010:20 and Bogdan, et al., 2003:4 elaborate further on the qualitative research approach and state that the qualitative researcher is concerned with the organic wholeness of the research process. It looks at the bigger picture, and starts to search for an understanding of the whole. In addition to this, Bauer and Brazer (2012: 233) depict qualitative research strategy as the how and why of things and events, occurring in their natural setting.

For the purpose of this study, the researcher explored the support structures required at school level to render support to learners experiencing barriers to learning. The researcher, in close collaboration with the co-researcher, used participant observation to observe the how and why of happenings in their natural setting. This was discussed in detail in Chapter 1.

In this study, the researcher observed and gathered questionnaires from educators, ILST members, School Principals, members of the School Management Teams, DBST members and other professionals within the community, in order to determine why schools encounter problems in the establishment of their ILSTs and to provide guiding principles for the effective establishment and functioning of the ILST. Interviews were conducted with ILST co-ordinators, members of the community and other professionals within the community. Bauer and Brazer (2012:233) elucidate qualitative research further by stating that qualitative research allows the researcher to examine context deeply, revealing the reasons and possible solutions to a problem.

The researcher in this study is interested in understanding the research phenomenon from the perspective of the research participant; thus knowledge, meaning and understanding are created from the research participants' own perspectives (Struwig, et al., 2001:16). Bogdan, et al., (2003:5) agree that meaning is of essential concern to the qualitative research approach. The researcher wants to understand, describe and interpret an event from the point of view of the participant (Mertens, 2010:235).

4.2.2 Ethical Considerations

In this study the researcher undertook several steps to ensure that the research adhered to the ethical rules laid down by the Research Ethics Committee of the Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University (NMMU). Firstly, the researcher requested permission from the Department of Education to conduct research within the Uitenhage District. The District Director of the Uitenhage District, then forwarded this request to the then Superintendent General of the Department of Education. Permission was granted by the Superintendent General and the District Director, to conduct research within the Uitenhage District (See Appendix B).

Secondly, the researcher applied for ethics approval from the Research Ethics Committee (Human) REC-H of the Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University. Permission was granted and ethics clearance reference number **H12-EDU-ERE-013** were allocated (See Appendix A). Thirdly, the researcher requested permission from School Principals to conduct research at their respective schools and permission were granted (See Appendix C and D).

Lastly, the researcher adhered to the following ethical considerations within the study.

Informed consent forms were completed by all participants.

- a) A copy of the REC-H approval letter, as well as the approval letter from the Superintendent-General of Education, were given to schools who decided to participate in this research.
- b) Participants were informed that participation within this study is voluntarily. Furthermore, participants were informed that they could withdraw from this research at any given time, without penalty.
- c) Participants were notified that confidentiality and privacy would be maintained at all times within this study. No names of participants would be mentioned during the write up of this research.
- d) All participants were treated respectfully and their sacrifice to participate was taken into consideration and appreciated at all times.

The names of the schools and various professionals who participated in this study will not be disclosed in order to ensure confidentiality and anonymity. A detailed discussion on Ethical Considerations were discussed in Chapter 1, section 1.5.

4.2.3 Sampling

Literature discussed in Chapter 1, section 1.7 described sampling as a process of selecting participants from a population group (Given, 2008:79). All schools participating in this study are within the Uitenhage District. The Uitenhage District consists of five municipal areas, as indicated in Chapter 1, section 1.1. For logistical

reasons, six schools per municipal area were identified to be part of the sample group. A total of 30 schools participated in this study.

In this study, a combination of purposive and judgement sampling as well as convenience sampling were used, as indicated and discussed in Chapter 1, section 1.7. Participants were chosen according to a set criterion to optimize research data and research results. The criteria as discussed in Chapter 1, section 1.7. are as follows:

- Participants must be knowledgeable regarding the ILST at their school, as they will then be able to provide information rich data.
- Participants must have experienced the establishment of ILSTs at school, as they will then be able to share personal experiences, perspectives, thoughts and challenges encountered during the establishment of ILSTs at their schools.
- Participants must be an educator at the participating school. This educator should be involved in the activities of the ILST at their school.
- Participants must be a member of the ILST, supporting learners experiencing barriers to learning.
- Participants must be the Deputy Principal at the participating schools, assisting and supporting the activities of the ILST.
- Participants must be the School Principal at the participating schools, supporting the efforts of the ILST.
- Participants must be an ILST co-ordinator at participating schools, co-ordinating the activities of the ILST.
- At District Level participants must be part of the DBST.
- Participants within the community must be actively involved in learner support activities.

Convenience sampling will also be used, as educators, ILST members, ILST co-ordinators, Deputy Principals, School Principals, DBST members and community members participating within this study are easily available and accessible for the researcher. Additionally, the researcher selected certain participants for the study, based on the researcher's knowledge of the participants.

4.2.4 Data collection strategies

Data were gathered by making use of participant observations, questionnaires and semi-structured interviews. A detailed discussion regarding these data collection strategies can be found in Chapter 1, section 1.4.2. According to Bauer and Brazer (2012:236), participant observations, questionnaires and semi-structured interviews are the most common data collection techniques used within qualitative research. These data collection approaches will now be discussed

4.2.4.1 Participant observation

Observation allows researchers to gain first-hand experience of the participants' perspectives, experiences and doings (Atkinson, et al., 1998:111; Richie, 2003(a):35). Therefore, the researcher within this study employed participant observation to develop a good understanding of the problem under study, namely the effective establishment and functioning of ILSTs at Primary Schools within the Uitenhage District.

In Chapter 1, section 1.4.2.2, Lichtman (2010:172) stated that participant observation can be done in a working environment, where the researcher becomes part of the ordinary, natural setting. The researcher and co-researcher visit schools on a daily basis to assist and support ILSTs in their endeavour to help learners experiencing challenges. During school visits the researcher and co-researcher attend and participate in ILST discussions, where learner, educator and institutional needs and challenges are addressed. Hence the reason for making use of participant observation, as it allows the researcher to conduct research in the workplace and natural setting as discussed in Chapter 1, section 1.4.2.2.

During these ILST discussions the researcher and co-researcher are able to detect whether ILSTs are established at the particular school and whether this team is functioning optimally and effectively. The purpose and focus of participant observation was, therefore, to gain insight into the effective establishment and functioning of ILSTs at the particular school. Additionally, the researcher and co-researcher wanted to identify the challenges schools experience with the establishment and functioning of ILSTs.

4.2.4.2 Semi-structured interviews

Legard, et al., (2003:142), Cresswell, (2003:189) and Maree, (2007:87) agree with Gubruim and Holstein (2002:283) that qualitative interviewing is based on a conversation with the emphasis on the interviewer, posing questions and listening, whilst the interviewee responds to such questions, as discussed in Chapter 1, section 1.4.2.4. Additionally, these authors state that the purpose of most qualitative interviewing is to derive interpretations, not facts or laws, from the participants' responses.

Semi-structured interviewing allows interviewees to express their ideas, opinions and feelings (Cresswell, 2005:15 and Legard, et al., 2003:141). This flexible feature of semi-structured interviews grants the researcher the opportunity to obtain multiple views of the phenomenon under study as the researcher is able to probe the interviewee extensively, as discussed in Chapter 1, section 1.4.2.4.

In this study, the researcher employed semi-structured interviews. These interviews were conducted with ILST co-ordinators at participating schools, members of the DBST as well as with community members. The researcher requested ILST co-ordinators at participating schools to be the interviewees as they are information rich participants. Other ILST members completed questionnaires. Community members actively involved in learner support activities such as PAL and a project within the Kwanobuhle area, which will be discussed later in this chapter, section 4.4.1.3., participated in these interviews. The reason for interviewing community members was to detect how learner support activities within communities support and assist learners, the school and parents within the community. Conducting interviews at schools with ILST members as well as with community members required strategic planning.

Permission to conduct research at schools and at the District Office was granted as mentioned in the section on Ethical Considerations, section 4.2.2. With this consent granted, the researcher now had to make contact with interviewees. Firstly, the researcher contacted interviewees either personally or telephonically to request their participation in the research. The majority of these interviewees agreed spontaneously. Secondly, suitable dates, times and venues were arranged with these interviewees to conduct the interview. Most of these interviews were conducted at

venues suggested by the interviewee so that they may experience a sense of security, calmness and comfort. Thirdly, prior to the actual interview, the researcher discussed the main aim of the interview. Furthermore, the researcher requested the research participant to sign the Informed Consent Form (See Appendix F). Fourthly, the interview were conducted with the use of an interview schedule, as mentioned in Chapter 1, section 1.4.2 (See Appendix K).

Interviews were conducted in either English or Afrikaans. After 16 interviews the interviewer felt that the data became saturated, as the researcher heard the same answers repeated on the same question by different interviewees. The researcher made field notes during interviews to remember particular non-verbal cues or very important information. The interviews were audio-taped and later transcribed. Transcriptions helped the researcher to examine information provided by the interviewees. In Chapter 1, section 1.4.2.4 provided a detailed discussion on semi-structured interviews.

4.2.4.3 Questionnaires

As mentioned in Chapter 1, section 1.4.2.3, questionnaires were used in this study. The researcher opted to use questionnaires as a larger sample group would be obtained, thereby ensuring diversity of information. Menter, Elliot, Hulme, Lewin and Lowden, (2011:105) validate this by stating that questionnaires permit the researcher to collect large amounts of data. Chapter 1, section 1.4.2.3 elaborated on the use of the questionnaire as a data collection strategy.

Questionnaires were delivered to participating schools. Members of the DBST and community members, actively involved in learner support were asked to complete questionnaires. With the delivery of questionnaires, the purpose and aim of the study was explained to the participants. The researcher informed the participants verbally to help them understand the study and explained what would be expected from them. This explanation included the purpose of the study as well as the rights of the research participants. Many School Principals returned the questionnaires to the researcher or the researcher collected the questionnaires from the schools. This was not an easy task to adhere to due to distance and time constraints. Reluctance on the part of certain DBST members to complete questionnaires hampered the smooth flow of

gathering data. The majority of educators were willing to complete the questionnaires. The researcher distributed 45 questionnaires of which 39 were returned.

The questionnaires consisted of open-ended questions. As far as possible, the questions posed in the questionnaire for this study had a direct bearing on the topic and aim of this investigation in order to get answers to the research sub-aims. A copy of the questionnaires is included as Appendix I. In Chapter 1 section 1.4.2.3 a detailed discussions on questionnaires can be found.

All questionnaires were in English, although a diverse language group completed the questionnaires. Questions were posed in English and participants could either answer in English or Afrikaans. Whilst reading the answers of the participants, the researcher realised that educators are not well informed regarding learner support and intervention. They tried their best to complete the questionnaire but the lack of knowledge was evident. I realised something needed to be done to overcome this problem

4.3 DATA ANALYSIS

As mentioned before, data were collected by means of participant observations, questionnaires and semi-structured interviews. To ensure the validity of the collected data, the researcher requested the co-researcher to assist with data analysis in order to establish a true reflection of what participants said. Neuman, (2003:185), Barbie, (1989:G8) and Baker, (1998:119) endorse such practices and state that validity ensures that an accurate account of the phenomenon under study is presented.

The researcher employed descriptive and interpretive validity during this study, as discussed in Chapter 1, section 1.6.1. The researcher collaborated with the co-researcher to ensure that the presented data was a true reflection of what participants had to say. Additionally, the researcher went back into the research field to verify with research participants that the interpretation of data is accurate and true. The researcher applied hermeneutics as discussed in Chapter 1, section 1.4.1.

Furthermore, the researcher validated research results by means of data and researcher triangulation as discussed in Chapter 1, section 1.6.2. The researcher

executed data triangulation, by comparing collected data, using the information gathered through semi-structured interviews, participant observations and questionnaires. To compare data the researcher posed the same questions for both the interviews and the questionnaires.

Additionally the researcher executed researcher triangulation, by making use of a co-researcher. The co-researcher accompanied the researcher into the research field. During participant observation the researcher and co-researcher would interact with research participants. Soon after participant observation the researcher and co-researcher compared field notes on what was observed, as discussed in Chapter 1, section 1.4.2.2.

The co-researcher was actively involved with the analysis of questionnaires and interviews. The co-researcher was therefore able to add his opinion on the collected data. Through the entire data analysis process, the co-researcher could confirm or add to the emerging themes and sub-themes.

The analysis of data was executed as follows. Firstly, the researcher, together with the co-researcher, analysed field notes made during Participant Observation. The researcher and co-researcher could analyse their observation once they had done the following:

- Read through field notes made during participant observation.
- Re-read field notes for a better understanding.
- Write field notes on charts to visualise data.
- Identified commonalities, based on key words.

Secondly, the researcher and co-researcher analysed the questionnaires. They could only analyse the questionnaires once they had:

- Read the replies of questionnaires.
- Compiled questionnaire responses based on questions and responses.
- Identified similarities in the data within these responses.
- Similar data were put together, forming small segments of meaning.

- These small segments of meaning were identified as possible common themes and sub-themes.

Thirdly, the researcher together with the co-researcher analysed the interviews. In order for the researcher and co-researcher to analyse interviews the following had to be done:

- An audio-typist had to produce a word processed document, a transcription, from a Dictaphone.
- These transcriptions were read more than once to obtain a holistic view of the data.
- Similarities within the data were identified and put together.

Fourthly, the researcher, in close collaboration with the co-researcher, combined the data from the different data collection strategies. The researcher in conjunction with the co-researcher read the combined data repeatedly to formulate a holistic perspective of the data. Commonalities were identified and coded, using colour coding. Similar data were identified and organised into small segments of meaning. These small units of meaning were then put together to establish possible common themes. In Chapter 1, section 1.8.2 Henning endorse such practices. He states that once coding occurred small segments of data can be grouped together and transformed into possible common themes. Tesch;s step-by-step process, as discussed in Chapter 1, section 1.8 was applied in this study to determine the possible common themes and sub-themes.

4.4 DISCUSSION OF THE THEMES AND SUB-THEMES OF THE RESEARCH

Subsequent to data analysis, the following themes and sub-themes emerged from the data. They are visually presented in Table 4.1. Table 4.1 will be followed by a discussion of the research results.

Themes	Sub-themes
<p>Theme 1:</p> <p>A multi-layered support structure is needed for effective learner support.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The role of parents in creating an environment conducive to learning. • The school culture should reflect an ethos of inclusivity. • Communities should be involved in learner support. • The DBST plays a pivotal role in learner support.
<p>Theme 2:</p> <p>The importance of the Institutional Level Support Team (ILST) as support structure at school level.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The functionality of ILSTs at schools, presently. • The role and responsibility of ILSTs. • Challenges with the establishment of ILSTs.
<p>Theme 3:</p> <p>The benefits of collaboration for learner support and intervention.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collaboration between stakeholders within the school. • Collaboration with stakeholders outside the school.
<p>Theme 4:</p> <p>Learners experiencing learning problems are often found guilty of unacceptable behaviour.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learners disobey classroom rules and regulations. • Learners depict a lack of interest or concern with regards to scholastic progress • Learners become easily aggressive and emotionally unstable.

Table 4.1 Presentation of emergent themes and sub-themes of the study

The emerging themes and sub-themes are as follows:

1. A MULTI-LAYERED SUPPORT STRUCTURE IS NEEDED FOR EFFECTIVE LEARNER SUPPORT

- The role of parents in creating an environment conducive to learning.
- The school culture should reflect an ethos of inclusivity.

- Communities should be involved in learner support.
- The DBST plays a pivotal role in learner support.

2. THE IMPORTANCE OF THE ILST AS SUPPORT STRUCTURE

- The functionality of ILSTs at schools, presently.
- The role and responsibility of ILSTs.
- Challenges with the establishment of ILSTs.

3. THE BENEFITS OF COLLABORATION FOR LEARNER SUPPORT AND INTERVENTION

- Collaboration between stakeholders within the school.
- Collaboration with stakeholders outside the school.

4. LEARNERS EXPERIENCING LEARNING PROBLEMS ARE OFTEN FOUND GUILTY OF UNACCEPTABLE BEHAVIOUR

- Learners disobey classroom rules and regulations.
- Learners depict a lack of interest or concern with regards to scholastic progress.
- Learners become easily aggressive and emotional unstable.

These themes and their sub-themes will now be discussed in detail.

4.4.1 A MULTI-LAYERED SUPPORT STRUCTURE IS NEEDED FOR EFFECTIVE LEARNER SUPPORT

The majority of participants indicated that a multi-layered support structure is essential for effective learner support and intervention. Participants substantiated this by stating that various role players such as parents, the school, the community, including professionals within the community, should play a vital role in learner support. The role and responsibility of all these stakeholders will be discussed in detail when the sub-themes of this main theme are discussed here under.

The importance of this theme was evident at the onset of our observations and was highlighted in ILST meetings attended by the researcher and co-researcher as participant observers. During these meetings the importance of all stakeholders involved in learner support was mentioned repeatedly, as stakeholders need to take collective responsibility in supporting learners experiencing scholastic challenges. The importance of a multi-layered support structure, representing all stakeholders involved in learner support, was mentioned repeatedly. As mentioned before, in section 4.4., four sub-themes emerged from this main theme, which will now be discussed individually and in detail.

4.4.1.1 The role of the parent in creating an environment conducive to learning

All participants acknowledge that parents are vital role players in the rendering of effective learner support and intervention. In this regard participant 1 was of the opinion that parents should realise that they play a vital role in the development of their children. Participants 8, 14 and 21 also felt that effective learner support relies on parents to be actively involved in the scholastic development of their children. For example; participant 12 stated that you need to keep parents well informed with regards to barriers to learning, so that they know how to support their children.

Participants were of the opinion that, if parents are actively involved and well informed about the learning activities of their children, they will be able to help and support educators in their endeavours aimed at supporting learners experiencing various scholastic difficulties. Collectively, parents and educators should strengthen all learner support interventions.

Furthermore, educator participants were of the opinion that parents play a vital role in learner support. In this regard educator participants 23 and 24 remarked that they work closely with parents, as parents can extend and strengthen learner support intervention at home. Therefore, parents should be made aware of what educators are doing at school to enable them to consolidate and strengthen educator intervention efforts at home. For example, educator participant 9 stated: "I have regular contact with parents, so that parents are well informed regarding the scholastic progress of their children."

Participants also indicated that close collaboration between parents and educators will pave the way for a healthy parent-educator relationship and that such a relationship should lead to regular contact sessions between the educator and the parent. Moreover, participants felt that regular contact sessions between the parent and the educator will allow both parties to get to know each other better, grow and develop simultaneously with regards to learner support, whilst supporting the learners overcoming their barriers to learning. In support of the above statements educator participant 7 stated: "Visit their homes and talk with illiterate parents, because they are motivational tools for their children." In doing so, parents are well informed concerning the scholastic performance of their children.

With all of the above in mind, it is obvious that parents are central figures in assisting their children overcoming barriers to learning. The important role of the parent, in the life of the child, is endorsed in legislation and policies such as the South African Schools Act (SASA), Education White Paper 6, the SIAS process and other documents. A detailed discussion on these documents was provided in Chapter 2, section 2.4. Additional literature, confirming the important role of the parent was discussed in Chapter 3, sections 3.2, 3.3 and 3.4. It is therefore evident that parents are vital role players in learner support and that a collaborative, parent-educator relationship must be sustained. Participants indicated that the ILST, in close collaboration with educators, are currently busy arranging training sessions at various schools. Educators then invite parents from the community to be part of the training sessions dealing with learner support and intervention.

Participants indicated that at some schools training sessions or short courses are arranged for educators, parents and other stakeholders interested in learner support. For example participant 17 mentioned that they invited a Master student, currently busy with research on Foetal Alcohol Syndrome (FAS) to address the negative effect of alcohol consumption during pregnancy. Such practices are prevalent within the Humansdorp and Langkloof communities, as many learners at their school are medically diagnosed with FAS. The purpose of this specific short course was to create an awareness of the negative effects of alcohol abuse during pregnancy. The aim of these short courses is to empower all stakeholders interested in supporting learners experiencing scholastic challenges.

The fact that ILSTs arrange short courses for parents is confirmed by an Educational Psychologist, who is part of the District Based Support Team, within the Uitenhage District. According to this participant, the ILST at a school invited him to deliver a talk to parents on how to deal with learners experiencing challenges at school. He was pleasantly surprised at the number of parents who attended the meeting and their willingness to learn more on how to support their children who experienced barriers to learning.

From the above discussion, it is apparent and acknowledged by participants that parents play a vital role in learner support. In Chapter 3 mention was made that the Screening, Identification, Assessment and Support (SIAS) process acknowledges the central role played by parents in the life of the child (Department of Education, 2007:10; Department of Education, 2008:1-9, 15). The importance of parents within the SIAS process is affirmed in the design of an Individual Support Plan (ISP). This ISP is designed in close collaboration with the parent, as the parents are able to provide rich information regarding the developmental history of the child. This was explained in detail in Chapter 3, section 3.7.1 of this study.

Educator participants indicated that in some instances they have identified a common tendency amongst parents to be non-co-operative when expected to help and support their children to overcome their barriers to learning. They furthermore indicated that some parents do not create a supportive home environment conducive to learning and that some of them do not attend parent-educator meetings. For example, educator participant 33 stated that “Parents never turn up for parent meetings.” Furthermore, educator participant 5 mentioned that: “Parents abuse alcohol excessively, they physically abuse one another on a regular basis and poverty is at the order of the day.” With such conditions prevailing, it becomes apparent that parents need support to realise that they play a fundamental role in the growth and development of their children. The reason for the non-involvement of parents in the life of their children should be researched.

It was also indicated in Chapter 2, sections 2.6.5.1 and 2.6.5.2 that parents have a profound influence on the growth and development of the child. The majority of school-based participants were of the opinion that parents can afford their children opportunities and challenges. Opportunities can be regarded as those efforts by

parents that have a positive impact on the development of the child. These parents are involved and concerned about learner support and intervention as they assist and help their children overcome their barriers to learning. For example, educator participant 8 stated: “We collaborate with parents and discuss the situation with them in order for them to assist their children” This opinion of participants is affirmed by literature in Chapter 2, section 2.6.3 that indicates that parental involvement can make a positive contribution in the life and development of the child.

In contrast to opportunities, participants indicated that parents may present their children with challenges. These challenges may include nonchalant and apathetic parents with regards to scholastic support and intervention. In addition to the nonchalant attitude towards scholastic support and intervention, the home conditions of learners may be alarming. Their home environments may depict the abuse of alcohol, poverty and physical abuse amongst parents. For example community and school participants indicated that: “Learners have a history of neglect and physical abuse.” In addition, educator participant 14 stated: “Some of these learners have personal problems stemming out of circumstances at home.” In Chapter 3, literature reveals that a violent home environment and poor parenting may contribute to barriers to learning. These opportunities and challenges that parents present to their children were detected during data collection and confirmed during data analysis.

Keeping the above discussion in mind, it is clear that the theoretical framework of this study, namely Bronfenbrenner’s eco-systemic theory, becomes very important, since it recognises the significant role of the parent in the life of the child on the micro- and mesosystem. According to this theory, parents are regarded as part of the microsystem and the mesosystem, therefore they play a vital role in their children’s education and development. Other inhabitants form part of the microsystem and mesosystem includes educators, caregivers, families and friends.

From the discussion and explanations on Inclusive Education and Bronfenbrenner’s eco-systemic theory, as discussed in Chapter 2 section 2.3, 2.4 and 2.6 it is clear that inhabitants of the microsystem need to interact with each other on a continuous basis. The interactions amongst inhabitants of the microsystem, takes place in the mesosystem of Bronfenbrenner’s four nested systems. The mesosystem recognises the importance of relationships amongst inhabitants of the microsystem, since

whatever happens at home affects what happens at school and vice versa. So, whatever happens in one part; may have an impact on the other part, therefore systems cannot operate in isolation as all systems interact with one each other. Therefore, parents and educators need to work and collaborate with each other to understand, help and support the educational journey of the learner.

