Teachers' Perspectives of Learner Support in a Full-service School – A Case Study

by

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DECLARATION

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DEDICATION

To my parents, Angela and Laurie Conway, for allowing me to be who I am, for making me who I am and for providing me with the means to become who I am. Thank you for encouraging me to embrace every adventure that comes my way, for raising me in an inclusive household and exposing me to a diverse South Africa. Thank you for teaching me to believe in myself right from the start, even when I did not.

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KEY WORDS: Inclusion, Full-service Schools, Learner Support, Collaboration

ABSTRACT

Around the world, inclusive education means that learners' rights and needs are being taken into consideration and education systems are required to adapt to accommodate the diversity of individuals. The need for an integrated school was called upon by the department of education. In 2001, Education White Paper 6 was introduced by the Department of Education as part of a significant period of change and policy development post the apartheid era. Education White Paper 6 (DoE, 2001) introduced a comprehensive range of educational support services. Schools weregradually divided into mainstream schools, full-service schools or inclusive schools and special schools all offering varying levels of support in the aim to minimise learners' barriers to learning and increase active school participation for all learners.

Through a qualitative case study of a particular full-service school in South Africa, the study explores teachers' perspectives of learner support in the specific school. The study is based on Bronfenbrenner's bio-ecological model as a framework which views individuals in their context, taking into account various overlapping systems that are interconnected and influence the participants' lives.

This study which is rooted within an interpretive paradigm, made use of purposeful sampling to select the teachers from the full-service school as participants for the study as they were considered to be able to provide rich information. The study made use of semi-structured interviews as well as observations and interactions with the school in order to gather data. The findings suggest that, in line with the theory of inclusive education, when certain principles and practices are in place, learners are able to be supported and are provided with a voice within a full-service school. Participants also gave valuable recommendations with regards to what works when increasing learner participation and learner support in a full-service school.

SAMEVATTING

Regoor die wêreld, beteken inklusiewe onderwys dat die regte en behoeftes van leerders in ag geneem word en die verwagting is dat onderwysstelsels aangepas word om die diversiteit van individue te akkommodeer. In lyn hiermee, het die Departement van Onderwys 'n behoefte aan inklusiewe onderwys aangekondig. Na aanleiding hiervan het die Department van Onderwys Onderwyswitskrif 6 in 2001 aangekondig as inleiding tot tot 'n beduidende tydperk van verandering en beleidsontwikkeling ná die apartheid-era. Onderwyswitskrif 6 (DvO, 2001) het 'n omvattende reeks opvoedkundige ondersteuningsdienste aangekondig. Skole is geleidelik in hoofstroomskole, voldiens- of inklusiewe skole, en spesiale skole verdeel, wat almal verskillende vlakke van ondersteuning aanbied om struikelblokke tot leerders se leer te minimaliseer en die aktiewe skooldeelname van alle leerders te bevorder.

Hierdie studie ondersoek perspektiewe op leerderondersteuning in 'n bepaalde voldiensskool in Suid-Afrika deur middel van 'n kwalitatiewe gevallestudie. Die studie, met Bronfenbrenner se bio-ekologiese model as raamwerk, beskou individue in hul konteks, met inagneming van verskillende oorvleuelende stelsels wat met mekaar verbind is en die deelnemers se lewens beïnvloed.

Die studie was in 'n interpretatiewe paradigma geplaas en het gebruik gemaak van doelgerigte steekproefneming om onderwysers van die voldiensskool as deelnemers te kies vanweë die verwagting dat hulle ryk inligting kon verskaf. Semi-gestruktureerde onderhoude, asook waarneming en interaksie met die skool is ingespan om data in te samel. Die bevindinge dui daarop dat dit moontlik is om leerders in ooreenstemming met die teorie van inklusiewe onderwys in 'n voldiensskool te ondersteun en van 'n stem te voorsien wanneer sekere beginsels en praktyke in plek is. Deelnemers het ook waardevolle aanbevelings aan die hand gedoen ten opsigte van wat moontlik is wanneer leerderdeelname en leerderondersteuning in 'n voldiensskool verhoog word.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCING THE STUDY

The doors of learning shall be open to all. (The South African Freedom Charter, 1955)

1.1 Background to the Study

South Africa has an ever-changing society and we currently face many challenges due to our unfair discriminatory past and the effects of an apartheid government system. As one of the many ways to undo inequalities resulting from history in our country, our Constitution grants all South Africans an equal opportunity for education. An inclusive education system aims to provide quality and fair education for all learners. This specifically refers to full participation, respect for differences in cultures and different learning styles, variability of teaching methods, as well as open and flexible curricula with corresponding assessment techniques for all learners.[1] These criteria are presented in the guidelines for full-service schools under the Department of Basic Education (DoBE)(2010a). Education White Paper 6, which became applicable in 2001, introduced the end of a significant period of policy development and change following the end of Apartheid in South Africa. These changes in South African educational policy, and therefore the schooling system, has given rise to many changes in the governance of full-service schools and the implementation of a range of educational support services. Full-service schools offer varying levels of support according to learners' needs and specific learning barriers they may be facing. Inclusion should not be seen as something that we add to our education system, however. It is a transformation, intrinsically and extrinsically, as it involves adopting a philosophy, a set of values and beliefs and a passion. Inclusion is something that should be embedded in a school and all aspects of school life should reflect this set of beliefs.

The Index for Inclusion (Booth & Ainscow, 2011) states that inclusion in education involves valuing all learners and staff equally and increasing the participation of learners in the local school community.Inclusion requires the restructuring of the cultures, policies and practices in schools so that reducing barriers to learning and encouraging the participation of all learners meet the diversity of individuals. Schools adopting inclusive policies are to learn from barriers that have been overcome, in order to make changes more widely for the benefit of learners. The differences between learners are viewed as a resource to support learning

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[1]Throughout this study, the term 'learner' refers to children of school-going age.

rather than a problem to be overcome. Inclusion in schools involves acknowledging the right of learners to an education in their locality, as well as for improving the school experience for staff and learners. The role of schools in building a community and developing values is emphasised through the fostering of mutually sustaining relationships between schools and communities which requires inclusion in education to be recognised as an aspect of inclusion in society as a whole. Swart and Pettipher (2016) state that inclusive education is based on a value system that celebrates diversity. The value of inclusive education is in seeking to create a sense of belonging for all individuals and ensuring that they can receive equal opportunity to live out their maximum potential (Swart & Pettipher, 2016). According to the Guidelines for full-Service/Inclusive Schools, one of the ways of ensuring this opportunity and support is through the establishment of mainstream schools, full-service schools and special schools (DoBE, 2010a).

1.2 Inclusive Education and Full-Service Schools in South Africa

Inclusion is about acknowledging that all children and youth can learn and that all children and youth need support. It is about accepting and respecting the fact that all learners are different and have different learning needs which are to be equally valued. Inclusion aims at enabling education structures; systems and learning methodologies to meet the needs of all learners (DoE, 2001).

In line with the imperative of addressing the inequalities of the apartheid legacy, a number of policies and guidelines were developed towards developing inclusive education. The policies are aimed at providing learner support to address the diverse barriers to learning within South African schools. The proposed 3-tier system of support (DoBE, 2015) suggests that learners require differing levels of support according to the severity of the barriers which confront them and assists in the potential placement of learners in mainstream, full-service or special schools, each catering for different levels of support needed. Chapter 2 provides more detail on the 3-tier system of support as well as theory and discourse of inclusive education.

In South Africa, according to the Guidelines for full-Service/Inclusive Schools a full-service school is defined as a school "that will be equipped and supported to provide for the full range of learning needs among all our learners" (DoBE, 2010a, p. 7). Full-service schools are mainstream education institutions providing quality education to all learners by meeting the full range of learner needs. They should strive to achieve access, equity, quality and social justice in education while promoting a sense of belonging so that all learners, staff

and families experience a sense of worth in the learning community. Full-service schools should respond to diversity by providing appropriate education for the needs of all learners (DoBE,2010a). According to Davis (1995), a full-service school represents an effort to create a wide range of services that are available to children and families who might be considered to be at risk. Priorities in full-service schools will therefore include training in new roles for teachers, a focus on multi-level classroom instruction, co-operative learning and teaching and the development of learners' strengths and competencies, rather than focusing on their shortcomings (DoE, 2001).