As indicated in Chapter 3, collaboration between parents and educators is of cardinal importance for effective intervention and support. In Chapter 3, section 3.5, collaboration is described as a purposeful engagement, directed towards a mutual goal (Ainscow and Sandill, 2010:403).

Members of the SMT and School Principals that participated in this study felt that collaboration between educators and parents are important as collectively they need to address the diverse needs of all learners. Therefore School Principals and SMTs need to implement collaborative practices at school level and as far as possible. In support of this, educator participants mentioned that some educators collaborate with parents on a regular basis. In addition, participant 19 elaborated further by stating that people meet with each other to discuss common things. Although parents and educators meet with each other to discuss issues, there is a need for both educators and parents to realise that they should not just talk with each other, they need to collaborate effectively with each other. Effective collaboration entails discussions between educators and parents to the benefit of the learner. It is therefore a fact, as discussed in Chapter 3, section 3.5 that collaboration between educators and parents augments the involvement of parents in the academic life of the child.

Therefore, it is evident that parents play a vital role in the life of the child. It is expected from parents to create a home environment conducive to learning. Parents should be actively involved in the scholastic life of their children. Involved parents will be able to support their children effectively and efficiently. Effective learner support can be achieved through collaborative practices. Collaboration between parents and the school may lead to growth and developmental opportunities for parents. Parents may be requested to attend training sessions at the school, assisting them in supporting their children effectively. These training sessions can be arranged by the School Principal, SMT or ILST co-ordinator.

4.4.1.2 The school culture should reflect an ethos of inclusivity

School-based participants were of the opinion that a positive school culture is a culture which embraces an ethos of inclusivity and delineates a positive attitude towards learner support and intervention. They also indicated that a school culture with an inclusive ethos is able to create a welcoming and non-threatening environment, meaning all learners will be accepted, irrespective of their ability or disability. Furthermore, they felt that a school culture reflects the traditions, norms, values and policies within a school that will be implemented and maintained by the school community. In Chapter 1, section 1.10.5, mention is made that Inclusive Education demands a school culture which welcomes and accepts learner diversity.

Participants indicated that a school culture that embraces inclusivity, where all learners are welcomed and accepted can be seen in the attitude and commitment of the school community, with specific reference to the school management team's attitude and commitment towards inclusion. During the researcher's observation, she detected that the attitude and commitment of the school management team (SMT) towards inclusion has a profound effect on how educators react towards inclusive practices. She detected that as soon as the SMT are in agreement with inclusive policy implementation and practice, the entire school community will follow suit. School Principal and SMT participants endorsed this by stating that some educators are willing to go the extra mile to help and assist learners in need of support and intervention. This statement is endorsed by educator participant 7 who stated that: "The principal is always willing to go the extra mile." Educator participant 1 elaborated further by stating that: "All members of the team are willing to work together in a positive attitude." In Chapter 2, section 2.6.5.1, mention is made that the implementation of Inclusive Education lies with the entire school community which includes the SMT, SGB, learners, parents and educators.

Members of the DBST participating in this study indicated that educators who embraces an ethos of inclusivity, believe that all learners matters, all learners can achieve and therefore all learners must benefit from instruction. During data analysis, it became evident that some educator participants embraced an ethos of inclusivity. For example, participants 13 and 37 indicated that they would grant learners additional time for the completion of tasks and would apply for special examination concession.

Educator participants indicated that they tried to identify barriers to learning to the best of their abilities and then intervene at school level. Educator participant 36 affirmed these practices by stating that they identify and address barriers to learning. Mention was made that a school culture that embraces an ethos of inclusivity should utilise available systems and structures to support the process of teaching and learning (see Chapter 2, section 2.3). In doing so, all learners within an inclusive school culture will benefit from teaching, all learners will be learning, all learners will experience a sense of achievement and the scholastic progress of each learner will matter.

ILST co-ordinator participants indicated that a change in school culture should affect the community, since schools are part of their communities. Schools and communities should embrace an ethos of inclusivity within the communities collectively. This phenomenon is confirmed in Chapter 2, section 2.9 where literature reveals that educational change requires a change in the school culture and its organization. Communities are part of a school organisation, therefore they will be affected by changes in a school.

School Principals, SMTs and ILSTs member participants felt that as soon as communities sense a change in the school culture that may benefit the children of the community, they may be influenced to such an extent that they become actively involved in such activities. Communities may realise that this change in school culture is much needed at the school as it addresses the diverse needs of all learners. Participants 8, 17, 39 and others mentioned that some community members become actively involved in learner support activities on a voluntary basis as soon as they detect that schools address learner needs and challenges. These community members may include parents, and professionals within the community. These parents and professionals may share their knowledge and experience with each other, thereby establishing a multi-disciplinary team actively involved in learner support and intervention at the school. For example educator participant 4 stated that: "Community members help with reading intervention and support." A detailed discussion on community involvement in learner support will follow in the next sub-theme discussed in section 4.4.1.3.

The majority of participants' participating in this study indicated that their understanding of an inclusive school culture, includes the identification of barriers to

learning, the recognition of individual differences between learners and the implementation of a flexible curriculum, addressing the diverse needs of all learners. This means that educators should identify those learners experiencing scholastic challenges, be familiar with individual differences between learners and provide learning experiences designed to meet the needs of all learners. For example, educator participant 14 stated that “They (barriers to learning) are identified by the subject teacher within the Intermediate Phase. After identification parent consultations, thereafter an ISP (Individual Support Plan) is designed.” Literature discussed in Chapter 2, section 2.3 substantiated such practices by stating that an inclusive school culture that embraces an ethos of inclusivity should implement a flexible curriculum where adaptations to teaching and learning are evident.

Although the researcher discovered a few school cultures which embraces an ethos of inclusivity, the majority of schools participating in this study portrayed a negative attitude towards inclusive practices. School Principal and SMT participants shared that some educators refused to participate in any learner support programmes or intervention strategies. Furthermore, School Principal and SMT participants indicated that some of these educators are not willing to go the extra mile for learners in need of additional help and assistance. Some educator participants shared that they are not trained to teach such children and that these learners should be taught by specialised educators. For example, participant 22 stated: “Learners with these problems had to attend LSEN classes.” Participants 2 and 34 stated that a “Shortage of educators and shortage of resources” hinders them from practicing Inclusive Education. They felt that additional educators should be appointed to help and support these learners.

A negative school culture towards inclusion and inclusive practices are in direct contrast to a range of policy documents that create a culture and ethos of inclusivity. The South African Constitution of 1996, The South African Schools Act (Act no.84 of 1996), as well as the Education White Paper 6 – Special Needs Education: Building an Inclusive Education and Training, had a profound influence on Inclusive Education in South Africa. In Chapter 2, section 2.4 elaborated on significant policies, documents and legislation on Inclusive Education where the creation of an inclusive school culture is clearly promulgated.

The Education White Paper 6 based on the principles of the South African Constitution and the South African Schools Act contains evidence of legislation portraying the principles of Inclusion in South Africa. A school with an inclusive culture creates a welcoming and non-threatening atmosphere, where all learners will be accepted, irrespective of their abilities or challenges. In Chapter 2, section 2.3, Swart et al. (2005:19) and Mitchell (2008:27) clearly stated that Inclusive Education commits itself to education for all learners within a school culture which welcomes learner diversity. Booth, et al, 2002:8 takes school culture a step further by stating that school culture, with its policies and practices are important elements in whole school development.

In Chapter 2 school culture was viewed at the heart of whole school development and improvement. Participants mentioned that in order for them to sustain a school culture embracing an ethos of inclusivity, they are in need of continuous growth and development with regards to inclusive policies and practices. For example, participant 17 stated that they are in need of: "In-service training through teaching sessions." Participant 18 elaborated further by stating that they are in need of "Teaching sessions regarding learning problems". These statements clearly indicate that if schools strive to sustain a school culture embracing an ethos of inclusivity, they are in need of constant growth and development. Educators are in need of this development as many of them were trained prior the promulgation of an Inclusive Education and training system. In order for educators to address the diverse needs of the learners at school, they are in need of sufficient knowledge and skills to address the diverse needs of all learners. The constant growth and development of educators will enable the entire school to grow and develop optimally.

These statements endorse the fact that inclusive policy and practices require whole school development. A whole school developmental approach is central in creating an inclusive school ethos, as change within the school will influence a number of factors during the development of an inclusive school (Swart et al., 2005(a):19). Whole school development will include the entire school community which needs training regarding inclusive policies and practices (Bourke, 2009:819). A detailed discussion on Whole School Development was provided in Chapter 2, section 2.9.3.

In conclusion, Donald, Lazarus and Lolwana (2002:23) maintain that Inclusive Education emphasises that the system should meet the needs of all learners as

normally and inclusively as possible. It is therefore evident from the above discussion that an inclusive school culture, embracing an ethos of inclusivity will address the diverse needs of all learners within an Inclusive Education setting.

4.4.1.3 Communities should be involved in learner support

The majority of participants strongly believed that all schools are in need of community involvement for efficient and effective learner support and intervention. Nearly every participant considered community involvement in school endeavours as vital, as schools which are supported by their communities are able to support and assist learners in need of additional help and guidance more effectively and efficiently. This necessity was noticeable during the researcher and co-researchers Participant observations and Semi-structured interviews. In this regard a DBST participant stated that: “Schools should involve their community parents as well as other professionals.” Educator Participant 27 fully agrees by stating: “Involve your stakeholders, community members and all other professionals.” These feelings, thoughts and opinions of participants is confirmed with literature reviews done in Chapter 3 within this study. For instance in Chapter 3, section 3.2 it is stated that learner support needs to be rendered holistically, therefore members of the community needs to be part of learner support (Department of Education, 2001). Support is therefore not only about the educator in the classroom assisting the learner, or the parents at home helping the child. Support includes assistance from community members and other professionals within the community.

It is therefore evident that other professionals within communities play a pivotal role in learner support. These professionals who are actively involved in learner support within communities may include Clergy, Speech Therapists, Occupational Therapists, Psychologists, Physiotherapists, Remedial Therapists, members from the Department of Health, members from the Department of Social Development and members from the Education fraternity. Educator participants mentioned that these professionals within the community are able to provide specialised knowledge regarding their field of specialization. For example, School Principal and ILST co-ordinator participants believed that other professionals within the community will be able to: “Provide teaching sessions regarding learning problems.” In doing so, educators will be more empowered to support learners within their classrooms. Chapter 3, section 3.8

indicated that the development of an integrated and community based support system aims at building the capacity of all relevant stakeholders, so as to enable all relevant stakeholders to respond to the diverse needs of the learner. Chapter 3, section 3.4 and 3.5 elaborated further by stating that other professionals rendering support and assistance to educators increases the growth and development of educators and they are able to take their services to the people in need of help and assistance.

Participants testified to the fact that various stakeholders, organizations and professionals within the school community visit schools on a regular basis to help and support educators and learners in need of assistance. For example educator participant 11 said: “Our local minister comes to school every Friday to help with emotional barriers.” This is in agreement with what was indicated in Chapter 3, where it is stated that professional services need to be community-based, meaning professionals within communities need to offer their services to people in need of help and support.

From the above discussion the importance of various stakeholders and members from different departments to work in close alliance with each other is clear. ILST coordinator participants expressed the need of an alliance between various stakeholders as they felt that there should be consultations with people who have specialised knowledge and skills to deal with learners and educators in need of help and support. In support of this participant 34 stated: “The support structure needs external support.” The insight of the participants with regards to alliances between various stakeholders is affirmed in Chapter 3, section 3.5 where Lemmer and Badenhorst (1997:250) state that within an inclusive and integrated support structure, various departments such as Education, Health and Social Development will have to work hand-in-hand. In addition to this, literature in Chapter 3, section 3.3.3 divulged that a community approach to learner support can be strengthened when various departments and organizations embrace their responsibility towards learner support.

As indicated in Chapter 2, schools need to engage all relevant stakeholders within the community to embrace inclusive practices and policies for effective learner support and intervention. Participants were of the opinion that all stakeholders should work together for the advancement of the learners. For example, participant 15 stated: “Teamwork to achieve a goal, work together for the sake of the learner.” In Chapter 2,

section 2.8.3, Ainscow, et al., (2006;23) validates the understanding of these participants by stating that true inclusive practices promotes active community participation.

During informal discussion with community members involved in learner support initiatives within the Humansdorp area, I discovered that in this area community members are actively involved in learner support initiatives. At present they are busy with a reading project, commonly known as PAL (Pensioners Assisting Learners). Pensioners Assisting Learners (PAL) assists learners experiencing reading difficulties. They assist and support both primary and high school pupils in the area.

Within the Kwanobuhle area, Uitenhage, another group of community members, are planning to provide the same kind of support to learners within their community. From my discussions with these individuals it became apparent that community involvement in learner support can make a remarkable difference in the scholastic performance of learners. These projects employ resources within the community to support learners in need of additional intervention and support. In Chapter 3, section 3.3.3, literature stated that learner support should be the responsibility of the entire community.

Community projects start off by sharing knowledge, experience and skills with one another, meaning collaboration between various stakeholders enable communities to help and support each other, learners, educators and others in need of help and support. Participants mentioned that collaboration between the school and the community occurs on a regular, continuous basis, where stakeholders converse with each other regarding learner support and intervention. Participant 19 confirmed this by stating that: "We meet from time to time to discuss common things." Participants felt that regular collaboration between all stakeholders will enable the community to be actively involved in learner support. Communities will therefore influence the school and the school will influence the community. This is a basic eco-systemic understanding, as discussed in Chapter 2, section 2.5 and 2.6..

This notion of community involvement in learner support is echoed by a systemic approach to learner support and intervention. In Chapter 2, section 2.6, where Bronfenbrenner's eco-systemic theory is discussed, mention is made that a systemic approach to Inclusive Education will enable all relevant stakeholders to be actively

involved in learner support and intervention. Riffel (2011:2) cited in Chapter 2, section 2.6.3, stated that for effective education to take place at school level, all relevant stakeholders must be actively involved in the learning process. Thus, including the community in learner support will enhance the effectiveness and efficiency of learner support and all relevant stakeholders will be granted the opportunity to work together towards inclusive policies and practices.

Therefore, community involvement in learner support will enable school communities to respond to the diverse needs of learners, communities will strive to facilitate the full participation of all learners in the learning process and support will be rendered holistically and effectively. From the discussion above it is clear that community involvement in schools is of utmost importance, unfortunately this is not evident within all communities and schools at the present moment.

4.4.1.4 The DBST plays a pivotal role in learner support

ILST co-ordinators members, ILST co-ordinators, School Principals and SMTs participating in this study pointed out that the District Based Support Team plays a fundamental role in learner support. This team possesses the authority to establish a multi-layered support structure needed for effective learner support and intervention as they interact with parents, the school, the community and other professionals within the community on a regular basis. The interaction between the DBST and these important role players in learner support can pave the way to the establishment of a multi-layered support structure, supporting learners experiencing barriers to learning.

In addition to this responsibility of the DBST, participants indicated that they need to fulfil an essential task with regards to support delivery to schools, including curriculum adaptation, training and collaborative practices. These notions of participants were endorsed by literature in Chapter 1, section 1.10.2 where the DBST is described as the core support provider at district level whose responsibility it is to promote Inclusive Education through continuous training and curriculum support.

A few educator participants shared that the DBST within the Uitenhage District, supports schools whenever possible. They mentioned that district officials support schools by means of on-site school visits on a regular basis, supporting the growth

and development of ILSTs. Participants 23 and 24 stated that after educators in close collaboration with the ILST have identified learners experiencing barriers to learning, they make contact with the DBST to ask for advice, guidance and assistance. Such practices are confirmed by participant 40 who stated: “We identify LSEN learners with barriers to learning then ask advice from the district office.” In addition to this, participant 28 stated: “The ILST gets assistance from the District Office”. These statements by participants indicate that the DBST performs within its legitimate role and responsibility with regards to learner support. In Chapter 1 section 1.10.1 and Chapter 3, section 3.8.3 mention is made that the DBST should provide support to schools thus enhancing the development of effective teaching and learning.

However, some School Principals, SMT members and ILST co-ordinators pointed out that the DBST members are unable to address the many challenges within each and every school. DBST participants acknowledged that although they embark on school visits on a daily basis, they are unable to address the vast range of challenges within each and every school. DBST member participants indicated that systemic challenges such as staff shortages impacted negatively on their role and responsibility towards ILSTs within school.

Furthermore DBST member participants indicated that the majority of ILSTs at schools, do not keep close contact with the DBST. DBST member participants mentioned that ILSTs will only make contact with the DBST once they detect that learners need to be placed at Special School. ILSTs rarely make contact with the DBST to assist them with the implementation of the SIAS or other inclusive practices at their respective schools. Many schools prefer to employ the medical model practices within their schools, where learners should be tested and placed accordingly.

Some educator participants were of the opinion that effective learner support can only occur, once support providers are knowledgeable regarding the diverse needs of learners at the school. This implies that the capacity of support providers, meaning the people supporting learners in need of additional support and intervention, needs to be developed on a continuous basis so as to enable them to address the diverse range of learner needs. For example, educator participant 34 stated: “...need more training and support on how to help learners in different phases.” This indicates that DBSTs need to provide more training sessions for schools, educators, parents and community

members. In Chapter 3, section 3.3.3 it is said that the DBST should build the capacity of the ILST and those involved in learner support to recognise and address barriers to learning, as well as enable all learners to benefit from instruction.

Participants pointed out that all learners can benefit from instruction with the implementation of a flexible curriculum where curriculum adaptation is approved and allowed. Participants mentioned that the DBST assists educators in curriculum adaptation. In doing so, educators are able to provide more learners with access to the curriculum. For example participant 21 stated: “The district based officials assist us in making the work easier for learners”. Such practices were detected in a few schools. The majority of participants stated that they do not know about curriculum adaptation or curriculum differentiation. In Chapter 2, section 2.3 mention was made that the main emphasis of Inclusive Education is to make it possible for all learners to access the curriculum. The National Curriculum Statement (NCS) has flexible features, enabling curriculum adaptation where educators are able to deal with the diverse needs of learners in their classrooms. In Chapter 1, section 1.10.1 it was stated that the ILST is to be supported by the DBST in curriculum adaptation.

From the above arguments it is apparent that the DBST still need to address many shortcomings within their learner support structures. ILSTs are advised to stay in close contact with the DBST and that the DBST needs to communicate with various role players involved in learner support to enhance the effect of learner support and intervention. This constant communication between various role players, commonly known as collaboration, is thus of utmost importance in learner support. Participants shared that the ILST collaborate with the DBST on a regular basis. This is confirmed by participant 14 when stating that: “We collaborate with the DBST”. Collaboration does not only occur between the ILST and DBST. Participants indicated that the ILST interacts with various organizations and structures within the school community, where they seek help and assistance for the learners. Participant 25 stated: “...ILST consults with different institutions”. In Chapter 3, section 3.3.3 it is stated that the ILST must make regular contact with the DBST or other professionals within their communities through regular collaboration with all relevant stakeholders. The close collaboration between the ILST, DBST and other professionals within the community should facilitate the development of expertise within the ILST.

Although DBST make contact with schools and other professionals there is a need for DBSTs to be more visible and actively involved in schools and with professionals within communities as they play a pivotal role in learner support. DBST should establish networks with all stakeholders involved in learner support. DBST should work in close collaboration with parents, schools and communities, thus establishing a multi-layered support structure needed for effective learner support and intervention.

4.4.2 THE IMPORTANCE OF THE INSTITUTIONAL LEVEL SUPPORT TEAM (ILST) AS SUPPORT STRUCTURE AT SCHOOL LEVEL

The majority of participants agreed that the Institutional Level Support Team (ILST) is an important support structure at school level. As mentioned before, the Education White Paper 6 clearly states that an ILST should be established at all schools (Department of Education:2001).

ILST co-ordinators, School Principals and SMT member participants indicated that ILSTs are established at the majority of schools participating in this study, as schools recognised the need of a multi-layered support structure for effective learner support and intervention. The researcher detected during her observations that although the ILSTs are established at the majority of schools participating in this study, their level of functionality is not yet optimal. The researcher's observations were confirmed by data gathered from questionnaires and interviews, where ILST co-ordinator and ILST member participants mentioned that ILSTs are established at schools but that their functionality varies. Some of them show potential for improvements, growth and development, which will enhance their functionality. The following sub-themes emerged from this main theme:

- The present functionality of ILSTs at schools.
- Role and responsibility of ILSTs and its members.
- Challenges with the establishment of ILSTs.

These will now be discussed in detail.

4.4.2.1 The present functionality of ILSTs at schools

According to the respondents, ILSTs are established at schools but they are not functioning optimally at the present moment. For instance, Participant 39 stated “We are still in a developing stage”. Participant 40 agreed and mentioned that: “We are still developing and extending our system.” Furthermore, educator participant 42 mentioned: “The structure is in place, but we can still grow further and develop into an effective team, supporting learners”. Other educator participants agreed and elaborated further by stating that “... not functioning very well at the moment. The structure is in place, but we can grow and develop further”. From the quotes above it is evident that ILSTs are established at schools, but they need to grow and develop further.

Participants felt that the ILST can grow and develop further, once they have sufficient knowledge regarding the functioning of an ILST. Participant 3 stated that: “... cannot be functional due to a lack of knowledge”. In addition to this participant 19 stated that “... we can do better with more assistance”. It is therefore clear that participants feel that DBSTs should be more visible and active within schools and communities. From the discussion in Chapter 1, section 1.1.0.2 it became evident that it is the responsibility of the DBST to empower educators with the necessary skills and knowledge regarding the ILST. Their commitment and support to this internal support team at schools should enable the ILST to grow and develop into effective support teams, supporting learners and educators in need of help and assistance. In addition to this, the discussion on the DBST in Chapter 3, section 3.8.3 describe the DBST as the core support providers at district level with the responsibility to promote Inclusive Education through training, curriculum support and the distribution of resources. Furthermore, it was indicated in Chapter 3, section 3.3.3 that the DBST must build the capacity of the ILST. In doing so, the DBST will undoubtedly strengthen the functionality of the ILST.

The lack of knowledge was not the only reason mentioned by participants for ILSTs not functioning optimally. In addition to that, participants mentioned that a shortage of educators, the lack of parental involvement and the negative attitude of some educators towards learners experiencing scholastic challenges, are hampering the functionality of ILSTs. Therefore the researcher provided guiding principles to parents,

the school and communities which will be discussed in Chapter 5, section 5.2 – 5.4. The negative attitude of some educators towards these learners are in contrast with the responsibility educators have towards learners. Educators are important role players in the life of learners and therefore their negative attitude can be detrimental to learner support and intervention.

For example, participant 27 stated that: “Not all educators are interested in learners with learning difficulties”. This means educators portraying a negative attitude towards learners experiencing learning challenges will not be actively involved in any learning support endeavours or the ILST. Such practices of educators are in direct contrast with discussions in Chapter 3, section 3.3.2 which indicated that the ILST is composed primarily of educators. Therefore educators should realise that they are important role players for effective learner support and intervention.

According to Bronfenbrenner’s systems theory, as discussed in Chapter 2, section 2.6.5.1, educators form part of the microsystem of the child. Inhabitants of the microsystem affect the learner directly as they are the closest to the learner and they play a vital role in the growth and development of the child. According to Donald, et al., (2010:40), the interactions that occur in the microsystem are the most important aspects in shaping the child’s growth and development. With such a role and responsibility in mind, it is imperative that educators fulfil their duty towards learners and that they cannot withdraw themselves from any intervention and support needed by the learner. Parents and educators are very important stakeholders within the mesosystem.

Although some educators indicated that they do not want to be involved with the ILST, most educator participants indicated that they would like to be actively involved in the activities of the ILST. Participant 1 pointed out that at their school educators yearn for participation in activities organised by the ILST as they have identified that some learners are in need of intervention and support. For practicality and efficiency purposes, their school decided to select members from all grades to be part of the ILST. In this way the entire school becomes aware of the activities of the ILST. For example, participant 45 mentioned: “Staff members are actively involved with the ILST”. In addition to that, participant 13 stated: “....functioning extremely well”. The

discussion in Chapter 3, section 3.3.2 acknowledged the important role of the educator in learner support and intervention.