The National Strategy on Screening, Identification, Assessment and Support (SIAS) (DoBE, 2014) reports that full-service schools are ordinary schools which are specifically resourced and orientated to address a full range of barriers to learning in an inclusive education setting. The joint report of the National Commission on Special Needs in Education and Training (NCSNET) and the National Committee on Education Support Services (NCESS) (1997c) also summarised an integrated system of education where opportunities for all learners can be provided as in the case of a full-service school. The Guidelines for Full-Service/Inclusive Schools (DoBE, 2010a) means these institutions will promote a sense of belonging so that all learners, staff and families are provided with a sense of worth in the learning community. Institutions should have the capacity to respond to diversity. In order to do so, they should provide appropriate education for the specific needs of each learner, irrespective of difficulties experienced by the learner. These institutions are responsible for establishing methods to assist curriculum and institutional transformation.This will ensure both an awareness of diversity, and that support will be available to those learners and educators who need it (DoBE, 2005a).

The school chosen for this case study was purposefully selected as it is regarded as a functioning full-service school that accommodates mainstream learners as well as learners with special needs[2](Refer to *2.7 Learner support in a full-service school).*The participants could therefore be regarded as "information-rich" cases (Merriam, 2009). This school believes that all children are entitled to be treated with respect in an inclusive environment where they can receive the necessary support in an atmosphere of understanding and empathy.

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[2]Although the term special needs is an international concept originating in the medical model frame of thought, it is used in this study when referring to the school as it is a term that the school uses in order to be able to identify and support learners in achieving their full potential. The preferred term within South African inclusive education is barriers to learning which speaks to the broad range of environmental, physical, emotional and mental challenges which confront learners (Nel, M., Engelbrecht, Nel, N.,& Tlale, 2014) .

The inclusive education model depends strongly on resource centres to offer support to full-service schools (DoBE, 2007). Learner support should be organised around support programmes that accommodate learners who require it, rather than focussing on a category of disability. Each learner should have access to support that is beneficial to him or her. Support programmes should include school staffing as well as psychosocial and health professionals, curriculum and physical infrastructure, availability of assistive technology, training and qualifications of staff. A school should offer support covering the above areas and have a differentiated curriculum to ensure appropriate learning and development. According to the Department of Education (1997a), support programmes should address barriers to learning with various levels of support.

1.2.1 Defining Difficulty and Disability

In South Africa, the Statistics South Africa Annual General Household Survey (GHS) has used the Washington Group (WG) Questions technique since 2009. This is a short set of questions which asks survey participants about difficulties that they may experience in seven domains of functioning, i.e. seeing, hearing, walking, remembering, concentrating, self-care and communicating. An individual is classified as disabled if they have "some difficulty" related to two or more of the six categories, or had "a lot of difficulty" or were "unable to do so" with regard to one or more categories. The GHS conducted in 2009 (DSD, DWCPD & UNICEF, 2012) classified nearly 2.1 million children (11.2 percent of the total child population) as disabled. The prevalence of disability appears unusually high for young children: 28 percent of children in the age group 0-4 years and 10 percent in the age group 5-9 years were classified as disabled. It is important to remember, though, that, in South Africa, we need to distinguish between real difficulties and normal developmental processes when using the WG statistics. Projections from Census 2001 indicate that there are some 474 000 children living with severe disabilities in South Africa today. The GHS 2009 thus points to more widespread mild to moderate disability among children than what was captured by Census 2001. Early detection of childhood disabilities is of high importance in order to ensure that children receive effective treatment. South Africa's inclusive education system has enabled the expansion of facilities for children with disabilities in mainstream schools. There is evidence that still suggests, however, that children with disabilities are less likely to attend school than non-disabled children, with figures quoted as high as half a million children; according to Walton (2015),as many as 200 000 children with disabilities are not attending school (DSD, DWCPD & UNICEF, 2012; Walton, 2015).