During observation the researcher discovered that some ILSTs are functional. Her observation was confirmed when the school secretary of a certain school retrieved minutes of ILST meetings. During a conversation with the principal of this particular school, he indicated that they have experienced various challenges with the establishment their support team, but that they could overcome their challenges. He mentioned that educators are not always able to work in close collaboration with each other. This was endorsed by other participants that stated that: "Members struggled to work together initially". The researcher observed that educators are experiencing challenges with collaboration. This may be due to the fact that educators are not used to collaborative practices in supporting learners experiencing scholastic challenges.

Schools with functional ILSTs could offer advice to schools experiencing challenges with the establishment of their ILSTs. School Principal participants shared that the ILST co-ordinator plays a vital role in the effective establishment and functioning of the ILST. Their belief was confirmed by educator participant 9 who stated that: "...functioning well because the ILST co-ordinator provide us with knowledge and assistance". The discussion in Chapter 3, section 3.6 pointed out that the learner support educator who might co-ordinate the work of the ILST, play a vital role in facilitating support at school. In addition to this research participants shared that teamwork is important within the ILST if stakeholders involved in learner support strives to support learners effectively and efficiently. All efforts and activities with the ILST should be approached with a positive attitude and regular contact with the DBST is of utmost importance.

From all of the above it is evident that ILSTs are established at all schools participating in this study, but their level of functionality is a challenge. Research results indicated that they are not functioning optimally at the present moment, therefore the need for guiding principles for the effective establishment and functioning of Institutional Level Support Teams. Research results revealed that ILSTs are in need of continuous growth and development with the help and support from the DBST, School Principals, community members, parents, educators and professionals within the community.

4.4.2.2 The role and responsibility of ILSTs

As mentioned before, participants confirmed that ILSTs play a vital role in any school with regards to providing learner support. Research participants felt that the role and responsibility of the ILST should include the following:

- a) Support and assist learners and educators by means of a problem solving approach.
- b) Collaborate with role players concerned with learner support.
- c) Arrange continuous in-service training sessions to empower educators with regards to learner support.

Research results indicated that some ILSTs attempt to support learners and educators. ILST co-ordinator participants mentioned that as soon as class educators identify learners experiencing challenges they should consult the ILST. Although some ILSTs attempt to support class educators, to help learners within their classrooms, educator participants indicated that they are in need of more guidance and support from the ILST. Educator participants suggest that the ILST should intervene and help class educators in their endeavours to support and assist the learner. Participant 24 confirmed such practices by stating that: “We are assisted by the ILST”. Educator participants suggest that class educators meet the ILST on a regular basis to resolve challenges they may experience. This collaboration should occur frequently. If collaboration occurs on a regular basis, educators, ILST co-ordinators and ILST members will realise that learner support is an important and central activity within the school.

Educator participant 15 mentioned that: “We have meetings in which problems are identified”. In so doing, the ILST is partially fulfilling their role and responsibility to both learners and educators by collaborating with class educators, but ILSTs should not only meet to discuss problems. It is expected from ILSTs to embrace a holistic, proactive approach in learner support, where preventative measures are in place to prevent possible barriers to learning. In Chapter 3 mention was made that the ILST should empower educators to employ effective intervention strategies, such as SWPBS, UDL and the SIAS process to prevent barriers to learning before it manifests within learners.

Respondents felt that collaboration within the ILST is of utmost importance. Some participants made it clear that the ILST is collaborating with various role players to help and support the learner holistically. Such practices are endorsed in Chapter 3, section 3.1 where the discussion indicates that the ILST should facilitate a holistic approach to learner support.

Participant 14 elaborated further by stating that: “We collaborate with other schools and the DBST. It is therefore apparent that the ILST is collaborating with various stakeholders such as the DBST, with educators, the broader community and other professionals within the school community. Collaboration within the ILST will be of assistance to the team in rendering effective support. The following main theme (The benefits of collaboration for learner support and intervention) will discuss the results on the benefits of collaboration, in section 4.4.3.

In addition to the above mentioned roles and responsibilities cited by participants, they felt that an added duty of the ILST should be to arrange continuous in-service training. Continuous in-service training will enhance the skills and knowledge of educators with regards to learner support and intervention. Growth and development within the ILST is one of the aspects highlighted by numerous participants within this study. Participants were in agreement that growth and development within the ILST is an ongoing process as educators need to develop themselves on a continuous, with regards to new knowledge and skills in addressing the diverse needs of all learners at school. Members of the DBST, School Principal participants and SMT member participants felt that continuous in-service training will develop ILST members at school level, enabling them to help and support learners more effectively.

From the above discussion it is evident that ILSTs need more guidance in clarifying their role and responsibility within the school to function more effectively. Mention is made that the skills and knowledge of ILST members need to be increased if they wish to address the diverse needs of learners within the school, thereby fulfilling their role and responsibility more effectively. The clarification of roles and responsibilities within the ILST may enhance the establishment of this support structure at school level.

4.4.2.3 Challenges with the establishment of ILSTs

An overwhelming majority of respondents in this study agreed that the establishment of ILSTs at schools can be challenging. They mentioned that various factors contribute to challenges in establishing ILSTs at schools. Factors including systemic challenges, educator challenges and the non-involvement of parents were some of the challenges schools had to deal with during their endeavours to establish ILSTs at their schools.

As mentioned before, participants stated that a variety of systemic challenges hampers the establishment of ILSTs at schools. Systemic challenges such as multi-grade teaching, a lack of knowledge as well as time limitations, contributed negatively to the establishment of ILSTs at schools. With regards to multi-grade teaching educator participants felt that due to their multi-grade situation it is nearly impossible to provide additional help and support to learners. For example educator participant 3 stated that the ILST: “cannot be functional due to multi-grade teaching”. Other educator participants agreed and elaborated further by stating that the ILST is: “Not fully functional due to multi-grade teaching. According to the participants multi-grade class groups consist of two or more grades, where it is expected from educators to teach all subjects, to all grades within this multi-grade class group. This hinders educators from establishing additional support teams at their schools.

In addition to this, respondents mentioned that multi-grade teaching requires differentiated lesson planning and teaching. When planning a differentiated lesson, it is required from educators to teach learners in smaller groups to address the different grade levels within one class group, which is time consuming. Therefore participants mentioned that time constraint is another factor affecting the establishment of ILSTs at schools negatively, due to workload and responsibilities of class educators. Participants indicated that they do not have enough time within their multi-grade classes to help those learners in need of additional help and assistance. For example participant 17 stated that she: “don’t have the time to help slow learners”. With a multi-grade class group in mind, it is apparent that multi-grade teaching requires differentiated planning and teaching and that differentiated planning and teaching consumes much time from educators.

Multi-grade teaching and time constraints were not the only systemic challenge educators had to deal with, whilst attempting to establish ILSTs at their schools. Research participants mentioned that other factors contributing negatively to the establishment of ILSTs at schools include the lack of knowledge with regards to ILSTs. In the previous sub-theme (the functionality of ILSTs at schools, presently.) a detailed discussion was provided with regards to the lack of knowledge on ILSTs at schools.

Another systemic challenge faced by schools in their venture to establish ILSTs are overpopulated class groups. Educator participants mentioned that they have many learners in their schools and that big class groups cause educators to feel overwhelmed with responsibility and overloaded with work. For example, educator participant 17 stated that: "Teachers battle to help learners with help programs because they have too many kids in their classes". During observations, the researcher became aware of overpopulated class groups and the heavy workload of educators. Participants 46 and 48 stated that all educators are experiencing a huge workload. Participant 9 confirmed the heavy work load of educators by stating that: "Educators were hesitant to become part of the team due to work overload". The reason for overpopulated class groups may be due to a shortage of educators.

The majority of participants were of the opinion that schools are experiencing a shortage of educators. Participant 4 confirmed the current situation by stating that: the ILST is "...not fully functional due to a shortage of educators." As mentioned previously, educator challenges contribute negatively to the establishment of ILSTs at schools, as well as the non-involvement of parents.

Respondents felt that the non-involvement of parents in the lives of their children hinders the establishment of ILST at schools. Parents are important role players in learner support and intervention, as mentioned in Theme 1 sub-theme 1, (see section 4.4.1.1. where the role of the parent was discussed. Participants 4 and 33 felt that parents do not fulfil their parental role towards their children. For example, participant 42 stated: "Parents not involved in the life of their children". Participants were of the opinion that parents are rich sources of information and that educators are unable to support learners optimally without the support and guidance of parents.

In contrast to schools that experienced challenges with the establishment of ILSTs, some participants mentioned that they did not experience any difficulty in the establishment of their ILST. The researcher noticed during her observations and visits at schools for interview purposes that schools with a school culture which embraced an ethos of inclusivity did not experience any challenges with the establishment of their ILST. At these schools learner support was perceived as fundamental and of utmost importance. Participants shared that team members are willing to work together and that the School Principal always goes the extra mile for learners in need of additional help and support. For example participant 45 stated: “We did not experience any problems in the establishment of the ILST”.

From the above discussions it is apparent that schools experience challenges with the establishment and functioning of ILSTs. Research participants mentioned that multi-grade teaching, the negative attitude portrayed by some educators regarding inclusive practices and the non-involvement of parents affect the establishment and functioning of ILSTs at schools negatively.

4.4.3 THE BENEFIT OF COLLABORATION FOR LEARNER SUPPORT AND INTERVENTION

It is interesting to note that participants identified characteristics of collaboration between various stakeholders involved in learner support and intervention. Participants mentioned that people are talking and working with each other, they plan together for intervention and support and they are involved in group decision making. Stakeholders are thus collaborating with each other by means of talking to each other, planning together for intervention and support and making decisions collectively. These characteristics of collaboration was endorsed by literature in Chapter 3, section 3.5 where Ainscow and Sandill (2010:403) described collaboration as a purposeful engagement where joint planning, decision making and problem solving activities are directed towards a mutual goal. Although stakeholders are collaborating, there is a need for this collaboration to be more structured and goal orientated. Collaboration should occur within ILST meetings where attention is given to specific learners and specific needs within the school. Therefore the need for guiding principles on how various role players can collaborate for effective learner support and intervention.

As mentioned above, collaboration is about people working together. People working together to do a task, to solve challenges and to share goals are in fact working together in a team. Teamwork is thus of utmost importance during collaboration and within the ILST. Participant 1 confirmed the importance of teamwork within the ILST. Participant 15 fully agreed and stated that we "...work together for the sake of the learner. The learner is the end goal."

The importance of the last mentioned is also validated by the discussion in Chapter 3, section 3.1 where Donald, et al., (1997:26) affirmed the importance of teamwork during collaboration by stating that a team approach needed to be built at all levels within learner support structures. Johnson, et al., (2007:162) agrees with Donald by stating that during support intervention people share their experiences in a team-based environment, to facilitate effective learner support and intervention. During collaboration people should show respect for each other and acknowledge the work done by others.

The importance of collaboration was highlighted by participants and affirmed by literature within this study. Participants were clear that collaboration with stakeholders within the school is not effectively practiced at this stage. Additionally collaboration with stakeholders outside the school is also not happening effectively at the moment and such collaboration is very important if schools envisage the effective establishment and functioning of ILSTs. Collaboration with stakeholders inside the school should include educators, learners and parents. Collaborative practices with stakeholders outside the school should include the community members, professionals within the community, neighbouring schools and other departments.

Collaboration with stakeholders within and outside the school will now be discussed.

4.4.3.1 Collaboration between stakeholders within the school

As mentioned in the previous paragraph, collaboration within the school should include the following stakeholders, educators, parents and learners. Although participants are aware of the fact that educators, learners and parents need to collaborate with each other at school level, participants indicated that collaboration between educators and parents are not as effective and structured as it should be. An overwhelming number

of participants agreed that collaboration between educators and parents is of utmost importance.

Participants mentioned that they interact with parents on a regular basis. For example, Participant 8 noticeably stated that “We collaborate with parents.” The significance of collaboration between educators and parents cannot be neglected. Collaboration between parents and educators should not stop there. Their collaborative efforts and discussions should be shared with the ILST, enabling the ILST to help and support them in their endeavour to help and support the learner.

Educator participant 41 stated that collaboration between parents and educators is very important, because parents need to know what is happening at school with their children. Swart et al. (2005(b):226) and Department of Education (2009:22) accentuate the importance of collaboration with parents by stating that parents are able to provide educators with rich information regarding the early developmental years of their children and parents actively involved in the educational life of their children may enhance the learning opportunities of the learner.

In Theme 1 sub-theme 1 (The role of the parent in creating an environment conducive to learning- see section 4.4.1.1) reference was made to literature in this study that substantiated the important role of the parent in the life of the child. In addition to this, mention is made of Bronfenbrenner’s eco-systemic theory, which recognises parents as part of the microsystem of the child. Furthermore, communication and relationships within the mesosystem pave the way for collaboration between various role players and cannot be overlooked as whatever happens at home or at school affects one another because systems are interacting dimensions. Discussion in this regards is provided in Chapter 2, sections 2.5 and 2.6.

School Principals, SMTs and ILST participants highlighted the importance of collaboration between educators and parents. They further mentioned that educators need to collaborate with each other as well for effective learner support and intervention. During observation the researcher became aware of the fact that educators spoke to each other regarding learner performance on a regular basis. In staffrooms at various schools, including small or farm schools, educators shared with each other their experiences with various learners. They would then guide and advise

each other as how to go about helping and supporting the learner. Such practices are endorsed by participant 45 who shared that during collaboration between educators, they are able to talk to each other regarding specific learners. In addition to this, they are able to share advice and experiences with one another.

Research participants were of the opinion that educators collaborate formally whenever possible. For example, educator participant 19 stated that: "We meet from time to time to discuss common things." The benefit of collaboration between educators is highlighted by Kruger and Yorke (2010:303) in Chapter 3, section 3.5 where mention was made that collaboration between educators strengthens learner support and intervention. In addition to this, the Department of Education (2003(c):15) advise educators to embrace a team approach for learner support so as to ensure that learning support is effectively managed and co-ordinated. This formal collaboration between educators should occur within the ILST, which is not happening at the present moment.

The discussion on collaboration in Chapter 3, section 3.5 illustrated that collaboration is not confined to educators and parents alone. Other structures within the school need to collaborate with each other to increase the learning opportunities of learners. Participants mentioned that other stakeholders within the school are collaborating with each other. For example, Participants 1 and 14 mentioned that the ILST collaborated with the SGB and SMT. Collaboration with other stakeholders within the school is important as all systems within the school need to work in close collaboration with each other so as to augment the effect of learner support activities. Collaboration within the ILST including the SMT and SGB may be beneficial for learner support and intervention, unfortunately this kind of collaboration is not prevalent within schools currently. In this regard, the discussion in Chapter 3, section 3.3.2 on the inclusion of the SMT and SGB within the ILST, is relevant as it can assist in conveying the message that learner support is an important and central activity within the school (Johnson, et al., 2007:163; Donald, et.al., 1997:26; Landsberg, 2005:67).

During observation the researcher detected that the presence of the School Principal within the ILST is very important. As soon as educators witness the active participation of the School Principal in ILST activities they tend to follow suit. Although it is evident from this discussion that School Principals need to set the example with regards to

inclusive practices within the school, such practices are not evident at schools at the present moment. School Principals tend to shift their responsibility of creating an inclusive school culture, within the school, to the ILST co-ordinator.

4.4.3.2 Collaboration with stakeholders outside the school

The majority of participants were of the opinion that a multi-disciplinary support structure needs to be established at school to address the diverse needs of learners. In order for schools to establish multi-disciplinary support teams where the diverse needs of all learners are addressed effectively and efficiently, they need to interact with various stakeholders within their community on a regular basis. These facts were discussed in Chapter 2, section 2.9.1 where Swart, et al., (2001:34) fully agreed with this perception on the importance of collaboration between stakeholders as he believes that it is essential that stakeholders work closely with each other on a continuous basis.

Participants acknowledged the important role communities could fulfil in the ILST. For example, participant 2 stated that “Schools should involve their communities.” Community stakeholders may include the local councillor, clergy and other individuals interested in learner support. A specific school in this study mentioned that their local priest visited their school every Friday to offer spiritual guidance to learners. The involvement of all stakeholders in learner support represent the various levels within a systems approach as suggested by Bronfenbrenner, will provide greater insight and understanding in supporting learners experiencing barriers to learning. Landsberg, (2005:62) and Waghid, et al., (2002:23), as discussed in Chapter 3, section 3.1, stated that, in a systems approach collaboration needs to occur between various stakeholders as they are part of the entire social system. Donald, et al., (1997:26) elaborated further by stating that a team approach needed to be built at all levels within the social system.

Within any community different resources are available to the people living within that specific community. Discussion in Chapter 2, sections 2.3 – 2.6 as well as Chapter 3, section 3.3.3 illustrated to us that schools should make use of resources within the community to enhance learner support and intervention. Resources such as health care facilities and social workers employed, within the community should be used by

the school. Participants were of the opinion that the ILST are in need of resources within the community. Participant 34 stated that: "The structure needs external support." Other participants mentioned that they are utilizing the services of the Department of Health and Social Development.

Participants suggested that if schools collaborated or networked with their local clinic they may be able to access the services of Occupational Therapists, Physiotherapists and other medically orientated services within the Department of Health to the benefit of the learner. In addition to this, schools needed to collaborate with social workers within their communities to access the services the Department of Social Development may offer the school. In doing so, the school is utilizing the services of other professionals within the community. In this regard Swart, et al., (2005(a):19), Swart and Phasa (2005(b):228-230) and Engelbrecht (2007(b):176), as discussed in Chapter 2, section 2.9.1, mentioned that individuals who share resources and ideas is a characteristic of collaboration.

Chapter 2, section 2.3, highlighted the advantages of using resources within the community. In this regard, participants mentioned that the use of resources within the community will enable ILST members to share and build on existing knowledge. Engelbrecht (2001(b):81), as discussed in Chapter 3, fully agreed and elaborated further by stating that local resources within the learner's immediate environment should be drawn on, so that the community can understand and address barriers to learning. This means that the use of resources within the community will not only benefit the ILST but also the community. As mentioned before, the school can have a positive influence on the community and the community can have a positive influence the school if everyone contribute positively to the education of all children. This is a basic understanding of Bronfenbrenner's eco-systemic theory, taking into account how systems can influence each other.

ILST co-ordinator participants also mentioned that they collaborate with other neighbouring schools. For example ILST member participants stated that: "We serve other schools with advice." From this statement one senses that functional ILSTs are able to give other ILSTs guidance on their establishment and functioning. Participant 18 stated that they create partnerships with other schools. Participant 40 endorsed such practices by stating that "...with Jeffreys Bay Primary School." Together these

schools are able to grow and develop to the best of their ability. Johnson, et al., (2007:162) as discussed in Chapter 3 section 3.3.3, stated that regular support intervention sessions within ILSTs are a means of sharing expertise and encouraging team-based collaboration across a wide range of role players.

Some of the ILST member participants also mentioned that the ILST collaborated with the DBST on a regular basis. ILST co-ordinator participants clearly stated that: "District office officials support the school by having school visits and giving the LSEN (learners with special educational needs) learners support." Participant 8 elaborated further by stating that: "We collaborate with the DBST." The advantage of collaboration with the DBST is supported by literature in Chapter 3, section 3.3.3 where Johnson, et al., (2007:163) and Department of Education (2001:29) stated that close collaboration, as well as regular and adequate contact with the DBST, will undoubtedly, strengthen the ILST.

From the above discussion it is evident that various stakeholders realised that collaboration within and outside the school was essential for effective learner support and intervention, unfortunately it is not evident within schools at the present moment. The Education White Paper 6 (2001) underpins such practices by proposing a systems approach to learner support for effective interventions from communities, other professionals and other Departments.

4.4.4 LEARNERS EXPERIENCING LEARNING PROBLEMS ARE OFTEN FOUND GUILTY OF UNACCEPTABLE BEHAVIOUR

An important finding of this study is that learners experiencing barriers to learning often portray disruptive and unacceptable behaviour in the classroom. This theme came strongly to the fore as the majority of participants agreed that learners experiencing scholastic challenges are prone to displaying anti-social and unacceptable behaviour. This finding is endorsed by literature in Chapter 3, section 3.4, where Moletsane, (2013:75) indicated that some learners need to act out their challenges and that this may cause problems at school and in the community. Educator participants were of the opinion that learners portray this unacceptable behaviour as they wish to hide personal shortcomings such as learning disabilities or challenges.

During observation sessions at schools the researcher noticed that learners experiencing barriers to learning are inclined to disrupt the culture of teaching and learning prevalent within the school. These learners disobey classroom rules, they depict a lack of interest with regards to scholastic progress and they become easily aggressive and emotionally unstable. Such practices can affect the entire school community negatively. In Chapter 3, section 3.4, it was stated that school-wide positive behaviour support addresses these challenges by establishing environments conducive to teaching and learning, where problematic behaviour is minimized and learner attainment is increased.

Participants mentioned that the unruly behaviour of these learners affects both learners and educators. They stated that these learners disrupt other learners in the classroom and they portray a lack of interest with regards to scholastic performance and achievement. In Chapter 3, section 3.4 Pienaar (2013:177-179) state that the challenging behaviour of learners in the classroom and beyond is on the increase on a daily basis in South Africa. From this main theme the following sub-themes emerged:

- Learners disobey classroom rules and regulations.
- Learners depict a lack of interest or concern with regards to scholastic progress.
- Learners become easily aggressive and emotional unstable.

4.4.4.1 Learners disobey classroom rules and regulations

Participants were in agreement that learners exhibiting behavioural problems tend to disobey the ground rules of the class and the school. Participants shared that these learners do not adhere to any rules and regulations. They refuse to comply to policies and regulations. In addition to that, participants stated that they do not adhere to the code of conduct of the school. Such behaviour will disturb the culture of teaching and learning in the classroom and learner support and intervention initiatives can be affected negatively. Therefore SWPBS should be enrolled at schools to address learner behaviour.

In Tier 1 of SWPBS, commonly known as primary support or universal intervention, as discussed in Chapter 3, section 3.4.1 Benedict, et al., (2007:175) indicated that educators need to define classroom rules and regulations clearly to learners to combat

behavioural challenges within the classroom. Pienaar, (2013:179) fully agrees with Benedict by stating that classroom-wide positive behaviour support will enable learners to adhere to the classroom code-of-conduct and become effective and efficient learners.

As mentioned before, participants mentioned that learners experiencing barriers to learning often disobey classroom rules and regulations. Educator participant 1 stated that these learners are restless in the classroom and that they disturb other learners who wish to participate in class activities and discussions. Educator participants 22 agreed with educator participant 1 by stating that: "They disturb other learners who want to do their schoolwork". Educator participants 25 and 27 agreed with educator participants 1 and 22 by stating that these learners are disruptive and restless in the classroom. In Tier 1 of SWPBS, as discussed in Chapter 3, section 3.4.1, Pienaar (2013:179) stated that the educator needs to implement classroom-wide positive behaviour support to prevent disharmonious behaviour within the classroom.

These statements by educator participants were confirmed by the researcher. During data analysis the researcher discovered that the majority of participants agreed that learners experiencing scholastic challenges are inclined to be guilty of misconduct. During observations the researcher heard educators complaining about the behavioural challenges they experience with LSEN (learners with special educational needs) learners. In addition to this, participants shared that learners experiencing challenges with reading and writing are always running around on the premises, not doing their class activities as expected from them. These learners refuse to participate actively in class activities and agitate their fellow classmates and educators. At a later stage these learners become uncooperative and refuse to participate in any educational activity inside or outside the classroom.