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1.3 Problem Statement

The number of full-service schools in South Africa is increasing as we aim to transform an education system from one of special education to an integrated system which embraces our diversity. After 22 years of democracy, progress has been made in achieving social justice, equality of access and broadening of support to all learners within the system, but it is still not enough. Fifteen years since the introduction of White Paper 6 (2001) and the implementation of inclusion, many learners are still failed by the education system. Learners experience barriers which are psycho-social as well as pedagogical and district support services do not provide appropriate support to teachers in order to assist them in the support of these learners (Similane & Schoeman, 2016). If South Africa wishes to achieve the goal of having an education system based on the values and beliefs of inclusion, it is important to understand how schools adopt a philosophy of inclusion, create a vision and set of beliefs and, consequently, provide the necessary support to the learners. We need to understand how mainstream schools internalise and enact inclusion in order to transform into full-service schools and provide learners with the appropriate support. There should be clear guidelines covering a wide range of areas on how learners can be provided with the support they need. The Department of Education (now Department of Basic Education) released the 'Conceptual and Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of Inclusive Education: Full-Service Schools' in 2005, which provides a framework from which guidelines can be formed. This set of guidelines include the National strategy on Screening, Identification, Assessment and Support (DoBE, 2008; revised 2014); Guidelines for Inclusive Learning Programmes (DoBE, 2005c); Conceptual and Operational Guidelines for District-based Support Teams (DoBE, 2005b); Guidelines to Ensure Quality Education and Support in Special Schools and Special School Resource Centres (DoBE, 2008); and Guidelines for Full-service/Inclusive Schools (DoBE, 2009); Guidelines for Responding to Learner Diversity in the Classroom through Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statements (DoBE, 2011).

Although this study is conducted in a single context, it could add to our understanding of the functioning of a full-service school. While inclusive education is well studied, the perspective of the teachers within the full-service school, and the role they play in the level of support given to the learners could be beneficial in understanding how to best support learners in other schools.

1.3.1 Aim Of Research

This study aimed to explore and describe how the teachers in a particular full-service school experience the support provided to the learners. It was important to explore what support strategies are applied in the context of this full-service school in order to be able to provide learners with an environment where they can reach their maximum learning potential. The fact that this study was focused on the teachers' perspectives from a single full-service school, leads to a limited scope within the study and influences the manner in which the findings can be generalised. It should not be ignored that the support given to all role players within the school is of great importance.The purpose was to describe the experiences of learner support rather than provide an evaluation of the level of support given.

1.3.2 Research Questions

The study therefore aimed to answer the following overarching research question.

What are teachers' perspectives on and experiences of support for learners within a full-service school?

The following sub-questions also guided the study.

What are the teachers' perspectives on Inclusive Education and the role of a full-service school?

How are learners with disabilities/barriers to learning, both external and internal, supported in participating in a full-service school?

What are the teachers' roles in supporting learners within the classroom?

What recommendations would teachers give with regard to successful support to further the development of full-service schools?

I as the researcher aimed to explore and describe how the teachers in a particular full-service school experience the support provided to the learners. It is important to explore what support strategies are applied in the context of this full-service school in order to be able to provide learners with an environment where they can reach their maximum learning potential. Iexplored teachers' experiences of support as well as what support they were required to give, what role players were involved in assisting learner support, what training

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teachers were receiving and should receive and what teachers would recommend with regard to learner support.

1.4 The Research Process

The following section will describe the research process that I undertook by looking at the following components: the theoretical framework, research paradigm, design and methodology and data analysis.

1.4.1 Theoretical Framework

Over the past few years, an attempt has been made to understand how a child develops in his or her social context and society. A paradigm shift has taken place with regard to the concept of inclusion and this is also evident in the work of Bronfenbrenner in the field of developmental psychology. Bronfenbrenner's original model was known as the ecological model and took into consideration the individual's social context as well as the direct and indirect influences that this social context has on an individual's development. This model is used as a tool for understanding the learner in context in the field of inclusive education. For the purpose of this research, I will refer to his multidimensional model namely the Bio-ecological model. This model suggests that there are levels of interacting systems resulting in human growth and development (Swart & Pettipher, 2016). Bronfenbrenner (2005) argued that humans have both objective and subjective experiences. Very few external influences that affect human behaviour and development can be described by only looking at them objectively, thus both objectivity and subjectivity need to be considered (Bronfenbrenner, 2005). The bio-ecological model allows for the integration of several role players that influence the education system: schools, parents[3] and learners. The integration of the different interconnected systems that interact with one another across time, influence the experiences, perception and development of individuals (Bronfenbrenner, 2005). Bronfenbrenner's model is described in more detail in Chapter 2. With a theoretical model in place, it becomes possible to develop theories based on the research and findings.