Educator participants mentioned that these learners deliberately make a noise in the class. They would engage in private conversations, pass remarks to other learners in the classroom and leave their seats whilst the educator is presenting a lesson. In addition to this, participants mentioned that they do not participate in group activities. ILST member participants were of the opinion that these learners disregard the authority of the educator in the classroom. They would misbehave to such a degree that the culture of teaching and learning in the classroom is disturbed.

Participant 26 confirmed such behaviour by stating that these learners: “.....always making a noise and like to move around”. Participant 25 elaborated further by stating that: “Sometimes makes the class situation unmanageable”. In an attempt to address these situations, SWPBS advises educators, as discussed in Chapter 3, section 3.4.1, to arrange their classrooms in such a manner that they create an atmosphere conducive to teaching and learning. Educators should plan the physical appearance, design and structure of the classroom thoroughly, prohibiting learners from speaking to other learners or moving around in the classroom. In so doing, the educator should be able to manage the classroom better.

It is therefore evident that learners who disobey classroom rules and regulations hinder the teaching and learning process in the classroom. They prevent themselves and other learners from participating actively in the learning and teaching process. Disobeying classroom rules and regulations may lead to a classroom situation that is unbearable and intolerable, affecting the scholastic progress of learners negatively.

4.4.4.2 Learners depict a lack of interest or concern with regard to scholastic progress

School Principal, SMT and ILST co-ordinator participants felt that learners experiencing scholastic challenges portray a lack of interest in scholastic success and achievement. This can be due to their inability to do well at school. They pretend that they are not interested in academic success in the achievement of scholastic goals.

Due to the fact that they are not interested in any goals or achievement they are likely to be uninvolved in class activities and discussions. For example educator participant 1 stated: “They become non-active in class”. In addition to their non-involvement in activities, they tend to be absent from school on a regular basis.

Participants mentioned that the absentee rate amongst these learners is very high, as they stay away from school on a regular basis. Participant 24 mentioned that these learners bunk class frequently and that they stay absent without any valid reason. Participants felt that these learners prefer to stay away from school, to avoid encountering learning difficulty. Participants were of the opinion that these learners do not realise that staying away from school impacts them negatively, as their scholastic

backlog increases due to their absenteeism. In Chapter 3, section 3.4, Raymond (2013:180) acknowledged that absenteeism is one of the recurrent behavioural challenges faced by educators within the ordinary classroom. These learners stay away from schools unnecessarily, not realizing that they are increasing their scholastic backlogs.

It is clear that learners portray a lack of interest in their schoolwork, when they are unable to cope with the scholastic demands within the classroom. Their inability to cope with classroom demands may cause them to experience feelings of failure and rejection causing them to be aggressive and emotional unstable.

4.4.4.3 Learners become easily aggressive and emotionally unstable

As mentioned in the previous paragraph, educator participants shared that learners experiencing challenges at school become very aggressive and emotionally unstable at times. Participants felt that their aggression and emotional instability could be due to their failures and inability to cope with mainstream demands.

Educator participants stated that these learners fight with other on a regular basis. For example educator participant 5 stated: "Learners fight on a daily basis with their classmates." Educator participant 6 stated that: "Swears and fight with their classmates on a daily basis." ILST co-ordinator participants were of the opinion that these learners are aggressive due to the scholastic failure they experience and the rejection they experience from their classmates. Educator participant 19 fully agreed and stated that these learners are aggressive and can become very emotional. Educator participant 27 felt that these learners make themselves guilty of bullying at times.

Raymond, (2013:198) stated that one of the goals of SWPBS Tier 1, is to create safe and supportive environments for learners, where the emotional and social needs of all learners will be addressed. Pienaar, (2013:184) elaborates further on this issue by endorsing that Tier 1 is responsible for teaching social skills, such as the management of anger, frustration and the building of relationships within the classroom. It is clearly stated in Chapter 3, section 3.4.1 that the teaching of social skills will help learners to function socially.

From the above discussion it is apparent that learners experiencing scholastic difficulties are often guilty of anti-social and unacceptable behaviour. They influence the teaching and learning climate negatively, affecting both learners and educators. It is therefore apparent that schools need guiding principles on how to address challenging behaviours (see Chapter 5, section 5.3.3)

4.5 SUMMARY

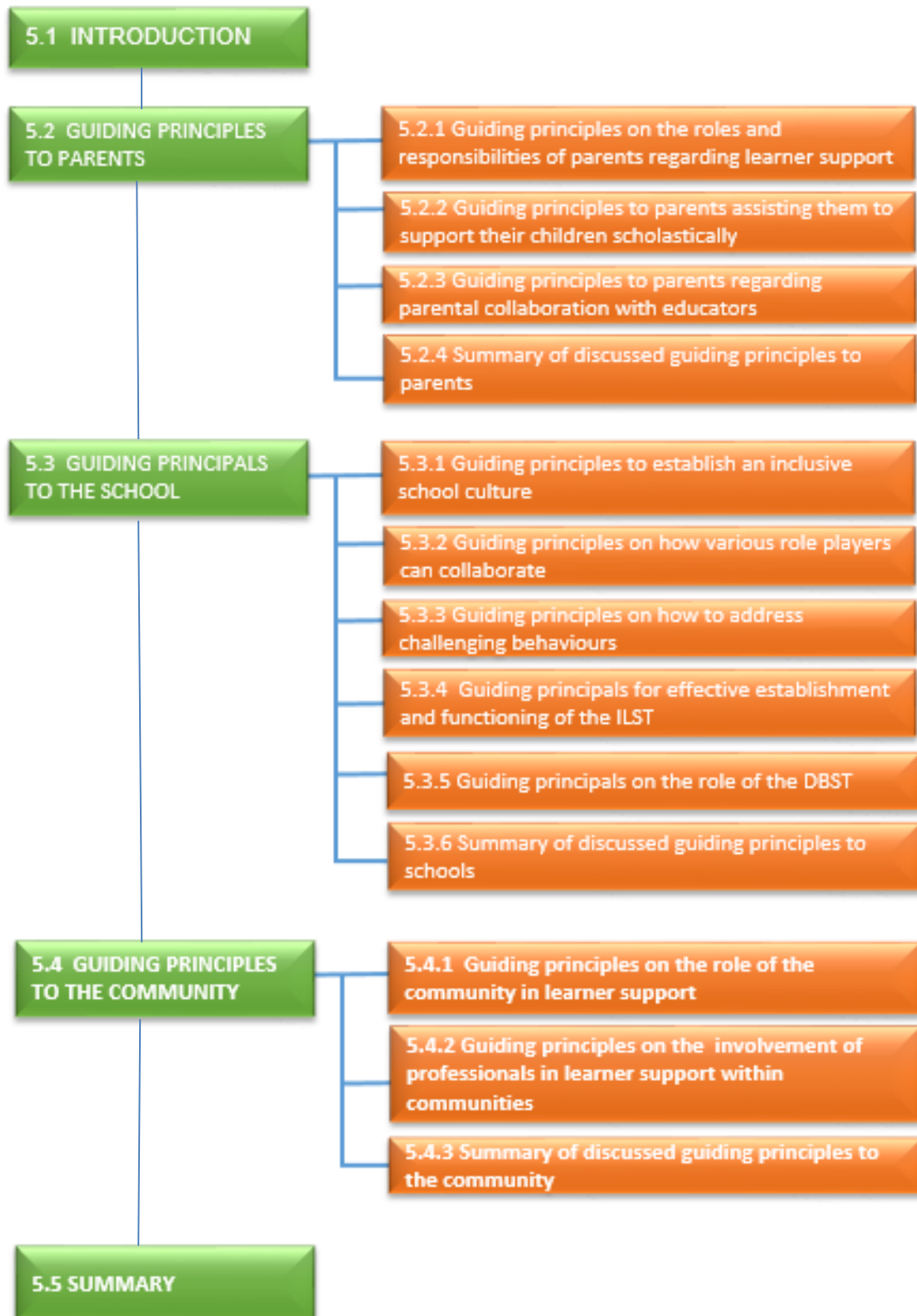
Chapter 4 presented the execution and results of the empirical study. In this chapter, the researcher discussed the methodology, encompassing the research type, ethical considerations as well as the sample group, who participated in this study. Additionally, the researcher discussed the data collection strategies, which were employed to collect data.

Data was analysed using Tesch's eight step data analyses process. Themes and sub-themes emerged from the data and were presented as the results of the study. Lastly, research results were discussed and presented in this chapter.

The next chapter, Chapter 5 will provide guiding principles for the effective establishment and functioning of Institutional Level Support Teams.

CHAPTER 5 OUTLINE:

GUIDING PRINCIPLES FOR THE EFFECIVE ESTABLISHMENT AND FUNCTIONING OF INSTITUTIONAL LEVEL SUPPORT TEAMS (ILSTs)



CHAPTER 5

GUIDING PRINCIPLES FOR THE EFFECTIVE ESTABLISHMENT AND FUNCTIONING OF INSTITUTIONAL LEVEL SUPPORT TEAM (ILSTS)

5.1 INTRODUCTION

Chapter 1 provided a general introduction to the study, where the aim and problem statements as well as the theoretical framework underpinning this study were discussed. The research methodology was also discussed in Chapter 1. Chapter 2 provided a literature review on Inclusive Education and Bronfenbrenner's eco-systemic theory. From this literature review it is apparent that Inclusive Education necessitates the use of an eco-systemic approach such as Bronfenbrenner's eco-systemic theory in order to gain a deeper understanding of how to address and overcome barriers to learning. It is thus evident that an eco-systemic model acknowledges that barriers to learning are caused by multiple spheres of influence.

Chapter 3 contained a literature review on learner support. This literature review highlighted the importance of establishing Institutional Level Support Teams within an Inclusive Education setting whose core responsibility would be to address barriers to learning systemically, as various factors influence the life of the learner. Chapter 4 presented a description of the execution of the empirical research of the study, as well as the results of the study. Research results within Chapter 4 highlighted the importance of an eco-systemic theory such as Bronfenbrenner's systems theory within an Inclusive Education, as it can enhance effective learner support and intervention.

The researcher again read through the results of the study and identified further emerging themes from the research results in order to establish the most important problems that emerged from the research. The results indicated that the identified emerging themes focused on the following stakeholders, which is of utmost importance for the effective establishment and functioning of the ILST (see Figure 5.1). The following stakeholders were identified:

- Parents.
- The school and

- The community.

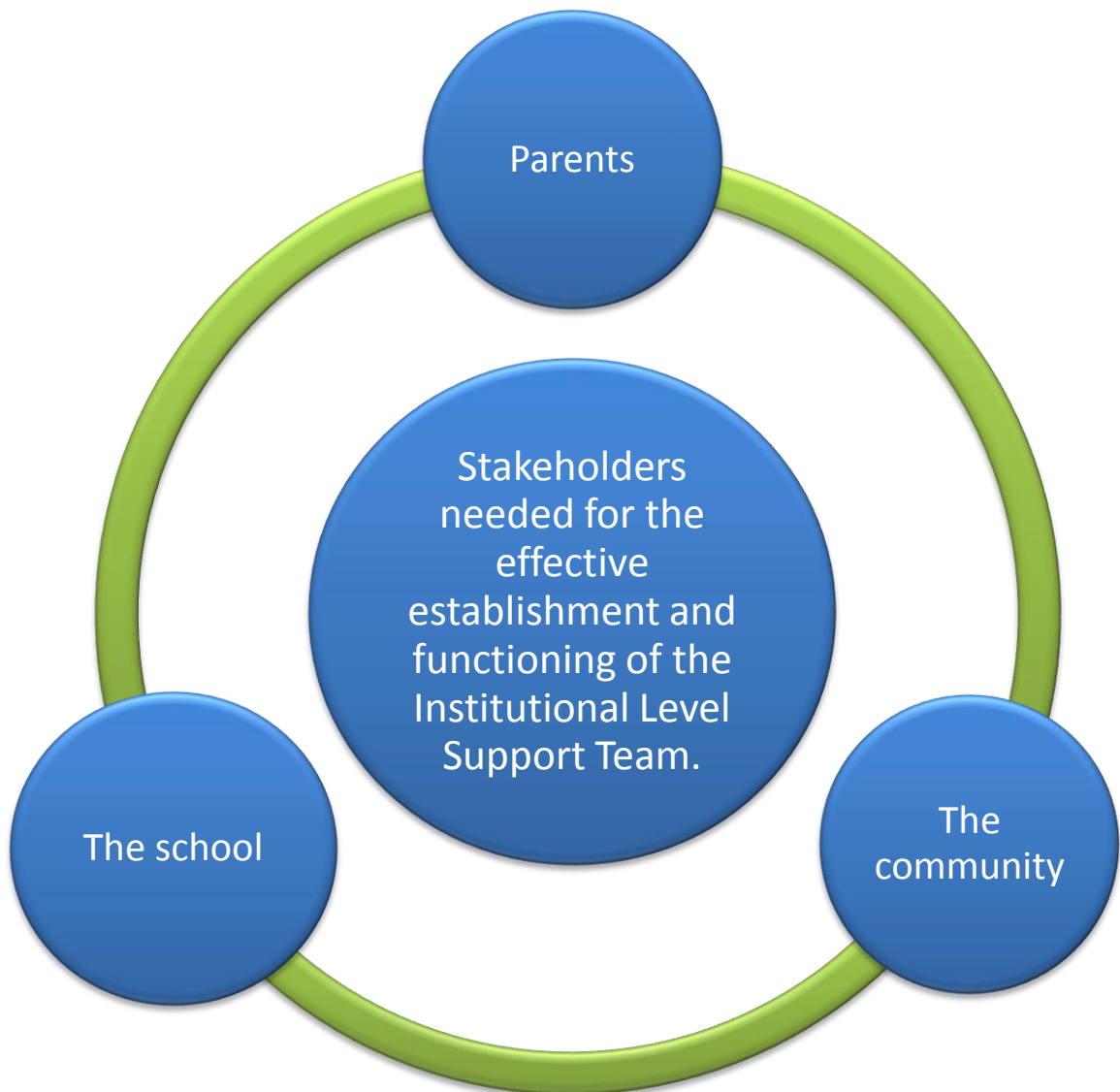


Figure 5.1 Stakeholders needed for the effective establishment and functioning of Institutional Level Support Teams

The guiding principles regarding identified issues about parents, the school and the community will be presented for the effective establishment and functioning of Institutional Level Support Teams at schools. These guiding principles are displayed in the Figure 5.2 on the following page.



Figure 5.2 Guiding principles for the effective establishment and functioning of Institutional Level Support Teams (ILSTs)

The above mentioned guiding principles, visually presented in Figure 5.2 are based on the theoretical framework of this study, namely Bronfenbrenner’s eco-systemic theory. Additionally, the literature reviews done in Chapters 2 (Inclusive Education) and 3 (Learner Support) together with the research results in Chapter 4 will be employed to propose guiding principles in Chapter 5. The proposed guiding principles will be in line with Bronfenbrenner’s eco-systemic theory, as parents, the school and the community (as indicated in Figure 5.1) should be encouraged to work in close collaboration with each other. Collaboration between these stakeholders may increase the effective establishment and functioning of Institutional Level Support Teams (ILSTs) at primary schools within the Uitenhage District.

A detailed discussion on guiding principles for parents, the school and the community will now follow.

5.2 GUIDING PRINCIPLES FOR PARENTS

Research results indicated that many parents do not know their role and responsibility regarding the education of their children. It is apparent that they are in need of guidance on how to support their children as well as on how to collaborate with educators and other stakeholders involved in learner support.

According to Jakes and De Bord, (2010:177-178), as mentioned in Chapter 2, section 2.4.7 and affirmed in Chapter 3, section 3.7, the role of the parent within the life of the child is indispensable and cannot be ignored. Pienaar, (2013:182) fully agrees with Jakes and De Bord and states that parents are the primary caregivers of the child and therefore their roles and responsibilities in the life of the child cannot be overlooked. Policy documents discussed in Chapter 2 section 2.4 accentuate the important role of the parent in the life of the child. It is therefore apparent that parents have a profound influence on the scholastic development of their children. The research results of this study affirmed the perspective of Jakes, De Bord and Pienaar as they indicated that parents are vital in the life of the child.

Participants indicated that effective learner support requires parents to be actively involved in the scholastic development of their children (See Chapter 4, section 4.4.1.1). This perspective of participants is endorsed by literature in Chapter 3 section 3.7.1, where mention was made that the SIAS process acknowledged the central role played by parents in the life of the child (Department of Education, 2007:10; Department of Education, 2008: 1-9,15). The important role of the parent is endorsed in other documents as well, such as the South African Schools Act and the South African Constitution, as discussed in Chapter 2, section 2.4. The importance of these documents are endorsed by Bronfenbrenner's eco-systemic theory, with specific reference to the macrosystem of his theory, as indicated in Figure 5.6.

With reference to research results and the above mentioned policy documents and Acts, it is apparent that parents need to fulfil certain roles, responsibilities and acquire skills and knowledge to help and support their children more effectively and efficiently. After an analysis of the research results, it became apparent that parents need guiding principles. The researcher formulated the following guiding principles to parents in order to address parental issues. These guiding principles will be presented in Figure 5.3

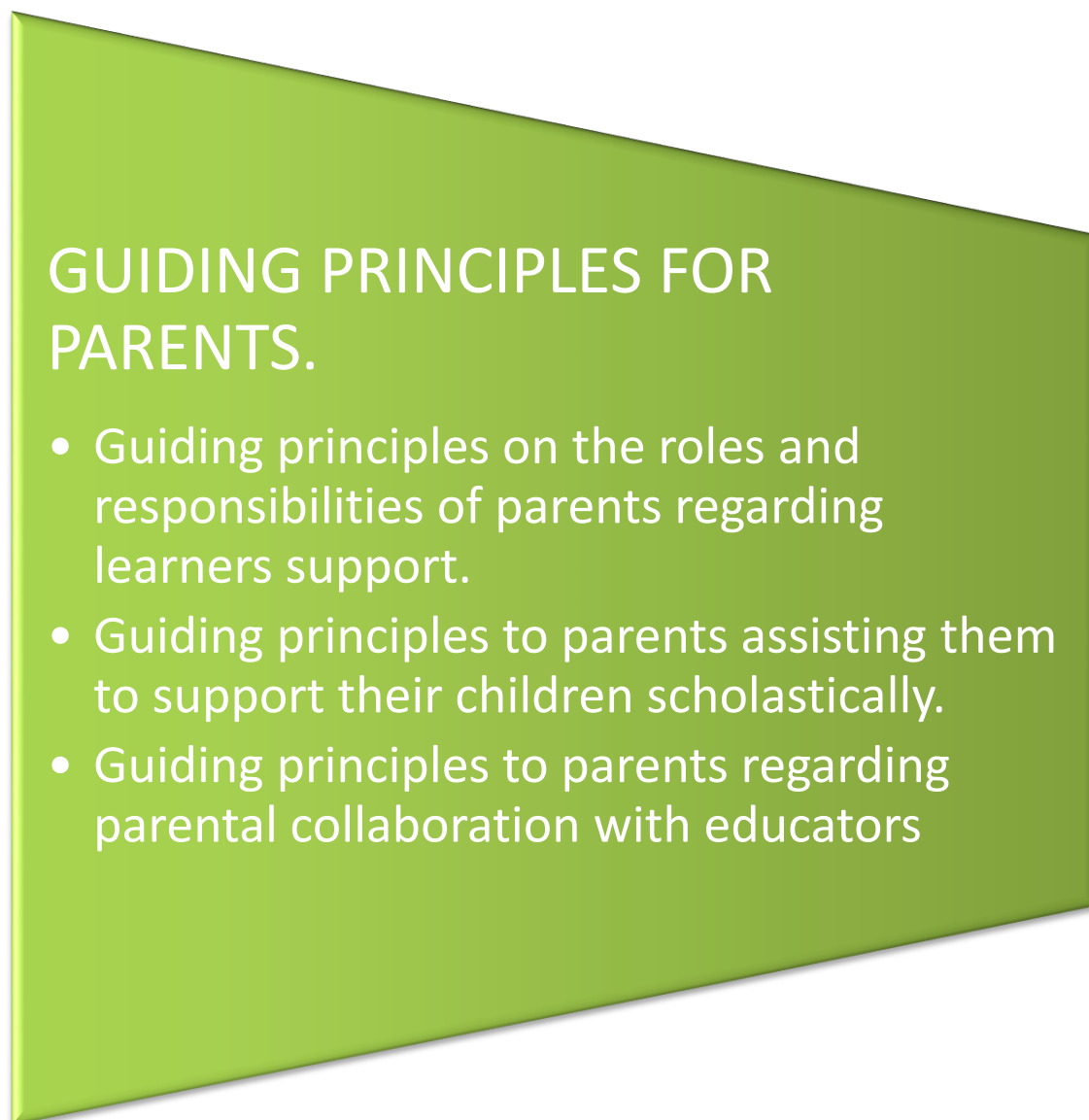


Figure 5.3 Guiding principles to parents

The above visually presented guiding principles will now be discussed individually.

5.2.1 Guiding principles on the roles and responsibilities of parents regarding learner support

Research results in Chapter 4 indicated that educators at school level are faced with two kinds of parents. One group of parents accept their role and responsibility towards their children, whilst another group of parents seemingly neglect their role and responsibility towards their children.

As mentioned before literature discussed in Chapter 2, section 2.6.3 confirmed that parental involvement can make a positive contribution in the life and development of the child. Research results revealed that parents who accept their role and responsibility towards their children are actively involved in the educational journey of their children. These parents create positive opportunities for their children, enabling them to reach their full potential and perform well at school.

Furthermore, research results indicated that involved parents attend school activities such as parent meetings on a regular basis, they familiarise themselves with what's happening at school and are therefore able to help and support their children effectively and efficiently.

On the other hand, parents who do not accept their role and responsibility towards their children may pose a possible barrier to learning. These uninvolved parents are not actively involved in the educational journey of their children. These parents create challenges rather than opportunities for their children. They hinder their children from reaching their full potential and prohibit them from overcoming their barriers to learning. Research results indicated that these parents do not attend school meetings, they do not create home conditions conducive to learning and some of them are guilty of alcohol and physical abuse.

Literature discussed in Chapter 1, section 1.10.3, indicated that the non-involvement of parents in the growth and development of their children can be regarded as a barrier to learning, due to the fact that these parents are unable to help and guide their children effectively. Education White Paper 6 and other policy documents discussed in Chapter 2 clearly state that parents should be part of the education of their children, so as to ensure that their children receive quality education. Therefore, the non-involvement of parents is in direct contrast with recent policy documents.

Policy documents such as The South African Constitution, The South African Schools Act, The National Strategy on Screening, Identification, Assessment and Support, School-wide Positive Behaviour Support and others affirm the important role of the parent in the life of the learner. These policy documents heightened the need for parents to take cognisance of their role and responsibility towards their children as discussed in Chapter 2, section 2.4.

Uninvolved parents should be consulted as there might be various reasons for their behaviour. Educators detecting such conduct should investigate the rationale behind the non-involvement of parents, prior to labelling these parents as non-involved parents. At times, educators fail to understand that parents also experience personal challenges and therefore may be unable to support and guide their children. Educators should take the work conditions of parents into consideration. At times parents have long working hours, which may hamper them from supporting their children. It would be wise of educators to embark on home visits, with the aim of familiarising themselves with the background and home conditions of their learners. This will enable educators to meet parents or guardians of learners personally and engage with them during personal consultations. Consultations and personal engagements may lead to the provisioning of support and guidance to parents.

Educators with the help and support of the ILST, should provide guiding principles to parents on their role and responsibility towards their children. Support and guidance to parents should not be the sole responsibility of educators. The entire school, including School Principals, SMT's ILSTs and SGB's should assist with support provisioning to parents. Additionally other professionals in communities should be part of training workshops and capacity building sessions for parents. Such training should occur in school halls and community centres. Venues should be strategically planned, as it needs to be easily accessible to parents and community members. In section 5.3 and 5.4 a detailed discussion will follow on what schools and communities should do to assist parents in fulfilling their role and responsibility in the life of the child.

Although communities and schools should assist and guide parents, parents need to take responsibility for their children. Based on research results it is suggested that parents provide school-based support at home. For example, parents need to create an atmosphere conducive to learning at home.

The daily routine at home should be of such a nature that school success and school responsibilities takes precedence. The routine should include the completion of homework and preparations for the following day. Additionally, parents should converse with their children, regarding the school day. During this time children are granted the opportunity to share their daily successes and challenges which happened at school. As soon as learners inform parents about challenges, parents should talk to their children and motivate them to overcome these challenges. By doing this, parents are able to pay attention to their children's needs and enhance the trust relationship between the parent and child.

Furthermore, it is advised that educators need to inform parents that they need to create a calm, friendly, peace-loving environment at home, which enables teaching and learning. Parents should refrain from physical abuse between mother and father and avoid the excessive abuse of alcohol, since the research results of this study revealed that physical abuse between parents and the excessive use of alcohol can have a negative effect on the scholastic progress of children. In this regard Donald, et al (2010:40) and Knowles (2006:36) indicate that whatever happens within the family or peer group, can have a profound effect on the scholastic development of the child as discussed in Chapter 2, section 2.6. Therefore these parents should be supported to overcome their abuse of alcohol and be guided to refrain from physical abuse.

Furthermore, parents are advised to make regular and frequent contact with the school and as such, will be able to support their children successfully and resourcefully. Involved parents will be able to extend and strengthen the support interventions of educators and in turn educators will be able to request help and support from those parents, if need be. A working relationship between parents and educators will enhance intervention strategies. Involved parents are able to relate to school activities and programmes which may result in well informed and knowledgeable parents. It is therefore of utmost importance that parents participate in school activities and attend meetings if requested to do so. This way, parents may acquire knowledge and information regarding a vast range of issues, regarding the education of their children.

The research results indicated that involved parents will not only concentrate on the academic performance of their children, but will also instil other important principles within the child such as respect, honour and good behaviour. Through these actions,

parents are teaching their children how to behave in all social conditions, at home, at school and in the community. Parents are therefore advised to set clear expectations to their children with regards to scholastic achievement and general behaviour. This may lead to learners knowing what their parents expect from them and it may influence the general behaviour and scholastic progress of children. Parents should be able to guide their children effectively, once educators supported and guided them on how to assist their children.

Effective learner support and intervention requires parental involvement. Parents will need guidance, enabling them to address the diverse needs of their children. Some educator participants felt that such guidance will create awareness with parents regarding the diverse needs of learners.

The following guiding principle that will be discussed is on how parents are in need of assistance on how to assist their children. This will now be discussed.

5.2.2 Guiding principles to parents assisting them to support their children scholastically

Research results indicated that parents are in need of guidance to assist their children with scholastic activities. The DBST, ILST and educators should assist these parents by means of capacity building sessions. Capacity building sessions may take the form of training workshops, information sharing gatherings presented by professionals within the community and short courses where parents, educators and community members involved in learner support are addressed. These capacity building sessions may be regarded as an effort to help and guide parents to take responsibility for their children.

The National Strategy on Screening, Identification, Assessment and Support (2008), as discussed in Chapter 2, section 2.4.7 necessitates parents to be part of the entire support process at school level. This compels parents to make regular contact with educators, ILST members, other professionals within the community and stakeholders involved in learner support. In this way, parents and educators will get to know each other, develop and grow simultaneously with regard to learner support and intervention.

As mentioned and discussed in 5.2.1 research results indicated that capacity building sessions can be beneficial to parents, as parents will become skilled and knowledgeable regarding barriers to learning and learner support. Based on these results; it is suggested that parents attend capacity building sessions when invited by the school or other professionals within the community. Capacitated parents will be able to detect the possible reason for learning challenges and focus on addressing the problem effectively at home. Consequently, parents will be able to extend and strengthen learner support intervention and support at home. Participants felt that well informed and knowledgeable parents will be able to employ effective learner support strategies at home.

Knowledge gained by parents at these sessions will guide parents into knowing how to develop and unfold the potential of their children. Parents are advised to attend and utilise capacity building sessions as platforms to acquire skills and knowledge, pose questions, seek clarity and clarify uncertainties on difficulties they may experience.

Research results provided evidence that parents are keen to learn more about learner support and intervention. In this regard it was indicated in Chapter 4, section 4.4.1.1 about an Educational Psychologist and Master Student who were invited by ILSTs of schools to converse with parents regarding learner support and intervention. This Educational Psychologist and Masters Student were pleasantly surprised at the number of parents attending these gatherings. They observed that parents are enthusiastic to learn more on how to support their children who may experience barriers to learning. Research results suggest that parents should utilize capacity building sessions optimally. Parents should ensure that they are part of such deliberation where educators, other professionals and inclusive communities gather to share knowledge and experiences.

From the above mentioned it is clear that parents could benefit from capacity building sessions to equip themselves with the necessary skills and knowledge to support their children. Parents participating in school activities or capacity building sessions, will know what is happening at school with regards to learner support and intervention. Parents should avail themselves to be part of school programmes and activities which may enhance learner attainment. Additionally, parents should take personal

responsibility for their children's needs and should not expect the school to take sole responsibility for learner's academic progress.

In Chapter 2, section 2.3 it is indicated that Inclusive Education demands from both educators and parents to be actively involved in learner support. It is apparent that collaboration between these two elements is of utmost importance. Mitchell, (2008:27) agrees with this view and state that parents and educators need to work in close collaboration with each other in their undertaking to meet the diverse needs of all learners. Effective learner support within an Inclusive Education setting requires from parents and educators to work in close collaboration with each other.

5.2.3 Guiding principles to parents regarding parental collaboration with educators

Evidence visible in research results indicated that close collaboration between parents and educators will augment intervention and support deeds and address barriers successfully. Literature in Chapter 1, section 1.1 affirmed research results as it pointed out that collaboration between parents and educators will allow them to establish relationships with each other. Consequently, they will be able to plan together for effective support programs and make shared decisions regarding learner support. Parents are therefore advised to work in close collaboration with the school and educators to improve the quality of education.

Research results indicated that parental collaboration can pave the way for healthy parent-educator relationships. The importance of parent-educator relationships is endorsed by Bronfenbrenner's eco-systemic theory, with specific reference to the micro-system of this theory, which was discussed in Chapter 2 section 2.6.5.1. According to Swart, et al.,(2005(a):11) the microsystem is characterised by individuals closest to the learners life. The interactions that occur in the micro-system are the most important aspects in shaping the child's growth and development (Donald et al.2010:40). The close face-to-face, long term relationships are called proximal interactions. The proximal interactions can be identified in reciprocal relationships between families, peer groups, classrooms, schools and local communities (Donald,et al.,2010:40 and Knowles, 2006:35).In addition, the microsystem includes concrete

settings such as the school, home, after-care facilities and the school playground (Hook,2009:505).

The importance of a reciprocal relationship between parents and educators was highlighted by research results. Such as relationship should be established and cultivated by both educators and parents. As mentioned before, parents need to respond positively to communication requests from educators. Additionally, educators need to embark on home visits, meeting parents at convenient times and nurture the reciprocal relationship between parents and educators.

A reciprocal relationship between parents and educators will permit holistic support provisioning to learners, as both parents and educators work together towards a common goal. Within this reciprocal relationship parents and educators will be able to support each other in finding positive means of supporting the learner and establishing common goals. In Chapter 3, section 3.5.2. Bornman, et al., (2010:122) and Simpson et al.,(2010:185) indicate that parental collaboration is the cornerstone for positive learner support and intervention. Based on the above mentioned results and literature, parents are advised to establish relationships with educators. This will enable parents and educators to support the learner holistically and collectively. As mentioned before, this reciprocal relationship can be to the benefit of the learner.

Research results implied that collaboration between parents and educators may influence learner performance positively. Learners may be motivated due to the fact that their parents are actively involved in their scholastic activities. These learners may be motivated to such an extent, that they experience the need to work even harder, resulting in parents recognising that these children appreciate their interest in school programs and activities. Parents are therefore advised to enhance their involvement in the life of the child. Parental involvement may contribute positively with regards to learners, educators and parents. Parents and educators are therefore advised to make the positive connection with each other.

Parent-educator collaboration will permit parents to get to know what is happening at school. Parents should familiarise themselves with school support efforts and programmes to support their children and to strengthen educators support and intervention. Parents are thus advised to take responsibility for their children. They will

be able to support and help their children, by collaborating with educators in addressing learner needs and requirements.

Research results showed that parents are able to strengthen and extend learner support and intervention. Parents will be able to do so, once they have acquired the necessary skills and knowledge by means of capacity building sessions, as discussed in section 5.2.1. Additionally, parents need to be told by educators that their contributions and suggestions will be appreciated and welcomed. Educators are advised to notify parents that their assistance and ideas will be valued. This may lead to parents experiencing a sense of worth and belonging.

Literature discussed in Chapter 2, section 2.4.7 confirms that parents should establish partnerships with educators and the broader community for effective learner support and intervention (Department of Education, 1997:131). Swart, et al., (2005:226) agree and state that forming partnerships with parents is of utmost importance as it can enhance the learning opportunities of learners. Forming partnerships is endorsed by Bronfenbrenner's eco-systemic theory (McWhirter, et al., 2007:17). Being part of inclusive communities and networks will enable parents to engage with people who experience the same challenges and circumstances as they do. Parents are therefore advised to join parent-support groups within the community or at schools.

Successful parental involvement are built on a shared vision between parents, educators, the school, family, friends and the entire community. Figure 5.4 visually signifies the support needed by parents, which may enable them to support their children holistically.

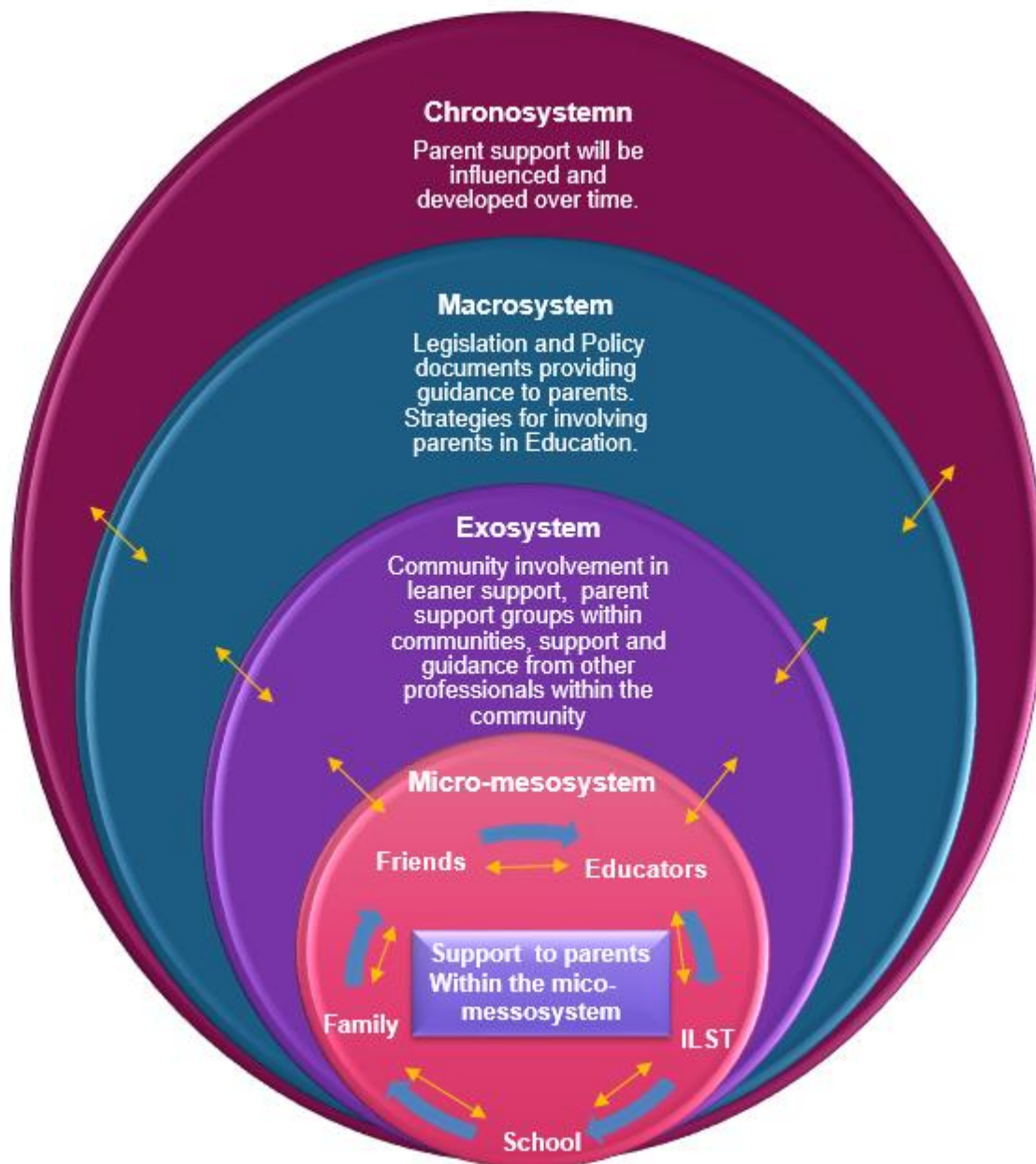


Figure 5.4 Support to parents based on Bronfenbrenner’s eco-systemic theory

Figure 5.4 indicates the interrelationships and influences between the various systems and sub-systems for effective parental support and intervention. This interrelatedness between the various systems is demonstrated by means of numerous circles embracing each other. To address the support needs of parents, the various systems and sub-systems as indicated in Bronfenbrenner’s eco-systemic theory needs to be taken into account. This interrelatedness of the various systems and sub-systems as

well as the reciprocal influences amongst systems and sub-systems should be acknowledged.

Figure 5.4 indicates that the micro and mesosystem of the learner, which includes the family, friends, educators, ILSTs and other roleplayers within the school. The blue arrows indicate that there is a reciprocal influence amongst the inhabitants of the micro and mesosystem. The microsystem is surrounded by the exosystem as visually presented in Figure 5.4.

The exosystem illustrates the role and responsibility of the community towards parents. Communities need to establish parent support groups, assisting parents in supporting their children holistically and effectively. Professionals within communities should assist and guide parents whenever possible. The macrosystem, indicates that legislation and policies accentuates the role and responsibility of parents in learner support and intervention. A detailed discussion in this regard can be found in Chapter 2, section 2.4

Lastly, the chronosystem, as indicated in Figure 5.4 illustrates the systems in time, which may have an impact on various systems and their sub-systems. This means that as the various systems engage more and more over time with parents, parental support and intervention should increase which may enhance the functionality of ILSTs.

5.2.4 Summary of discussed guiding principles to parents

Based on the above discussion, here follow a summary on guiding principles to parents. It is as follows:

- Parents should attend school meetings and activities. Communities and schools should encourage parents to do so on a regular basis. Schools should arrange such meetings after normal working hours and at venues in close proximity to all parents.
- Parents should respond positively upon communication and collaborative opportunities arranged by educators. In so doing, parents will be in contact with the school and know what is happening at school. The workplace of parents

should be child-friendly and allow parents to visit schools when requested to do so.

- Parents need to provide school-based support at home. The school, community and other professionals within the community should guide parents on how to provide school-based support at home.
- Parents should instil the principles of respect, honour and good behaviour in their children. Schools and communities should support parents in this regard by employing the same norms and values at home, at school and within the community.
- Parents should attend capacity building sessions to equip them with the necessary skills and knowledge to support their children. Such capacity building sessions should be arranged by the school and other professionals within the community. Capacity training should occur on a regular basis and at venues easily accessible to parents and the community at large.
- Parents need to take personal responsibility for their children.

5.3 GUIDING PRINCIPLES FOR THE SCHOOL

Research results indicated that schools experience challenges with the establishment and functioning of ILST's. According to the Education White Paper 6, Building an Inclusive Education System, as discussed in Chapter 2, section 2.4.6, ILST's should be established at all schools. The ILST is described as the support structure at school level, whose main purpose and goal is to identify and address institutional, educator and learner needs (See Chapter 1, section 1.1 and 1.2)

The theoretical framework of this study, namely Bronfenbrenner's eco-systemic theory, indicates that schools form part of a social system. Based on this fact, schools, in close collaboration with other interrelated systems and sub-systems involved in learner support, should aspire to the most effective intervention and support that addresses institutional, learner and educator needs.

To realise such an aspiration, schools need to create and cultivate a school culture that is inclusive, meaning learner diversity will be embraced and accepted. Such a vision requires schools to employ a whole-school developmental approach in which school communities grow, collaborate and develop simultaneously to increase the

effect of learner support and intervention. In so doing, schools will enable learners to access good education. Good education, as discussed in Chapter 2, section 2.8.2 may unlock the full potential of all learners and will give children the prospect of a brighter future. Based on these research results and the literature reviews done in Chapters 2 and 3, the researcher will provide guiding principles to schools to enhance the effective establishment and functioning of ILST's.

After an analysis of the research results, it became apparent that schools need guiding principles for the effective establishment and functioning of ILST's. The researcher formulated the following guiding principles to schools. These guidelines will be presented in Figure 5.5.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES FOR THE SCHOOL.

- Guiding principles to establish an inclusive school culture.
- Guiding principles on how various role players can collaborate.
- Guiding principles on how to address challenging behaviours.
- Guiding principles for the effective establishment and functioning of ILST's.
- Guiding principles on the role of the DBST.

Figure 5.5 Guiding Principles to Schools

This visual representation of the guiding principles will now be individually discussed.

5.3.1 Guiding principles to establish an inclusive school culture

Research results indicated that some educators portray a negative attitude towards an inclusive school culture. These educators refuse to meet the diverse needs of learners within the classroom or to render support to learners in need of additional help, assistance and guidance, although other educators embrace an ethos of inclusivity.

Swart, et al., (2005:19) and Mitchell, (2008:27) in Chapter 1, section 1.10.5 point out that Inclusive Education demands a school culture that welcomes and accepts learner diversity. Furthermore, literature discussed in Chapter 2, section 2.3 stated that a school culture embracing an ethos of inclusivity should create systems and structures where adaptations are made regarding teaching and learning, to meet the individual needs of all learners.

Such schools embody a positive attitude towards learner support as all learners are accepted at such a school irrespective of their ability or disability. At such a school it is believed that all learners matter, all learners can achieve and therefore all learners should benefit from instruction. Additionally, the belief is that an inclusive school culture will make the necessary adjustments and changes to accommodate the individual needs of all learners.

Research results affirmed that some schools embraced an ethos of inclusivity. Such schools illustrated that learner support is regarded as fundamental and of the utmost importance and therefore these schools do not experience major challenges with the establishment and functioning of their ILST's. The researcher observed such practices at a school within the Langkloof area. The school including the SMT, ILST and SGB made the necessary adaptations to accommodate a learner with severe physical impairments. Educators at the school followed the example set by the School Principal, SMT, SGB and ILST and accommodated the learner to the best of their ability. This school demonstrated that all learners matter, all learners can achieve and therefore all learners should be accommodated.

Furthermore, research results indicated that some educators identify and address barriers to learning. These educators create support structures at the school to support all learners who need it. As previously mentioned, literature in Chapter 2 indicated that a school that embraces an inclusive school culture will create systems and structures to address the needs of all learners.

On the other hand, research results indicated that some educators display a negative attitude towards inclusive practices, as already indicated. Participants stated that some educators refused to participate in learner support activities and programmes, as they feel that they are not adequately trained to support and guide learners experiencing learning challenges.

Furthermore, research results showed that various systemic challenges have a negative impact on the effective establishment and functioning of ILST's. More specifically educator participants mentioned that multi-grade teaching, overpopulated classrooms and the shortage of educators prevent the ILST from functioning optimally. Such practices and working conditions are in direct contrast with recent inclusive policies and practices, as discussed in Chapter 2, section 2.4

Based on these research results, the researcher suggests that schools create a school culture that addresses learner needs and support by changing the negative attitude of educators. A clear vision and mission statement of the school clearly stating that all learners matter, that all learners can achieve and therefore all learners should benefit from instruction will help to achieve the desired school culture. Furthermore, the individual needs of learners should be addressed by the school and educators. The school and educators should make the necessary curriculum adaptations, with the help and support of the ILST and DBST. Literature discussed in Chapter 2, section 2.3 substantiated such practices by stating that an inclusive school culture, embracing an ethos of inclusivity, should implement a flexible curriculum where adaptations to teaching and learning are evident.

Furthermore, schools in close collaboration with the ILST need to collaborate with various role players to address systemic and other challenges. ILST's needs to make contact and consult with other professionals within the community as well as with the DBST with regards to training opportunities for educators. The DBST, in close

collaboration with other professionals within the community, needs to train educators on identifying and addressing barriers to learning, thus enabling them to address the diverse needs of all learners. A detailed discussion regarding the responsibility of the DBST towards learner support will follow later in this section. The knowledge and skills gained by educators during training sessions or capacity building sessions will enable the entire school to grow and develop optimally.

Research results implied that in order for schools to create and sustain an inclusive school culture they need to embrace a whole-school developmental approach to inclusive practices. In Chapter 3, section 3.3.5 Engelbrecht (2001:33) indicated that the establishment of an inclusive school culture requires schools to employ a whole-school developmental approach, where all stakeholders grow and develop simultaneously. Embracing a whole-school developmental approach may bring about constant change and development within the school.

In Chapter 2, section 2.9, Swart and Pettipher, (2005:19) indicated that a change in school culture will have an effect on the entire school as an organization. They elaborated further on school culture by stating that a change in school culture does not happen easily as it demands all stakeholders at school to acquire knowledge and skills regarding school culture reform. This means that SMT's, SGB's, ILST's and educators of the school should adopt an inclusive school culture conducive to inclusive practices.

Research results indicated that a school culture is influenced by the attitude and commitment of the school community, with specific reference to the School Management Team (SMT). The SMT is able to influence the attitude and commitment of educators. Participants mentioned that as soon as educators detect that the SMT, especially the School Principal, reacts positively to change in the school culture they will follow suit. For example, research results indicated that as soon as the School Principal accepted a school culture conducive to inclusive practices, where learner diversity is accepted and all learners are welcomed, educators followed suit. Ainscow and Sandill (2010:404) state that the school principal is crucial in providing leadership for growth, development and change. The implementation of Inclusive Education lies with the entire school community, which includes the SMT, SGB, learners, parents and educators (see Chapter 2, section 2.6.5.1).

Based on these research results and literature, the researcher suggests that schools embrace a whole-school developmental approach in establishing an inclusive school culture. The School Principal and SMT should portray a positive attitude and commitment towards an inclusive school culture. In so doing, the possibility of educators following their example becomes a reality. If this happens all learners will be welcomed at the school, irrespective of their abilities or disabilities.

The goals, vision and mission of the School Principal and School Management Team cannot be achieved without the help and assistance of communities and School Governing Body (SGB), as all systems and their sub-systems have an influence on learner support and intervention. A detailed discussion on the role of communities in learner support will follow in section 5.4. For schools to create and sustain a school culture which highlights the importance of learner needs, schools need to collaborate with stakeholders within and beyond the school. The following section will accentuate the importance of collaboration within the school.

5.3.2 Guiding principles for schools on how various role players can collaborate

Research results provided evidence to demonstrate that collaboration between role players within the school is of utmost importance for the effective establishment and functioning of the ILST. These role players are the School Principal, SMT, SGB, ILST and educators. Section 5.2 provides guiding principles for parents and sub-section 5.2.3 includes a detailed discussion on the importance of parental collaboration. This section, 5.3, will provide guiding principles for the school while sub-section 5.3.2 will highlight the value of collaboration within the school.

According to Stofile, et.al., (2007:58), Swart, et. al., (2005:19) and Swart, et.al., (2001:34), as discussed in Chapter 2, section 2.9.1, collaboration is of the utmost importance as educators, parents and other professionals within communities are required to work closely with each other in their endeavour to support learners effectively.