1.4.2 The Research Paradigm

The research was qualitative and therefore exploratory, based within an interpretive paradigm for exploring the experiences of the participants involved, in this case the teachers

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[3]In this study 'parents' refers to adults responsible for the learners and includes biological parents, adoptive parents, guardians and caregivers

at the selected full-service school. According to Groenewald (2004), a paradigm is a "pattern of thinking" (p. 6) to which a particular person adheres. It is a model according to which design actions are taken within research. Terre Blanche and Durrheim (2006) state that "(p)aradigms are all encompassing systems of interrelated practice and thinking that define for researchers the nature of their enquiry along three dimensions: ontology, epistemology and methodology" (p. 6). Ontology is the description of concepts and relationships within the study, how the nature of the reality is understood in the study. Epistemology describes the relationship between the researcher and the knowledge yet to be acquired, in this case the knowledge being subjective meanings. Finally, methodology is the approach used by the researcher to bring the unknown to the known (Terre Blanche& Durrheim, 2006). This study was conducted in the form of a single instrumental case study in order to gain in-depth understanding and meaning. It narrows the study down to a single unit within a bounded system and allows for intensive descriptions (Merriam, 2009). The interpretive research paradigm allows one to study the participant's subjective reality and perspectives. From within the interpretive paradigm, the researcher is able to recognise, understand and appreciate the behaviour, attitudes and feelings of the participants in the study (Terre Blanche& Durrheim, 2006).

1.4.3 Research Design And Methodology

Qualitative research, the methodology for this study, acknowledges the researcher as the main collector of data through a subjective lens (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011). It is therefore important to introduce myself as the researcher, the research paradigm and methodology, and the research design of this study.

Durrheim (2006) describes the research design of a study as "a strategic framework for action that serves as a bridge between research questions and the execution or implementation of the research" (p.34). Qualitative research as an umbrella term, covers various forms of inquiry that attempt to understand and explain the meaning the participants make of their worlds (Merriam, 2009). This research followed a qualitative case study design in the form of Stake's (2006) single-instrumental case study since the focus was on a single phenomenon. From a case study, suggestions can be made to the reader about what to do in similar situations by examining a specific case, keeping in mind that circumstances may differ. Yin (2011) suggested that we complete a case study in order to understand complex social phenomena, for example teachers' perspectives of learner support in full-services schools. Through this study, I have attempted to understand the perspectives of teachers who teach in a full-service school with regard to the learner support provided in the school.

An interpretive approach to the research allowed me to understand the realities of the teachers and how they had been constructed. My research methodology will be explained in detail in chapter 3.2.

1.4.3.1 Selection of Participants

The school that was selected in the Western Cape is classified as a full-service school and therefore has relevant role players, including the teachers. This was a convenience sample limited to one school due to the limited scope of the study. The identity of the school shall be kept confidential. The participants were those employed at the full-service school, including the school principal and three teachers. Participants were selected by means of purposive sampling which allows the researcher to decide what data would be gathered and from whom it would be collected. In the case of this specific study, I was able to explore the teachers' experiences of learner support within the chosen full-service school (Patton, 2015).The selection of participants is described in Chapter 3.2.5.

1.4.3.2 Methods of Data Collection

Specific research techniques used to gather relevant data needed to achieve the aim of the study are called methods. Observation, interviewing and the reviewing of pictures or documents are methods used in qualitative research as these methods provide information-rich and detailed data (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011). Methods of data collection in this study included semi-structured individual interviews with the participating teachers as well as observations that were conducted when spending time at and interacting within the selected school. Interviews enable the researcher to collect data by gaining insight into the world in which the interviewee lives. We can get a sense of how they make meaning of the world around them and how they understand the phenomenon under investigation, in this case, learner support (Fontana & Frey, 2005).

A general interview guide approach, discussed in detail in Chapter 3, which involved asking open-ended questions as guidelines was used in this study in order to conduct semi-structured interviews. Feelings, opinions and perspectives of the teachers in this study were important in order to accurately analyse the information that they provide. Fontana and Frey (2005) describe the interview as a narrative by which both the interviewer and interviewee construct the story surrounding the situation within the context of the research study

The methods of data collection are discussed in greater detail in Chapter 3.