The research results suggest that educators should create collaborative opportunities with parents. As discussed in section 5.2.3, parents are encouraged to respond

positively to such opportunities. One expects educators to engage and work with parents to deal with learner needs and requirements. Educators should arrange parent-educator meetings on a regular basis to discuss intervention strategies and intervention goals. Additionally, educators should make a concerted effort to share good news with parents. Educators can either phone or write a note to parents, informing them about improvements or achievements in their child's academic performance. Parents should be invited to the school to recognise these achievements and receive positive feedback regarding the learner's progress.

Furthermore parent-educator visits at school can be followed-up with a home visit from the educator. According to research results, home visits can be of benefit to educators. When educators are aware of home conditions, they may be able to understand learners better. Educators are therefore advised to visit parents at convenient times, such as after hours or on a Saturday morning. During home visits challenges and achievements can be discussed and follow-up visits can be arranged to review progress and development. Additionally, home visits will allow parents and educators to get to know one another. The interdependence between parents and educators is affirmed with Bronfenbrenner's eco-systemic theory. Chapter 2, section 2.6.5.1 clearly indicated that whatever happens at school or at home influences each other. The home has a direct influence on the performance of the child at school. Based on this it is evident that the importance of collaboration between the educator and the parent cannot be over-emphasised, as such collaboration may strengthen learner support and intervention.

The research results, as indicated in 5.2.3, suggest that parents get to know their children's educators. In so doing, a trust relationship can be established between the parents and the educators. Parents may experience a sense of security and have the assurance that the educator is concerned about each learner entrusted to his/her care.

Although research results accentuated the importance of educator-parent collaboration, they also highlighted the importance of collaboration between educators. Research results indicated that educators do collaborate with each other on a regular basis. In Chapter 3, section 3.5 Kruger and Yorke (2010:303) highlighted the benefit of collaboration between educators. Discussions in Chapter 3, section 3.5.1

illustrated that collaborative practices between educators will strengthen learner support and intervention measures.

Based on research results it is suggested that educators collaborate with each other on a regular basis. Collaboration between educators can benefit the educators. Such collaboration should occur within a formal setting to highlight its importance. Such regular collaborative practices expose educators to on-going training and support in their endeavours to address the diverse needs of all learners within the school. Furthermore, educators are advised to embrace a team approach, where constructive communication occurs and a trust relationship between educators can be cultivated. A collaborative team approach towards learner support will ensure that learner support is rendered holistically and is managed effectively.

Research results highlighted the importance of collaboration between ILSTs, SMTs, SGBs and DBSTs. Participants indicated that some ILST's collaborate with SMT's and DBSTs regularly. Learner support in these schools was more effective than in schools where no collaboration occurred. Literature in Chapter 3, section 3.3.5 pointed out that the School Principal, the SMT and ILST are responsible for the implementation of inclusive practices at school level. Bornman, et al., (2010:11) believes that the commitment and dedication of the School Principal and SMT regarding inclusive practices are critical for the effective establishment and functioning of ILSTs (see Chapter 3, section 3.3.5). Furthermore, this dedication and commitment of the School Principal and SMT will have a profound influence on the delivery of learner support and intervention. In Chapter 3, section 3.5 stated that collaboration between all stakeholders involved in learner support at school will be successful in increasing the learning opportunities of learners

Considering these results, it is suggested that the ILST, SMT, SGB and DBST need to collaborate frequently. This way, they will be able to support each other with the establishment of an inclusive school culture, where learner support is rendered holistically and effectively. The School Principal, SMT and ILST are advised to utilize collaborative opportunities optimally. During collaboration all stakeholders should strive towards the creation of a positive school environment, which aims to prevent learning problems and reduce challenging behaviours. This collaborative relationship

between the above-mentioned stakeholders, necessitates the use of a problem-solving team-based approach, addressing learning and behavioural challenges.

Research results indicated that collaboration is necessary between the school, the ILST and the SGB. The South African Schools Act, as discussed in Chapter 2, section 2.4.3, states that all stakeholders in education must accept communal responsibility for quality education. School Governing Bodies (SGBs) should support the School Principal, SMTs and ILSTs in performing their duties. School Governing Bodies (SGBs) should support the school in creating a disciplined and goal-orientated environment, where quality teaching learning occurs. As SGBs represent the parent component of the school, they should collaborate with parents on a regular basis to give them feedback concerning school activities and programmes. In so doing, SGBs will keep parents and the community well informed.

Furthermore, it is suggested that all stakeholders within the school collaborate with each other on a regular basis. In so doing, all relevant stakeholders will realise that learner support is an important and central activity within the school. Literature discussed in Chapter 1, section 1.1 stated that inclusive practices require all stakeholders to work in close collaboration with each other. Discussions in Chapter 3, section 3.5 illustrated that all stakeholders need to collaborate with each other to make joint decisions regarding the learning process for the effective implementation of learner support programmes at school level (Hook, 2009:503).

Moreover, it is becoming more evident that in order to enhance the scholastic performance of learners it is crucial for the community, school, parents and educators to work together as a team, supporting the better academic performance and behaviour of all learners. The following section will advise schools on how to address challenging behaviours among the learners.

5.3.3 Guiding principles for schools on how to address challenging behaviours

Research results indicated that the anti-social and unacceptable behaviour of learners is on the increase in classrooms. This perspective of participants is confirmed by the discussions in Chapter 3, section 3.4. Pienaar, (2013:177-179) stated that

unacceptable behaviour is on the increase in South African classrooms. The importance of discipline in learner support and intervention were highlighted in discussions in Chapter 3, section 3.4 where School-wide Positive Behaviour Support (SWPBS) was examined. To attain discipline and effective learner support, SWPBS should be employed at school level, as discussed in Chapter 3, section 3.4

Disciplinary challenges and anti-social and/or unacceptable behaviour was highlighted by research results. Participants shared that some learners disrupt the culture of teaching and learning at school. This unruly behaviour of some learners affects both learners and educators as they disrupt teaching time and learners in the class. Additionally, some of these learners portray a lack of interest with regards to their scholastic performance.

Furthermore, research results revealed that some learners hinder the culture of teaching and learning within the classroom by disobeying classroom rules and regulations. These learners become restless in the classroom, they leave their seats at any given time, they make a noise in the classroom, and they disregard the authority of the educator. In fact these learners cause havoc within the classroom.

Based on these results it is suggested that the school employ a behaviour support model, where learners are taught socially acceptable behaviour. One such model is School-wide Positive Behaviour Support (SWPBS), as discussed in Chapter 3, section 3.4. This model (SWPBS) strives to combat learning and behavioural problems. It provides learners with opportunities to acquire appropriate behaviour and to reduce unacceptable behaviour by introducing positive interventions and preventative systems in the school. This model establishes an environment conducive to teaching and learning, therefore learners are able to increase their scholastic performance and portray behaviour conducive to teaching and learning.

With the above mentioned research results in mind, educators are advised to employ the Primary level or Tier 1 (as discussed in Chapter 3, section 3.4 and visually presented in Figure 3.1), level of support in their classrooms. Educators will lay the foundation for this supportive strategy in their classrooms, as the class educator is of primary importance at this level. In Tier 1, or Primary level, learners are taught acceptable behaviour within the classroom. Additionally, they are taught to build

relationships, manage anger and frustration and to deal with rejections and disappointment.

It is expected from educators in Tier 1 to scrutinize their classroom organization. Educators should display a rules poster, indicating acceptable and unacceptable behaviour. Learners should know what the daily routine entails therefore a classroom routine poster could be useful in the classroom. Additionally, it is expected from the educators to acknowledge good or bad behaviour. Educators can do this by means of a merit and de-merit system. Lastly, educators are advised to use verbal praise regularly to increase the confidence of the learners. In Tier 1, it is expected from educators to give regular feedback with regards to learner behaviour and scholastic progress to both learners and parents. Educators can provide feedback by means of a Functional Behaviour Assessment (FBA), as discussed in Chapter 3, section 3.4.4.

Some learners will not respond positively to interventions in Tier 1. These learners will continue with their misconduct. They will hinder the teaching and learning process and will refuse to adhere to the school code-of-conduct. These learners will refuse to comply with policies and regulations and will continue to disregard the authority of educators.

Considering this, it is suggested that these learners receive more intensive support. Educators should work in close collaboration with the ILST in rendering support to these learners through the Secondary Level or Tier 2 of SWPBS as discussed in Chapter 3, section 3.4.2. In this tier support is rendered to a specific group of learners who did not respond positively to Tier 1 support. Additional support to these learners includes the acquisition of more social skills, but they remain part of the classroom-wide positive behaviour support.

Research results indicated that some learners portray severe behavioural challenges. These learners depict a lack of interest about their scholastic progress and become easily aggressive and emotionally unstable. These learners are often absent and stay away from school unnecessarily to avoid encountering learning difficulties.

Based on research results, these learners form part of Tier 1 support within SWPBS. If challenging behaviour persists, Tier 2 support is rendered. If Tier 2 intervention is

unsuccessful Tier 3 support should be rendered. In Tier 3, schools are advised to make use of other professionals within the community to address the individual needs of these learners. With the help, support and guidance of the School Management Team (SMT), community members, educators and parents, these learners should be guided to grow and develop to a stage where they take personal responsibility for their learning and behaviour.

By doing this, role-players will help learners achieve scholastic success and their anti-social behaviour will diminish. It is therefore evident that a multi-layered support structure, such as the ILST assists in providing effective learner support and intervention.

5.3.4 Guiding principles for the effective establishment and functioning of the ILST

Research results indicated that some schools experience challenges with the establishment and functioning of ILSTs. According to the Education White Paper 6, as mentioned before and discussed in Chapter 2, section 2.4.6, all schools should establish ILSTs. Literature discussed in Chapter 3, section 3.3.1 indicate that ILSTs need to fulfil certain roles and responsibilities towards educators, learners, parents and other stakeholders involved in learner support at school level

While the majority of schools participating in this study have established ILSTs, their level of functionality is of concern. ILST member participants indicated that growth and development within the ILST may increase their level of functionality. Additionally, participants highlighted the need for a multi-layered support structure within the ILST that may have a positive impact on the effective establishment and functioning of this support team.

On the other hand, some educator participants indicated that educators are not fully aware of the role and responsibility of the ILST. Participants shared that they do not know what is expected from them on this team and that they had not received any training for the task at hand. Literature in Chapter 3, section 3.3.2 indicated that the role and responsibility of ILSTs entails the identification and addressing of school, learner and educator needs.

Contrary to what some educator participants shared, members of the DBST indicated that the majority of primary schools, within the Uitenhage District received training on the role and responsibilities of the ILST. The DBST members detected that educators would attend training sessions on ILSTs but that these educators do not share the information with other staff members at the school. This limits educators' awareness of the role and responsibility of ILSTs.

With reference to the above-mentioned research results and discussions in Chapter 3, section 3.3, School Principals and SMTs are advised to instruct educators attending ILST training sessions to provide colleagues with reports on these capacity building sessions. The DBSTs, School Principals, SMTs and ILST co-ordinators should inform and train ILST members on their roles and responsibilities. Such training could be part of a whole-school developmental programme. As soon as educators are aware of the role and responsibility of the ILST, the functionality level of this team can be enhanced.

The research results highlight the importance of growth and development within the ILST. More specifically, participants mentioned that growth and development within the ILST is of the utmost importance for effective learner support and intervention. Growth and development within the ILST may enhance the functionality of the team. Participants shared that growth and development within the ILST can be brought about by way of regular on-site school visits and in-service training delivered by the DBST and other professionals within the community. Training should be done by the DBST members or other professionals within the community.

Therefore, growth and development within the ILST requires collaboration. This means ILSTs need to engage with SMTs, DBSTs and other professionals within the community. During such collaboration, knowledge and experience are shared. It is therefore apparent that the School Principal, SMT, SGB, ILST and educators need to collaborate with each other to ensure the effective establishment and functioning of ILST's. School Management Teams, Institutional Level Support Teams, educators, parents, friends, community members and other professionals within the community are advised to build a significant and positive relationship between them, to ensure effective learner support and intervention.

Chapter 3, section 3.3.3 indicated how Donald, et al., (1997:26) and the Department of Education, (2003:24) perceive the advancement that collaboration between the ILST, DBST and other professionals in the community can bring about regarding the knowledge and capacity of the team. The importance of collaboration with the ILST cannot be over-emphasised. Research results indicated that some schools did not experience any challenges with the establishment and functioning of their ILST's as they have established partnerships with the role-players involved in learner support, at their schools.

Based on research results DBSTs should undertake regular on-site school visits to ILSTs. Additionally DBSTs and other professionals within the community should provide capacity training sessions and training workshops to educators, ILST members and ILST co-ordinators. School Management Teams, School Principals, ILSTs, educators, parents, friends, community members and other professionals within the community are advised to create and cultivate a positive relationship amongst themselves, in order to contribute positively to the effective establishment and functioning of ILSTs. Within these partnerships, each component or member needs to fulfil a specific role to create an atmosphere conducive to effective learner support and intervention. An important link within these partnerships is the ILST co-ordinator.

Research results highlighted that the ILST co-ordinator plays a pivotal role within the ILST. In Chapter 3, section 3.3.2, Landsberg, (2005:67) stated that the ILST co-ordinator should evaluate and monitor the size, procedure and work of the team, to enhance the functioning of the ILST. Discussions in Chapter 3, section 3.3.2 indicated that the ILST co-ordinator should ensure close collaboration between various stakeholders, to ensure effective learner support and intervention at the school. The ILST co-ordinator should link the ILST with other school based management structures, the DBST and other professionals within the community to create harmony and collaboration within learner support ventures.

With reference to research results and for the effective establishment and functioning of ILST, schools are advised to appoint an ILST co-ordinator, who will be responsible for the management and administration of the team. This person may be an educator at the school, or schools can appoint a learner support educator based on their staff

establishment, as discussed in Chapter 3, section 3.6. The co-ordinator (or learner support educator), should be identified to take responsibility for the organization of this team. In addition to this, this person should serve the needs of the team (Landsberg, 2005:67 and Department of Education, 2009:19).

The ILST co-ordinator and team members of the ILST must be able to function well in a team structure and have skills in collaboration, problem solving and essential knowledge regarding identification and intervention.

Schools are advised to ensure that ILST members be a group of people who have learnt to support and trust one another as they share information with each other instead of keeping it to themselves. This team shares its resources, special talents and strengths to allow people to work together and increase their work morale or ethics. ILST's should be able to become an effective learner support structure with the support and guidance of the DBST. The following section will provide guiding principles to the DBST.

5.3.5 Guiding principles on the role of the DBST

Research results highlighted the importance of the DBST in learner support. The discussion in Chapter 1, section 1.10.2 affirmed the perspective of research participants as it described the DBST as the core learner support provider at District Level. In Chapter 3, section 3.8.3, Muthukrishna (2001:49) described the DBST as a multi-disciplinary team, working together and incorporating community members in support of the ILST.

Based on literature and research results, DBSTs are advised to utilise their ability and authority to establish a multi-disciplinary, multi-layered support structure for effective learner support and intervention. This means that the DBST should incorporate all inhabitants of the various systems with their sub-systems, to establish the support structures needed for effective learner support and intervention. Parents, the school and the community at large should all be part of learner support initiatives and activities. To accomplish this, DBSTs should collaborate with ILSTs and other professionals in the community, parents, educators and other role players who are actively involved in learner support. Additionally, DBSTs are advised to utilise the

expertise available at Special Schools as discussed in Chapter 3, section 3.8.2. By doing this, relationships can be established between people involved in learner support. If DBSTs do not collaborate with ILSTs and other professionals involved in learner support, they will not be able to establish relationships with the stakeholders involved in learner support. If no relationship exists between the stakeholders, they will not be able to work together towards a common goal.

Collaboration between stakeholders can enhance in-service training opportunities for ILSTs. Research results revealed that the DBST, in close collaboration with other professionals within the community, should provide capacity building sessions for educators, parents, ILST members and ILST co-ordinators. According to Lomofsky, et.al., (2001:313) and Johnson, et.al.,(2007:162), as discussed in Chapter 3, section 3.8.2, DBSTs should use community resources in addressing the needs of parents, ILSTs and educators. The philosophy of the DBST should be to share their expertise and encourage team-based collaboration across a wide range of role players

Based on research results the DBST is advised to provide training sessions for parents, educators and ILST co-ordinators and members. DBST should utilise the help and assistance of other professionals within the community, as well as Special Schools as Resources Centres, as discussed in Chapter 3, section 3.8.2. By doing this, the DBST will enable ILST co-ordinators, ILST members, parents and educators to acquire the necessary skills, knowledge and experience to support, guide and assist educators and learners to overcome barriers to learning. Learners will benefit from this training as the DBSTs support learners indirectly through the ILST.

It is therefore evident that DBST collaboration with other stakeholders involved in learner support can have a ripple effect and positively influence ILSTs, educators, other professionals and parents. For example, DBSTs will train ILSTs, ILSTs will equip educators with skills and knowledge, in turn educators will be able to build the capacity of parents as discussed in section 5.2.3.

In Chapter 2, section 2.5 Swart, et al., (2005:9) and Engelbrecht, et al.,(1999:3) state that Inclusive Education addresses social life in its totality and does not concentrate on education only. The use of an eco-systemic perspective, such as Bronfenbrenner's eco-systemic theory, could therefore be meaningful in understanding Inclusive

Education. As mentioned before, Donald, et al., (2002:57-58) consider the school as part of a social system, therefore interrelated social systems need to support the school in delivering effective learner support, as all systems are essential in the development of the individual learner.

With the above-mentioned in mind, the successful establishment and functioning of the ILST are only attainable once support structures within the school work together towards effective learner support. School Principals, SMTs, SGBs, ILSTs and educators need to create collaborative opportunities, where they can collaborate with one another, with parents and with professionals within communities on a regular basis. Such collaboration should concentrate on learner support, learner behaviour and learner achievement. The following Figure (Figure 5.6 on the following page) demonstrates the support needed within the school, for the effective establishment and functioning of the ILST. Figure 5.6 indicate that the school principal SMT, SGB, ILST, educators and parents are in need of each other for effective learner support and intervention. The micro and mesosystem, is also dependent on the exo and macrosystem which will be discussed in section 5.4.

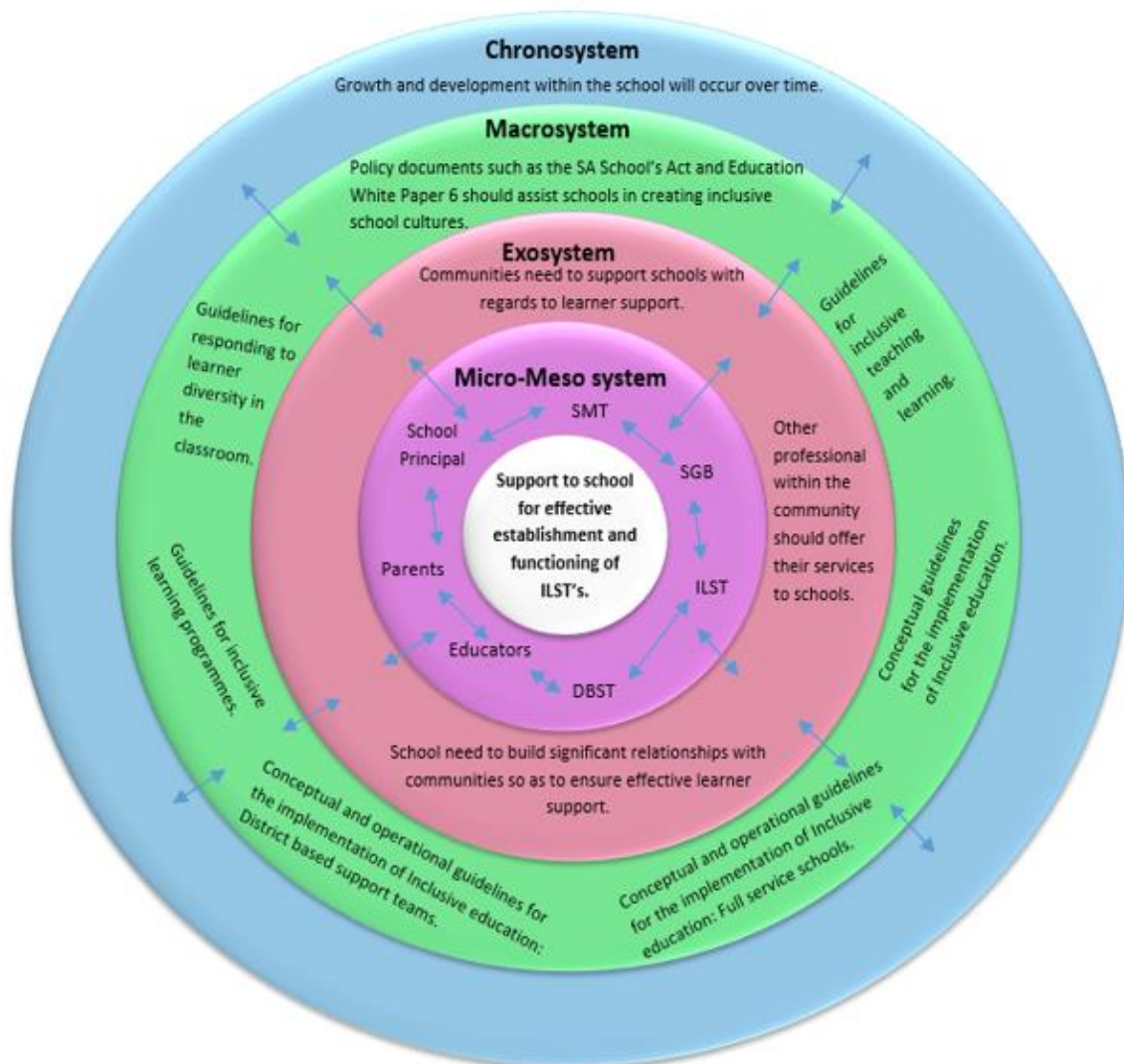


Figure 5.6 Support needed within the school and community based on Bronfenbrenner’s eco-systemic theory

The core of Figure 5.6 illustrates the support needs of the school and community for the effective establishment and functioning of the ILST. The different systems are represented by different colours. The inhabitants of the micro and mesosystems are the SMT, SGB, ILST, DBST, educators, parents and School Principals. The arrows demonstrate the connection between the inhabitants of the micro and mesosystem. These arrows pointing in both directions, illustrates the mutual relationship that needs to exist between the inhabitants of the various systems.

The pink circle, representing the exosystem, will be discussed in detail in section, 5.4. The green circle, representing the macrosystem, contains various policy documents

relevant to the support needs of parents, learners, educators, SGBs, SMTs ILST s and communities as discussed in Chapter 2, section 2.4. Lastly, the blue circle, representing the chronosystem indicates that time has an influence on the growth and development of support structures at schools, such as the ILST.

The different systems are represented as circles in different colours, with arrows extending beyond systems. This illustrates the interrelatedness and reciprocal relationships between the various systems and their sub-systems.

5.3.6 Summary of the guiding principles for schools

Guiding principles to establish an inclusive school culture

- Leadership within the school, which includes the School Principal, SMT, SGB and ILST, should take the lead and embrace a whole-school developmental approach in creating an inclusive school culture.
- Schools to establish and ensure inclusive policies and practices that cater for learner diversity and where all learners are granted the opportunity to access education.
- Learners, educators, parents and the community should know that all learners matter, all learners can achieve and therefore all learners should benefit from instruction.

Guiding principles on how various role players can collaborate

- School Principals, SMTs, SGBs, ILSTs and educators need to create opportunities to collaborate with each other, with parents and with communities on a regular basis. Such collaboration should concentrate on learner support, learner behaviour and the academic performance of learners.
- A collaborative team approach towards learner support should be embraced as ILSTs collaborate with DBSTs and other professionals within the community on a regular basis.