1.4.4 Data Analysis

According to Yin (2008), data analysis in a case study involves examining, categorising, tabulating and recombining the data so that the research questions of the study are addressed. The researcher can then make valid deductions and conclusions based on data within the specific context. This is done in the hope that knowledge can be provided and insight can be gained into people's experiences. Yin (2011) continues by saying that the analysis of the data in a case study is often reliant on the experience of the researcher. Each case study should be viewed as a general analytical strategy.

The constant comparative method of analysis was used in an attempt to understand the experiences of each individual case of the teachers who were teaching learners in full-service schools. The constant comparative method allows the researcher to explicitly code the data systematically while generating theory at the same time. This approach does not distinguish between the coding and theory development of the analysis process, but rather supports that the process occurs concurrently. The constant comparative method is described by Elo and Kyngäs (2007) as providing a systematic as well as an objective way to describe phenomena as a means of developing grounded theory. Grounded theory consists of theories and hypotheses that are the links between categories. Content analysis allows the researcher to make valid deductions from data within the specific context. This is done in order to provide knowledge, insight and representation of facts (Elo &Kyngäs, 2007). The constant comparison method allows one to constantly compare these comparisons which then allows for categorising (Merriam, 2009). For the content analysis process in this research, an inductive process was used which required preparation, organising and then reporting. The process allowed for open coding, which is the creation of categories and the generalisation of ideasis described in Chapter 3. Inductive content analysis required coding and categorising of the main headings which are reported in Chapter 4 and the process of which is evident in addenda G and H. Similar categories were combined by means of themes and generalisation of the topics that were derived. The process of analysis is flexible and exaggerated and is dependent on the skills and experiences of the researcher (Elo & Kyngäs, 2007).

1.5 Ethical Considerations

This study involved entering a school and becoming involved in people's lives and day-to-day activities. Ethics are aimed at ensuring the safety of people within society and we, as professionals, are required to live out these principles in order to protect the people involved

in our research. Allan (2016) explains that ethics form a part of philosophy known as moral philosophy, which studies the idea of morality or how individuals make decisions that influence other individuals in society. The Health Professions Council of South Africa (HPCSA) has clear guidelines for good research practice in their General Ethical Guidelines for Health Researchers (HPCSA, 2008). All the considerations related to this study are discussed in detail in Chapter 3.

1.6 Structure Of Presentation

Chapter 1 of this study has introduced the full-service school and in particular the research site. The aim and purpose of the study as well as the guiding research questions have been discussed andthe chapter has briefly explained how the research process took place.

In Chapter 2, literature that focuses on South Africa's inclusive education system is reviewed while looking at an international perspective as a backdrop. The study was focused specifically on full-service schools, the implementation of full service and the support they provide. The concept of childhood disability and how it has been viewed in the past and the stance we should take in an inclusive education system are discussed.

The research methods that were used, as well as assumptions and the rationale for using a qualitative case study, are presented in Chapter 3. The research site and participants of the study and the role of the researcher, the research design, methodology and trustworthiness are also discussed in this chapter and the ethical considerations are outlined.

Chapter 4 provides a description of the data and includes a summary and interpretation of the findings as categorised according to overall themes.

Chapter 5 contains a reflection on the process and the results. The research questions are addressed by means of conclusions from the research and recommendations based on the research process and findings are offered.

1.7 Conclusion

This chapter was aimed at providing the reader with the background to the study and orientating the reader to the way in which the research was conducted, as well as to indicate what is to follow in the report. The chapter informed the reader of the motivation for the study and the research questions and the research paradigm, methodology, methods and data analysis used in the study were described briefly.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

A CONCEPTUAL AND THEORETICAL ANALYSIS OF LEARNER SUPPORT IN FULL-SERVICE SCHOOLS IN SOUTH AFRICA

2.1 Introduction

The literature review is a central component of the thesis as it aims to assist in conceptualising the research through a discussion of the existing literature related to the research topic. The literature review provides the foundation from which the researcher is able to discuss the research findings and places the research within the context of the existing body of work (Henning, Van Rensburg & Smit, 2004).