Guiding principles on how to address challenging behaviour

- Schools should adopt and frequently re-visit the school's code of conduct that sets out disciplinary procedures. Learners should be aware of the school's code of conduct.
- Schools should introduce behaviour support models such as SWPBS. In so doing schools will specify policy implementation regarding disciplinary procedures.
- Educators, parents and community members should teach learners socially acceptable behaviour and lay down consistent rules and regulations at school, at home and within the community.

Guiding principles for the effective establishment and functioning of the ILST

- The DBSTs and School Principals need to inform ILSTs of their roles and responsibilities. ILST members, in close collaboration with the School Principal and SMT, need to appoint an ILST co-ordinator to manage and administer ILSTs activities.
- The ILST co-ordinator, SMT and Schools Principals need to create opportunities for educators to develop their skills and knowledge on how to address barriers to learning.
- The ILSTs should recruit parents, community members and other professionals within the community as members.
- The ILSTs should keep regular contact with the DBST.

Guiding principles on the role of the DBST

- The DBSTs should use their ability and authority to establish a multi-layered, multi-disciplinary support structure needed for learner support and intervention.
- The DBSTs should collaborate with ILSTs and other professionals within the community. By doing this, DBSTs will render support to schools.
- The DBSTs should provide training and capacity building sessions to ILSTs, educators and other professionals within the communities.

5.4 GUIDING PRINCIPLES FOR THE COMMUNITY

Schools can have a positive influence on the community and the community can have a positive influence on the schools when all involved in learner support make a positive contribution to learner support and intervention. However, research results revealed that communities are not actively involved in learner support at school. This reality is a concern as some educator participants were of the opinion that community involvement in learner support is of the utmost importance if schools envisage the effective establishment and functioning of ILSTs. The importance of community involvement in learner support was further accentuated in policy documents and acts as discussed in Chapter 2 section 2.4.

According to Bronfenbrenner's eco-systemic theory, the theoretical framework of this study, communities represents the exosystem, as discussed in Chapter 2 section 2.6.5.3 and indicated in Figure 5.6 Bornman, et al., (2010:9) and Swart, et al., (2005:11, 81), as discussed in Chapter 2 section 2.6.5.3, state that the learner is not actively involved within this system but that the learner may be influenced by what happens within the system. Figure 5.6 shows that the learner is not actively involved in the system, but it may affect the learner in some way or the other. Within the exosystem as indicated in Figure 5.6, communities need to support schools with regards to learner support and intervention. Communities need to build significant relationships with schools, so as to ensure effective learner support and intervention.

Based on research results, as discussed in Chapter 4 section 4.4.1.3, and the literature discussed in Chapter 2 section 2.4, and Chapter 3 section 3.4 and 3.8, it is evident that learner support requires the active involvement of communities. The study highlighted that learner support does not only refer to the educator in the classroom or the parent at home assisting the learner. Effective learner support requires the assistance, support and guidance from community members and other professionals within the community. It is evident that learner support needs to be expanded beyond the home and the classroom and therefore community involvement in learner support may strengthen intervention activities and enhance the effective establishment and functioning of ILSTs.

After an analysis of research results, it became apparent that communities are in need of guiding principles with regards to their role and responsibility in learner support. The researcher therefore formulated the following guiding principles to communities as visually presented in Figure 5.7.

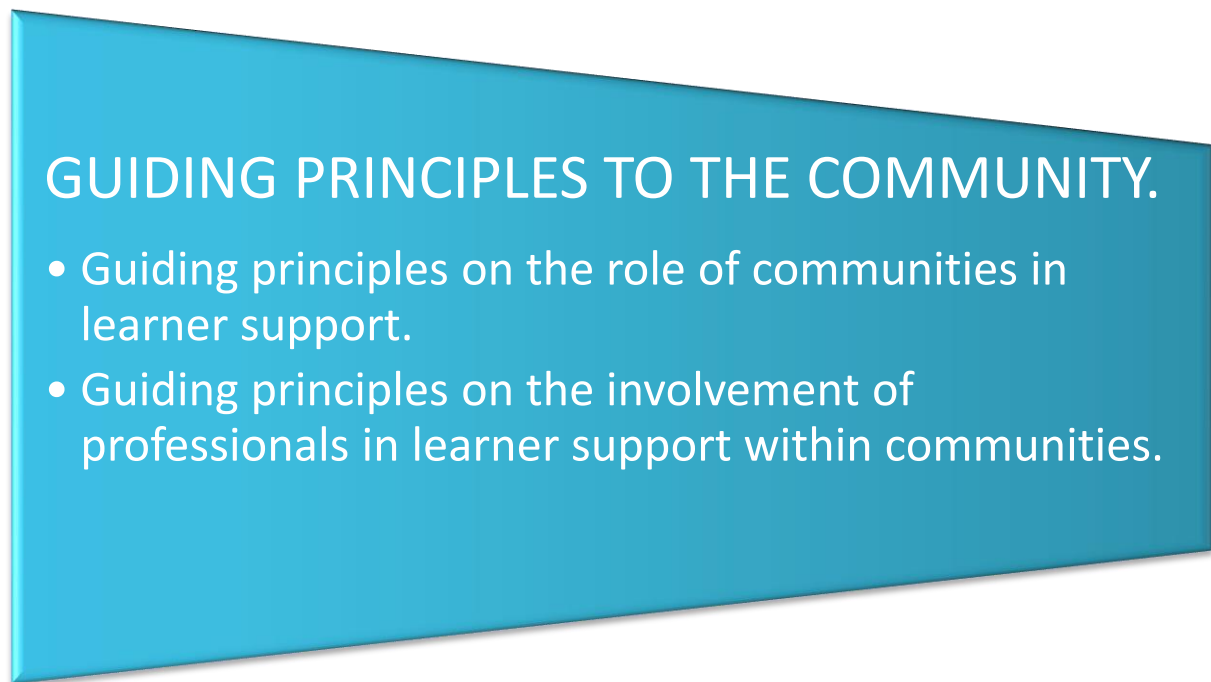


Figure 5.7 Guiding principles to communities

The above is a visual presentation of guiding principles to communities. These principles will now be discussed.

5.4.1 Guiding principles on the role of the community in learner support

Research results reflected in Chapter 4 section 4.4.1.3 revealed that parents and schools are in need of assistance and support from communities for learner support and intervention. Figure 5.1 visually illustrated that linkages between parents, the school and community needs to exist for effective learner support and intervention. Research results affirmed that linkages between the community, the school and parents may enhance learner support and intervention initiatives. These linkages will

be to the benefit of the learner as parents, schools and communities will work together towards a communal goal. It is therefore evident that parents, the school and the community need to work in close collaboration with each other for the effective establishment and functioning of Institutional Level Support Teams. The visual presentations in Figures 5.5 and 5.6 indicate that communities need to support and assist parents and the school. This can be done by means of Parent Support Groups guided by Psychologist within the community. Schools are part of communities therefore communities should be involved in learner support.

Furthermore, the South African Schools Act, as discussed in Chapter 2 section 2.4.3, states that all stakeholders in education must accept communal responsibility for quality education. Stakeholders within education may include SGBs, Churches, Professional Organizations the Business Fraternity and Municipalities. The SGBs, representing the parent component in school governance and administration, are one of the most important stakeholders in education within communities. The core role and responsibility of the SGB compels them to be active participants in the life of the learners and the school at large. Decisions they take may influence the programmes of the school. One such example is their role with regards to the adoption of a code of conduct for the school. The code of conduct adopted by the SGB needs to address the needs, aims and goals of the school.

Based on the research results, SGBs are advised to support the school in its endeavour to guide, develop and support the learner in its totality. The SGBs need to support the School Principal, Educators, SMTs, ILSTs and other professionals in the community involved in learner support, in their endeavour to create a school culture conducive to effective learner support and intervention. SGBs should take ownership of community schools and request help and support from other role players within communities such Churches, the Business Fraternity and Municipalities.

Additionally, the above-mentioned stakeholders should adopt and own learner support intervention programmes. These stakeholders should offer their support to school and collaborate with schools with regards to learner support programmes. In this regard Education White Paper 6, as discussed in Chapter 2 section 2.4.6, clearly state that communities' and all other stakeholders should participate vigorously in education support initiatives. In so doing, stakeholders may contribute positively to learner

support and the improvement of learner behaviour and scholastic progress. Such support may pave the way for holistic and effective learner support and intervention.

For communities to fulfil their role and responsibility in learner support, they should be guided and supported by learner support structures within and beyond the school such as the ILST, the Learner Support Educator (LSE) and the DBST. Discussions in Chapter 3, section 3.6 indicated that the LSE in close collaboration with the ILST needs to liaise with other professionals within the community. The LSE needs to get communities involved in learner support. Research results in Chapter 4 section 4.4.1.1 indicated that ILSTs invited Educational Psychologist and Master Student to converse with parents regarding learner support and intervention. These research results point out that the LSE and ILSTs can influence learner support initiatives positively within communities.

Based on research results ILSTs, in close collaboration with the DBST, are advised to arrange developmental opportunities within communities. Communities are encouraged to become actively involved in learner support initiatives. DBSTs are advised to organise advocacy and information sharing sessions within communities regarding their roles and responsibilities in learner support. During these information sharing sessions DBSTs should collaborate with parents, educators, schools and professionals within the community to ensure that all stakeholders are engaged in learner support.

The importance of collaboration between the school, ILST, DBST and the community as discussed in Chapter 3 section 3.5.3 cannot be over-emphasized. Donald, et al., (1997:21) and Swart, et al., (2001:81), in Chapter 3 section 3.5.3, state that collaboration between the school and community may pave the way for schools to become inclusive beacons of hope for the community, where learner and community needs are addressed. Communities are advised to collaborate with schools in their surrounding area on a regular basis. Collaboration between communities and the school may result in the establishment of a shared vision and goal for learner support and intervention.

Communities actively involved in learner support can develop to such an extent that they realise that learner needs are diverse and that an ethos of inclusivity within

communities should be embraced to address the diverse needs of all learners within the school and community. Research results revealed that some community members are actively involved in learner support, as indicated in Chapter 4 section 4.4.1.3. Community members involved in these projects felt that their involvement in learner support can make a marked difference in the scholastic performance of learners.

It is therefore evident that community involvement in learner support may result in:

- Improved learner attainment.
- Improved school attendance of learners.
- Decreased behavioural challenges.
- Increased parental involvement.
- Improved learner achievements.
- Improved learner enrolment.
- Communities may appreciate school projects.

5.4.2 Guiding principles on the involvement of professionals in learner support within communities

The involvement of community professionals in learner support within schools is of utmost importance as schools are in need of their skills and knowledge. Research results indicated that schools are in need of help, support and guidance from other professionals within the community for the effective establishment and functioning of Institutional Level Support Teams. In this regard sections 5.3.4 and 5.3.5 illustrate that other professionals within communities is of utmost importance for the effective establishment and functioning of ILSTs.

According to the White Paper on an Integrated National Disability Strategy for South Africa, as discussed in Chapter 2, section 2.4.4, various stakeholders need to embrace their responsibility towards people with disabilities or challenges. One such stakeholder group are other professionals within the communities who should engage with parents and the school within the community, as discussed in sections 5.2 and 5.3.

Based on the above-mentioned research results, professionals within communities are advised to avail their services to parents and the school. Professionals within the community may guide parents, educators, ILSTs and DBSTs in delivering effective learner support and intervention. Furthermore, discussions in Chapter 3, section 3.3.3 demonstrate that professionals within communities should be part of the ILSTs. The role of other professionals within the ILST should be twofold. Firstly, professionals need to assist ILSTs in generating innovative solutions to challenges experienced within the ILST. Secondly, professionals are advised to share their specialised knowledge, skills and experiences with the ILST. One such example may be the services of an Occupational Therapist within the ILST. This Occupational Therapist may inform educators, parents, the ILST and DBST on the importance of fine and gross motor development within the early years of the child. Figure 5.6 indicated that professionals within the community should offer their services to schools.

It is therefore apparent that other professionals may increase the ability of educators, parents, ILST and DBST members, as these individuals may bring about growth and development within learner support structures. Other professionals are able to contribute positively to the growth and development of the ILST. Growth and development within the ILST may, in turn, augment the abilities of educators, parents, ILST members and DBST members in addressing the diverse needs of learners within the school, the classroom and the community at large.

The close collaboration between the ILST, DBST, parents, educators and LSEs and professionals within the community may facilitate the development a multi-disciplinary ILST whose vision and goal it is to create and sustain a holistic approach to learner support and intervention.

5.4.3 Summary of guiding principles to communities

- Effective learner support requires the active participation of community members and other professionals within communities to be involved in learner intervention and support structures and initiatives. Communities should be linked to schools in the community as community involvement may strengthen learner support activities.

- SGB's who represent the parents within communities need to support the school in their endeavours and to link the school with other role players within communities such as Churches, the business fraternity, Municipalities and political parties.
- LSEs ILSTs and DBSTs need to guide communities in fulfilling their role and responsibility in learner support. Collaboration between all stakeholders are thus of utmost importance if all stakeholders wish to contribute effectively to learner support and intervention.
- Community involvement in learner support should be intentional and goal orientated.
- Other professionals within communities should avail their services to parents and the school. They should be part of the ILST and support the ILST in their endeavours.
- The contribution of other professionals within communities to the ILST may increase the abilities of educators, parents, ILSTs and DBSTs in addressing the diverse needs of learners within the school.

5.5 SUMMARY

In Chapter 5, the results of the study, the theoretical framework of the study and the literature reviews done in Chapter 2 and 3 were utilized to propose guiding principles for the effective establishment and functioning of Institutional Level Support Teams at primary schools within the Uitenhage District.

Guiding principles were provided to parents, the school and the community. The following chapter will provide concluding remarks and recommendations of the study.

CHAPTER 6 OUTLINE:

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE STUDY



CHAPTER 6

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE STUDY

6.1 INTRODUCTION

This Chapter will provide concluding statements and recommendations with the aim of improving the current learning support practices within an Inclusive Education setting. The recommendations are based on the literature reviews reported on in Chapters 2 and 3, the research results reflected in Chapter 4, and the guiding principles proposed in Chapter 5.

The literature review in Chapter 2 on Inclusive Education and Bronfenbrenner's eco-systemic theory acknowledge the dynamic interconnectedness of multiple systems within an eco-systemic framework. This study made use of an eco-systemic theoretical framework for the provisioning of learning support in an Inclusive Education system. As Senior Education Specialist, (SES), I established that schools do not use the ILST optimally and therefore they are unable to provide effective support within an inclusive setting.

An evaluation was done on the functioning of the ILST at the present moment.

6.2 SUMMARY OF CHAPTERS

Chapter 1 provided a general introduction to the study. The problem and sub-problems were stated and the aim of the study and the research methodology were discussed. In addition, the ethical considerations and the validity and reliability for the study were mentioned. A discussion followed on the theoretical framework underpinning this study, thereafter sampling and data analysis were stated and explained. In the last section of this chapter, the key concepts and study programme were clarified.

Chapter 2 contained a literature review on the Inclusive Education Policy in South-Africa as well as Bronfenbrenner's eco-systemic theory. The chapter explored the historical overview and the policies substantiating Inclusive Education. Furthermore,

the chapter incorporated the eco-systemic theory with specific reference to the four nested systems.

The literature review done in **Chapter 3** focused on learner support within an inclusive, holistic and integrated support structure. An in-depth discussion followed on what learner support entails and the establishment of ILSTs at schools to strengthen the provision of learner support, as recommended in the Education White Paper 6. This was followed by a discussion on the importance of collaboration between all role players for effective learner support and intervention. Finally, this chapter provided strategies for ensuring the implementation of Inclusive Education.

Chapter 4 provides a detailed analysis and interpretation of data collected through observations, questionnaires and semi-structured interviews. Data was analysed using Tesch's step-by-step data analyses process. Themes and sub-themes emerged from the data and were presented as the results of the study. Lastly, research results were discussed and presented in this chapter.

In **Chapter 5**, the researcher discussed the results of the study. The literature reviews in Chapters 2 and 3 were utilized to propose guiding principles for the effective establishment and functioning of the ILST at primary schools. Guiding principles were provided for parents, schools and communities.

Chapter 6 provided concluding statements and recommendations of the study. Recommendations are based on literature reviews done in Chapters 2 and 3, the research results in Chapter 4 and the guiding principles proposed in Chapter 5.

6.3 CONCLUSIONS

From the research results conclusions were drawn in relation to the sub-problems.

6.3.1 First sub-problem

Which guiding principles does the literature on Inclusive Education provide for the establishment of Institutional Level Support Teams (ILST s) in schools?

In Chapter 2, various policy documents and policies were discussed, indicating the need for support structures within schools. These policy documents, such as the Education White Paper 6 (discussed in Chapter 2, section 2.4.6), provided guidance for the establishment of effective learner support structures at all schools. These documents highlighted the importance of parental, school and community involvement in learner support, in so doing, the effective establishment and functioning of ILSTs may be enhanced. Policy documents discussed in Chapter 2, section 2.4 were utilized to provide guiding principles to schools, parents and communities for the effective establishment and functioning of ILSTs.

Additionally, the theoretical framework of this study, namely Bronfenbrenner's eco-systemic theory, highlighted the need for a systemic approach for effective learner support and intervention. Literature in Chapter 2 indicated that an eco-systemic approach to learner support can bring about effective support structures at all schools such as ILSTs, as parents, schools and communities will work in close collaboration with one another.

6.3.2 Second sub-problem

What can be derived from a literature review on learner support?

In Chapter 3, the second sub-problem was addressed. Literature in Chapter 3, section 3.3.1 provided guidelines on the purpose and goal of ILSTs. Furthermore, literature discussed in Chapter 3, sections 3.3.2 and 3.3.3, stipulated the roles and responsibilities of team members and expanded on the procedures that need to be followed within learner support teams.

Additionally, literature on learner support accentuated the need for collaborative practices within Inclusive Education for the effective establishment and functioning of learner support teams such as ILSTs (See Chapter 3, section 3.5). Literature discussed in Chapter 3, section 3.4, provided guidance to learner support teams on

how to address challenging behaviours at school and indicated what strategies and support structures are available to provide effective learner support and intervention.

Literature within Chapters 2 and 3 were used by the researcher to provide guiding principles for parents, schools and communities for effective learner support and intervention (See Chapter 5, section 5.2 – 5.4). The need for guiding principles for parents, schools and communities was identified in Chapter 4. Research results in Chapter 4 highlighted gaps in the establishment and functioning of ILSTs that had to be addressed in Chapter 5.

6.3.3 Third and Fourth Sub-problem

Third sub-problem

What problems do schools encounter in the establishment of their Institutional Level Support Teams?

Fourth sub-problem

Why do schools experience problems in the establishment of Institutional Level Support Teams?

Chapter 4, section 4.4.2.3, indicated that the majority of respondents in this study agreed that schools encounter challenges with the effective establishment and functioning of ILSTs. They mentioned that various factors contribute to challenges in establishing ILSTs at schools. Some of the challenges mentioned by research participants included systemic challenges, educator challenges and the non-involvement of parents in learner support and intervention.

On the other hand, the researcher detected a few schools that portray a positive attitude and commitment to inclusivity did not experience many challenges with the establishment and functioning of their ILSTs. At these schools, learner support is regarded as fundamental and important. The SMT and School Principal set the example at the schools and the educators followed suit. These schools include parents and the community members in learner support structures such as ILSTs.

Consequently, the researcher established guiding principles for the effective establishment and functioning of ILSTs as discussed in Chapter 5, section 5.3.4. The guiding principles were based on literature discussed in Chapter 2 and 3 as well as on research results discussed in Chapter 4, section 4.4.2.3.

6.3.4 Fifth sub-problem

What support systems need to be implemented at school to accommodate learners with barriers to learning within an Inclusive Education system?

The theoretical framework of this study, which is Bronfenbrenner's eco-systemic theory, as discussed in Chapter 2, section 2.5, indicated that all systems and sub-systems influence each other. Therefore all role players within the life of the child should be part of support structures implemented at school level, since all of them are able to make a positive contribution in the support of children. This means that if parents, schools and communities participate positively in learner support initiatives they should support all learners experiencing barriers to learning to reach their full potential.

Literature discussed in Chapter 3, indicated that it would be beneficial to learners if support systems such as the SIAS process as well as School-wide Positive Behaviour Support are implemented at all schools to accommodate learners who experience various challenges. Additionally, support structures such as Full Service Schools, Special Schools as Resource Centres as well as District Based Support Teams (DBST's), as discussed in Chapter 3, section 3.8.1 – 3.8.3, need to be in place within all districts to address learner diversity.

Research results, in Chapter 4, section 4.4.2, indicated that ILSTs need to be in place at all schools to deal with learner, educator and school needs. Inclusive Education policy documents, such as the Education White Paper 6, discussed in Chapter 2, section 2.4.6, affirmed such practices by stating that ILSTs should be established at all schools to support all learners within an Inclusive Education setting.

6.3.5. Sixth sub-problem

How can schools enhance the practice of an effective Institutional Level Support Team?

The guiding principles the researcher established and discussed in Chapter 5, section 5.2.-.5.4, provided guidelines for parents, schools and communities to execute an integrated support system at school level. Parents, educators and communities are advised to be part of support structures, the ILST in this study, at all schools.

The researcher arrived at these guiding principles from literature discussed in Chapters 2 and 3, as well as from the research results discussed in Chapter 4. Parents should realise that they need the educators in their endeavour to support their children. In turn, educators indicated that they need parental involvement for successful learner support and intervention. Furthermore, all stakeholders at schools acknowledged that they are in need of community involvement, whilst communities indicated that they would like to establish links with schools in the community.

6.4 RECOMMENDATIONS

As mentioned before, the study focused on the effective establishment and functioning of ILSTs. Research results indicated that all learners, including those who experience barriers to learning, should be supported by the ILST in close collaboration with parents, schools and communities. Learner support collaboration between parents, the school and the community may lead to improved scholastic progress and enhance the social behaviour of all learners. In light of the results and conclusions of this study, the following recommendations are made:

Towards parents:

- Parents should respond positively to requests made by the class educator, SMTs, School Principals and SGBs to attend school meetings and activities.
- Parents should work in close collaboration with class educators, SMTs, SGBs and School Principals so that they are well informed about what

happens at school. Additionally, parents need to get to know the class educators of their children.

- Parents should attend capacity building sessions arranged by the school and other professionals within the community, for educational growth and development.
- Parents need to have daily discussions with their children regarding general school matters, in so doing they are creating home conditions conducive to teaching and learning.
- Parents should instil the principles of respect, honour and good behaviour in their children. Schools and communities should support parents in this regard by employing the same norms and values at home, at school and within the community.
- Parents need to take personal responsibility of their children once they have been guided.
- Parents should establish a good working relationship with the educators of their children to collaborate successfully with them regarding their childrens' scholastic progress.

Towards schools:

Class educators

- Class educators must establish healthy relationships with parents, SMTs, SGBs, ILSTs, School Principals and communities.
- Class educators must attend capacity building sessions arranged by the ILST.
- Class educators should create an inclusive school culture within their classrooms, showing children that all learners matter, irrespective of their ability or disability.
- Educators should collaborate with each other, as well as with ILSTs, SMTs and School Principles on a regular basis, addressing learning challenges within the classroom.

- Class educators should display the classroom code of conduct and school code-of-conduct to ensure that learners are aware of such disciplinary measures.
- Class educators should consult the ILST when they experience challenges with learners, as the ILST is collectively responsible for support to learners.
- Class educators should embrace a collaborative role in creating an inclusive classroom that accommodates learner diversity.

School Management Teams (SMTs)

- School Management Teams should establish healthy relationships with parents, educators, SGBs, ILSTs, communities and School Principals for effective learner support and intervention.
- School Management Teams should arrange capacity building sessions for ILST members and educators.
- School Management Teams can arrange this with the help and guidance of the DBST.
- School Management Teams should take the lead in creating an inclusive school culture.
- School Management Teams should collaborate with educators, ILSTs and School Principals frequently to address learner needs and render effective learner support and intervention.
- School Management Teams should set out disciplinary procedures as learners should be aware of such disciplinary measures.

School Governing Bodies (SGBs)

- School Governing Bodies should establish healthy relationships with parents, educators, SMTs, ILSTs, communities and School Principals for effective learner support and intervention.
- School Governing Bodies should participate in capacity building sessions arranged by SMTs in close collaboration with the ILST to establish effective learner support teams such as ILSTs.

- School Governing Bodies should support School Principals, SMTs and ILSTs in creating an inclusive school culture.
- School Governing Bodies should collaborate regularly with SMTs and School Principals to address learner needs and learner support initiatives.
- School Governing Bodies should participate in drafting disciplinary procedures, as they need to know the disciplinary procedures and measures applied at the school.

Institutional Level Support Teams (ILSTs)

- Institutional Level Support Teams to establish healthy relationships with parents, educators, community members, SGBs, DBSTs, SMTs and School Principals for effective learner support and intervention.
- Institutional Level Support Teams to arrange capacity building sessions for educators, parents and ILST members in connection with learner support and intervention.
- Institutional Level Support Teams to support the School Principal and SMT in creating an inclusive school culture.
- Institutional Level Support Teams to collaborate frequently with parents, class educators, SMTs and School Principals in support of learner intervention and support.
- Institutional Level Support Teams to maintain regular contact with the DBST.
- Institutional Level Support Teams to implement SIAS process at their respective schools.

School Principals

- School Principals should establish healthy relationships with parents, educators, community members, SGBs, DBSTs, ILSTs and SMTs for effective learner support and intervention.
- School Principals in collaboration with the SMT should arrange capacity building sessions for ILSTs and educators. School Principals and SMTs can arrange this with the help and guidance of the DBST.

- School Principals should take the lead in establishing an inclusive school culture at schools.
- School Principals should collaborate regularly with ILSTs and SMTs in connection with learner intervention and support.
- School Principals should set out disciplinary procedures, as learners should be aware of such disciplinary measures.
- School Principals should ensure the effective establishment and functioning of ILSTs.
- School Principals should appoint an ILST co-ordinator to manage and administer the ILST.

District Based Support Teams (DBSTs)

- District Based Support Teams should establish healthy relationships with ILSTs.
- District Based Support Teams should provide capacity building sessions to ILSTs. Such capacity building sessions address the needs of the ILST.
- District Based Support Teams should collaborate with ILSTs, SMTs and School Principals on a regular basis to address learner intervention and support activities.
- District Based Support Teams need to inform School Principals and ILST co-ordinators on the role and responsibility of ILSTs.
- District Based Support Teams should implement SIAS processes.

Towards communities:

- Communities should establish linkages with schools in the community, as community involvement may strengthen learner support and intervention initiatives.
- Communities should instill the principles of respect, honour and good behaviour in children. Communities should support parents and schools in this regard.
- Community involvement in learner support must be intentional and goal orientated.

- Communities should collaborate with schools in the community, as this may cultivate a healthy relationship between the community and the school. Collaboration between all stakeholders is of utmost importance for effective learner support and intervention.
- The active participation of community members and other professionals within communities is of utmost importance for effective learner support and intervention.
- School Governing Bodies should link the school with other role players within communities such as Churches, the Business Fraternity and Municipalities.
- Learner Support Educators, ILSTs and DBSTs should guide communities in fulfilling their roles and responsibilities in learner support.
- Professionals within communities should avail their services to parents and the school.

6.5 CONCLUDING REMARKS

The aim of the study was to provide guiding principles for the effective establishment and functioning of ILSTs at primary schools within the Uitenhage District. Literature reviews in Chapters 2 and 3 provided guidance on Inclusive Education and guidance on learner support structures such as ILSTs.

The researcher made use of literature reviews, various data collection strategies, as well as an empirical study in Chapter 4, to establish guiding principles for the effective establishment and functioning of ILSTs. Research results indicated that parents, educators and communities need guidance on how to provide effective support to learners, thereby enhancing the effect of ILSTs.

The study revealed that ILSTs need to embrace a systems approach to learner support, where parents, schools and communities contribute positively to learner support and intervention initiatives. Research results indicated that various systems and sub-systems are interrelated as indicated in Bronfenbrenner's eco-systemic theory, the theoretical framework of this study. In practice this means that, whatever happens at home will have a profound influence on the scholastic life of the child and whatever happens at school will influence the child at home.

Based on the above, it is imperative that all role players such as parents, schools and communities are aware and able to execute their roles and responsibilities in learner support and intervention. The researcher therefore provided guiding principles for parents, schools and communities on effective learner support and intervention. These ensure the effective establishment and functioning of ILST at school level where parents, educators and communities can work together, assisting learners to overcome their barriers to learning. These role players need to accept and embrace their roles and responsibilities in learner support to ensure the effective establishment and functioning of the ILSTs.

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APPENDIX A: RESEARCH ETHICS APPROVAL (HUMAN) – NMMU



**Nelson Mandela
Metropolitan
University**

for tomorrow

FACULTY OF EDUCATION

Tel. +27 (0)41 504 2125
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21 May 2012
Ms C Van Niekerk / Dr C Pienaar
Education Faculty
NMMU

Dear Ms Van Niekerk / Dr Pienaar

**SUPPORTIVE GUIDELINES FOR THE EFFECTIVE ESTABLISHMENT OF INSTITUTIONAL
LEVEL SUPPORT TEAMS AT PRIMARY SCHOOLS IN THE UITENHAGE DISTRICT.**

Your above-entitled application for ethics approval was approved by the Faculty Research, Technology and Innovation Committee of Education (ERTIC) meeting on 8 May 2012.

We take pleasure in informing you that the application was approved by the Committee.

The ethics clearance reference number is **H12-EDU-ERE-013**.

We wish you well with the project. Please inform your co-investigators of the outcome, and convey our best wishes.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'J Elliott-Gentry'.

**Ms J Elliott-Gentry
Secretary: ERTIC**

- d. you will make all the arrangements concerning your research;
 - e. the research may not be conducted during official contact time, as educators' programmes should not be interrupted;
 - f. should you wish to extend the period of research after approval has been granted, an application to do this must be directed to the Director, Strategic Planning Policy Research and Secretarial Services;
 - g. the research may not be conducted during the fourth school term, except in cases where a special well motivated request is received;
 - h. your research will be limited to those schools or institutions for which approval has been granted;
 - i. you present the Department with a copy of your final paper/report/dissertation/thesis free of charge in hard copy and electronic format. This must be accompanied by a separate synopsis (maximum 2 – 3 typed pages) of the most important findings and recommendations if it does not already contain a synopsis. This must also be in an electronic format.
 - j. you are requested to provide the above to the Director, The Strategic Planning Policy Research and Secretarial Services upon completion of your research.
 - k. you comply to all the requirements as completed in the Terms and Conditions to conduct Research in the ECDoE document completed by you.
 - l. you comply with your ethical undertaking (commitment form).
 - m. You submit on a six monthly basis, from the date of permission of the research, concise reports to the Director, Strategic Planning Policy Research and Secretarial Services.
3. The Department wishes you well in your undertaking. You can contact the Director, Dr. Annetia Heckroodt on 043 702 7428 or mobile number 083 271 0715 and email: annetia_heckroodt@edu.ec.gov.za should you need any assistance.


Advocate Manna

HEAD OF DEPARTMENT: EDUCATION
11/4/2011

building blocks for growth.

Page 2 of 2 van Nlekerk CE



Access to Information Act

APPENDIX C: REQUEST TO SCHOOL PRINCIPALS TO CONDUCT RESERACH AT SCHOOLS

45 Deon Street
Rowallan Park
Port Elizabeth
6025
May 2011

The Principal

Dear Sir

Re: Request for permission to conduct research in schools

My name is Chantelle Emirina van Niekerk, and I am a part-time M.ED student at the Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University in Port Elizabeth. The research I wish to conduct for my Master dissertation involves the EFFECTIVE ESTABLISHMENT ABD FUBCTIONING OF INSTITUTIONAL LEVEL SUPPORT TEAMS AT PRIMARY SCHOOLS IN THE UITENAGE DISTRICT. This project will be conducted under the supervision of Dr.C.F.Pienaar, NMMU, Port Elizabeth – South Campus.

I am hereby seeking consent from the Principal, Senior Management Team (SMT) and staff to conduct my research at your institution. The research will include interviews, observations and questionnaires with groups and individuals, focusing on the Institutional Level Support Teams.

The aim of the study is to solicit ideas for the enhancement of effective establishment and functioning of Institutional Level Support Teams.

The outcome of this study will have benefits for your school and community, in that it will enable you to have an effective Institutional Level Support Team, supporting both teaching and learning. There is a great need for learner support and intervention, and we as educators, parents and community members have to equip ourselves with the necessary skills to support our children effectively.

Yours in education.

Mrs.C.E.van Niekerk

APPENDIX D: PERMISSION FROM SCHOOLS TO CONDUCT RESEARCH

1 June 2011

Mrs C.E. van Niekerk
45 Deon Street
Rowallan Park
Port Elizabeth
6025

Dear Mrs van Niekerk

REQUEST TO CONDUCT RESEARCH RELATING TO MATERS' DEGREE STUDIES

I have pleasure in informing you that our teaching staff are very happy to be of assistance in the furtherance of your studies relating to institutional level support teams.

They have already completed the questionnaires and I am returning them herewith.

Yours faithfully



Acting Principal

APPENDIX E: SCHOOL PRINCIPAL CONSENT FORM

I give consent for you to approach the ILST co-ordinators, ILST members, educators and SMT members to participate in the study on learner support and the effective establishment and functioning of Institutional Level Support Teams at Primary Schools within the Uitenhage District.

I have read the Research Information Statement explaining the purpose of the research project and understand that:

- The role of the school is voluntarily;
- I may decide to withdraw the school's participation at any given time without negative consequences.
- Only educators who consent will participate in the research.
- All information obtained will be treated in the strictest of confidence.
- The educator's names will not be used and individual educators will not be identifiable in any written reports about the study.
- The school will not be identifiable in any written reports about the study.
- Participants may withdraw from the study at any given time without penalty.
- A report of the findings will be made available to the school on request.
- I may seek further information on the project from Mrs.Chantelle van Niekerk on 084 510 6630.
- The researcher will make arrangements beforehand to visit the participants in order to facilitate data collection.

Principal (print name)

Signature

Date.

Please return to:

Mrs.Chantelle van Niekerk

APPENDIX F: INFORMED CONSENT FORM

PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR

Chantelle van Niekerk.

TITLE OF STUDY.

The effective establishment and functioning of Institutional Level Support Teams (ILSTs) at Primary Schools in the Uitenhage District.

INTRODUCTION

You are being invited to participate in this study to establish guiding principles for the effective establishment and functioning of Institutional Level Support Teams (ILSTs). Please read and review the Interview Schedule and ask questions to clarify any uncertainties. You are free to stop the interview at any time or choose not to answer any question that makes you feel uncomfortable.

PURPOSE

The purpose of this study is to design guiding principles for the effective establishment of Institutional Level Support Teams (ILSTs), empowering educators, parents and communities to address the diverse needs of learners within the classroom.

DURATION

The researcher will do Participant Observations and conduct Semi-structured interviews. The duration of these interviews will be approximately 30-40 minutes.

PROCEDURES

Data will be collected by means of Participant Observations at ILST meetings, Questionnaires will be completed by educators, ILST members, School Principals, and Deputy Principals and interviews will be conducted with ILST co-ordinators. All participants will be given as much time as they feel necessary to respond to questions. With the consent of each participant, interviews will be recorded, using a digital recorder. Interviews will then be transcribed. Copies of transcribed data will be available on request. A concerted effort for confidentiality will be made, as research

participants will not be requested to disclose their names or the name of their schools when answering interview questions or complete questionnaires.

POSSIBLE RISKS/DISCOMFORTS

Participants are free to stop any proceedings during this research if they experience a feeling of discomfort. Participants may stop the interview at any given time and may choose not to answer any question that makes them feel uncomfortable.

POSSIBLE BENEFITS AND/OR COMPENSATION

No participation benefit or forms of compensation are included in this study.

CONTACT FOR QUESTIONS

If you have any questions or concerns, please make contact with Chantelle van Niekerk at 084 510 6630 or Dr.C.F.Pienaar at 041 504 2370.

CONFIDENTIALITY

A concerted effort for confidentiality will be made, as research participants will not be requested to disclose their names or the names of their school when answering interview questions or complete questionnaires. Information on the tape recorder will be discarded immediately after the transcription process. The findings of this study will be published without naming any participant.

INFORMED CONSENT FORM

The nature, intention, purpose and the benefits of this study have been explained to me. I understand what my participation entails and demands. Furthermore, I understand that I am free to ask questions and withdraw from this study at any time, without any negative consequence. I have read and fully understand this consent form. I sign it freely and voluntarily. A signed copy will be given to me upon request.

Signature of participant: _____ **Date:** _____

Signature of researcher: _____ **Date:** _____

Witness: _____ **Date:** _____

APPENDIX G: OBSERVATION SCHEDULE

OBSERVATION SCHEDULE.

Name : Chantelle van Niekerk
Student no. : 193402330
Degree : M.Ed
Year : 2012.

1. School set-up. With specific reference to the SMT, staff establishment and special appointment such as a LSE (learner support educator).
2. General functioning of the ILST.
3. Evidence of ILST meetings, discussion of challenges with regards to educators and learners.
4. General school culture with regards to learner support and intervention.
5. Collaboration within the ILST, between educators, the school and parents, Dept of Health, Social Development as well as other professionals within the community.
6. Societal barriers
7. Systemic barriers.
8. Challenges establishing ILST.
9. If yes, provide reason.
10. Intervention programme in place at the school to support learners experiencing barriers to learning.
11. Referrals to the DBST.
12. Expectations from school to DBST.
13. Projects at school and in community, supporting learners experiencing barriers to learning.

APPENDIX H: EXTRACT OF A COMPLETED OBSERVATION SCHEDULE

COMPLETED OBSERVATION SCHEDULE.

Name : Chantelle van Niekerk
Student no. : 193402330
Degree : M.Ed
Year : 2012.

1.

School set-up. With specific reference to the SMT, staff establishment and special appointment such as a LSE (learner support educator).

The school comprise of a principal, 1 deputy-principal, 4 Head of Departments and Educators. No special appointments such as LSE. The school cannot afford the appointment of SGB posts.

2.

General functioning of the ILST.

The ILST is functioning well at the present moment. The principle and an educator, called the ILST co-ordinator is handling LSEN portfolio at the school. The structure is in place on paper, but not meetings or interaction regarding learners experiencing barriers to learning.

3.

Evidence of ILST meetings, discussion of challenges with regards to educators and learners.

No evidence of ILST meetings. Neither the principle or educators could provide such documentation. The stated that they speak to each other causally reading these learners.

4.

General school culture with regards to learner support and intervention.

Identifies these learners and refers them to the DBST. No teacher intervention and support evidence. Principle mentioned that his staff is not equipped to deal with these learners. They should be placed in Special Schools. I felt that the principle is not really catering for these children at his school.

5.

Collaboration within the ILST, between educators, the school and parents, Dept of Health, Social Development as well as other professionals within the community.

The school do call upon the Social worker in the community if they experience challenges with learners regarding their home conditions. The Department of Health visited the school to offer their services to the school. No effort from the school to establish a relationship with these departments.

6.

Societal barriers

Poverty, alcohol abuse, sexual abuse in the community, physical abuse at home between parents or relatives if they are intoxicated.

7.

Systemic barriers.

Shortage of educators.

8.

Challenges establishing ILST. If yes, provide reason.

It is noticeable that the school is experiencing challenges with the establishment of support structures at the school. This I believe can be due to the negative school culture the school portrays with regards to learner support and intervention. In addition to this, the school principle mentioned that the completion of administration to refer learners to the DBST is just too much. He feels that educators are already overloaded and that all the admin is unnecessary.

9.

Intervention programmes in place at the school to support learners experiencing barriers to learning.

None.

10.

Referrals to the DBST.

Yes, only the learners identified by the class educators.

11.

Expectations from school to DBST.

The principle and educator mentioned that the DBST needs to be more hands on. They should assist all schools with the identification of these learners. He mentioned that the school needs support with common problems at the school.

12.

Projects at school and in community, supporting learners experiencing barriers to learning.

An independent person is actively involved with reading intervention at the school. She operates a computer-aided reading support programme at the school.

APPENDIX I: QUESTIONNAIRE FOR SCHOOLS. (EDUCATORS, SMTs, ILST MEMBERS, SCHOOL PRINCIPALS AND SGBs)

QUESTIONNAIRE (SCHOOL)

Name : Chantelle van Niekerk

Student No : 193402330

Degree : M.Ed.

Year : 2012

What experience do you have with regards to learners experiencing barriers to learning?

What support programmes do you have in place at your school?

In your opinion, what support systems need to be in place at schools to accommodate learners experiencing barriers to learning?

Describe the intervention strategies used by you, with learners experiencing barriers to learning?

Do you have an Institutional Level Support Team (ILST) at your school?

If yes, is it functional?

What problems did you experience with the establishment of your ILST?

Why do you think you have experienced these problems?

What does your school do with the learners experiencing barriers to learning?

Is there anything you would like to share with regards to the ILST at your school?

Thank you very much

C.E.van Niekerk

APPENDIX J: DBST QUESTIONNAIRE

DBST QUESTIONNAIRE

Name : Chantelle van Niekerk

Student No : 193402330

Degree : M.Ed.

Year : 2012

Are you aware of the District Based Support Team within the Uitenhage District.

If yes, is it fully functional?

How would you explain the role, purpose and function of the DBST?

Does the ILST at school level collaborate with the DBST on a regular basis for support and assistance? If yes, please elaborate.

Thank you for sacrificing time to complete this questionnaire. It is highly appreciated.

Mrs.C.E.van Niekerk.

APPENDIX K: INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Name : Chantelle van Niekerk

Student No : 193402330

Degree : M.Ed.

Year : 2012

1. How would you describe barriers to learning?
2. Mention some of the barriers to learning educators have to deal with at school level?
3. How would you go about dealing with learners experiencing barriers to learning?
4. Please mention some of the support programmes you have in place at your school, to meet the diverse needs of learners experiencing barriers to learning?
5. In your opinion, what support systems need to be in place at schools to accommodate learners experiencing barriers to learning?
6. Describe the intervention strategies used by you, with learners experiencing barriers to learning?
7. Do you have an Institutional Level Support Team (ILST) at your school? In your opinion is it functioning optimally?
8. Has the staff, at your school, experience any problems with the establishment of your ILST?
9. Can you share some of the problems you have encountered with the establishment of your ILST?
10. What intervention programmes are in place at your school to support learners experiencing barriers to learning?
11. Do your ILST refer learners to the District Based Support Team (DBST)?
12. In your opinion, what is expected from the DBST?
13. Do you believe the DBST is currently functioning optimally?
14. Is there any community projects in your community supporting learners experiencing barriers to learning?
15. How important is collaboration within the ILST?

16. Is there any collaboration between educators?

17. Would you like to comment or share any experiences with regards to learner support at school level?

Thank you very much

C.E.van Niekerk

APPENDIX L: EXTRACT OF A COMPLETED TRANSCRIBED INTERVIEW

Juffrou baie dankie dat u ingestem het om hierdie onderhoud aan my af te staan. Voel asseblief gemaklik en ons gaan soms lekker lag, maar doen net wat u gemaklik maak, onthou dat u onder geen verpligting staan om enige iets te antwoord waarmee u nie gemaklik is om te antwoord nie.

How would you describe barriers to learning?

Ek sou sê dus iets wat 'n kind verhoed om te kan leer. Dus soms omstandighede wat kinders maak dat daar 'n tipe van 'n barrier is. Dit kom van verskillende omstandighede af. Somtyds is kinders so gebore en somtyds is dit maar omstandighede, wat dit veroorsaak.

Mention some of the barriers to learning educators have to deal with at school level?

By ons skool is daar kinders byvoorbeeld wat swakker vaar as andere omdat hulle nie kan lees nie. Ons het ook kinders wat van huise afkom waar die omstandighede nie lekker is nie en sommige kindertjies is alkohol sindroom babatjies omdat mammas alkohol gebruik het voor en tydens hul swangerskappe. Hierdie kinders se huisomstandighede veroorsaak soms dat hulle stadiger presteer as ander kinders.

How would you go about dealing with learners experiencing barriers to learning?

Wat ek vir hulle sou doen. Na identifisering probeer jy verstaan waarvandaan kom die kind, die agtergrond, voordat jy werklik sal kan uitvind wat is die probleem. Na identifisering vergader die ILST met mense vanaf die department. As die probleem akademies van aard is, remedieër die onderwyser in die klaskamer. Ondersteuning geskied ook buite die klaskamer. Dit sluit nou ondersteuning in vanaf die ILST. Die ILST moet kontak maak met die ouers en moet die nodige toestemming kry by ouers vir eksterne hulp en ondersteuning. Ouer betrokkenheid is baie belangrike en die ILST moet ook kontak maak met die DBST.

Please mention some of the support programmes you have in place at your school, to meet the diverse needs of learners experiencing barriers to learning?

Ons kry graag hulp vanaf die Welsyn, d.w.s Social Development. Welsynwerkers werk in noue samewerking met die skool. Ons kry ook hulp vanaf die Departement van Gesondheid.

In your opinion, what support systems need to be in place at schools to accommodate learners experiencing barriers to learning?

Ek voel die klasonderwyser is die mees belangrikste persoon vir die kind wat hulp en ondersteuning nodig het. Die klasonderwyser moet die kind eerste ondersteun. As die onderwyser alles probeer het en daar is nog steeds geen vordering nie moet die onderwyser eksterne hulp kry vanaf die ouers en die ILST.

Do you have an Institutional Level Support Team (ILST) at you school? In your opinion is it functioning optimally?

Ja ons het n ILST hier by ons skool. Volgens my fungeer hy nog nie optimaal nie. Daar is nog baie ruimte vir verbetering. Ek moet erken ons is in die proses om nog te leer.

Has the staff, at your school, experience any problems with the establishment of your ILST?

Ja ons ervaar probleme om hierdie struktuur op die been te kry. Ons het nie altyd tyd om te vergader nie vanweë n swaar werkslading. Omstandighede binne die onderwys op die oomblik soos n tekort aan onderwysers en n tekort aan hulpbronne dra ook by tot die problem wat ons ervaar om die span lekker aan die gang te kry. Nog n bydraende faktor is die negatiewe houding wat onderwysers soms openbaar teenoor leerders wat ietwat sukkel. Sommige van die onderwysers weier net om die kinders te help. Hulle sê eenvoudig dat hulle nie opgewasse on opgelei is om hierdie kinders te help nie.

Do your ILST refer learners to the District Based Support Team (DBST)?

Ja ons is in kontak met die DBST.

In your opinion, what is expected from the DBST?

Hulle moet met ouers binne die gemeenskap vergader en hulle ondersteun. Die DBST moet die onderwyser, leerders en die skool ondersteun.

Is there any community projects in your community supporting learners experiencing barriers to learning?

Omdat ons n baie klein gemeenskap is werk die skool en die gemeenskap gedeeltelik saam. Samewerking tussen die skool en die gemeenskap kan nog baie verbeter. Ons Learner Support Agent binne die skool woon in die gemeenskap. Die persoon is in staat om onderwysers in te lig oor leerders se huisomstandighede. Sommige van die onderwysers is self betrokke by gemeenskapsprojekte.

How important is collaboration within the ILST?

Ek glo die sukses van die ILST lê in kommunikasie tussen alle belanghebbendes. Ons kan advies vanaf mekaar ontvang. Samewerking is baie belangrik binne die ILST. Ouer en onderwyser kommunikasie is baie belangrik. Ouers moet te alle tye weet wat gaan aan by die skool.