The chapter is organised like a funnel moving from the global perspective and the international inclusive education context, to the South African context and lastly to the full-service school model of inclusive education. To place the research in context, a brief history of the development of inclusive education internationally is recorded. The chapter then goes on to examine the development of inclusive education in South Africa in more detail, noting the impact of international trends and how inclusive education has evolved in the South African education system. Definitions of inclusion and inclusive education and barriers to inclusion with a particular reference to the South African context are discussed.

The theoretical framework for the research is Bronfenbrenner's bio-ecological model of development highlighting the complexity of inclusion and placing the research within a theoretical framework of the relationship between individuals and the environment. The literature review looks at the impact of proximal processes and the interaction between process, person, context and time aspects, some of which were used to frame the research questions and analyse the responses of teachers.

The chapter then goes on to discuss full-service schools as a model for inclusive education and one tier of support service provision in South Africa. The literature review examines the policies and history of the development of full-service schools in South Africa, the principles and ethos thereof and some of the challenges which full-service schools experience. All of this builds up to the central subject of the research namely learner support in full-service schools. Attention is given to support systems and the various models which have been developed. Lastly, the chapter goes on to examine inclusive pedagogy as a framework for

supportive teaching for all in full-service schools with a discussion around strategy-orientated teaching and constructionist learning (Makoelle, 2014). The discussion highlights the importance of creativity and flexibility and the balance between formal skills acquisition and the intuitive awareness that comes with teaching experience, as well as the centrality of collaboration as a key component of inclusion.

A theme which weaves throughout the review is the gap between policy and vision for inclusion and actual realities of implementation within the South African context with its extreme societal inequalities. The literature review sets the background and context that framed the research and informed the analysis of the perceptions of teachers in a full-service school around learner support.

2.2 Inclusion And Inclusive Education In The International Context

Inclusion is a complex multi-dimensional concept encompassing layers of interrelationships. As such, inclusion remains controversial with no one exclusive definition or defining practice. Inclusion, rather, is an evolving process and the inclusive dialogue is ongoing and as yet inconclusive. However, there are commonalities which bind inclusive debates. It is widely agreed that inclusion broadly and inclusive education specifically contribute towards the evolution of a democratic society. Inclusive education is an ongoing struggle towards redistribution of access to quality education, recognition and valuing of learner differences and the creation of more opportunities for non-dominant groups (Kozleski, Waitoller & Gonzalez, 2016). Democratic principles including equality and equal access to resources and opportunities underpin the theory of inclusion. As such, inclusive education recognises the imperative of an equitable and quality education system accessible to all and promotes that mainstream schools should accommodate all learners (Swart & Pettipher, 2016). Inclusive education explores how educational organisations can develop a service to as many members of society as possible through providing them with equal opportunities to learn and fulfil their potential (Middlewood, Parker & Beere, 2005). This requires that all education organisations (from schools to tertiary institutions to workplaces) recognise their responsibility to serve learners (Middlewood *et al.,*2005). Inclusion recognises that the education system and schools specifically, do not function in isolation but are affected by economic, social and political influences (Swart & Pettipher, 2016). Conversely, an inclusive education system and inclusive schools are central to economic, social and political transformation. Inclusive education as an outcome of inclusion has a rich international history which informs the South African context.

2.2.1 The History and Development of Inclusive Education Internationally

Although the movement to inclusive education goes back to the 1960s, the first global commitment towards Education for All (EFA) was made in Jomtien, Thailand in 1990. The commitment issued from an international conference including 155 countries and representatives from 150 government and non-government organisations. The primary commitments issuing from the Jomtien commitment was that primary school education would be accessible to all learners and that illiteracy would be reduced by the year 2000 (UNESCO, 1990). The Jomtien Conference, with the backing of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO), the United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF), the United Nations Development Programme, the United Nations Population Fund and the World Bank, aimed to embrace and implement a new vision for basic education.

A second defining milestone in the development of inclusive education internationally was the Salamanca Statement issued in 1994 in Salamanca, Spain (UNESCO, 1994). The statement reaffirmed the commitment to Education for All. In addition, the statement called on signatory governments to ensure their respective departments of education adopted principles of inclusion offering all children mainstream education. The statement called on the schooling system to integrate learners irrespective of their intellectual, social, emotional, physical, linguistic or cultural backgrounds. In addition, the statement called for prioritisation of education within governments' budget allocations. The statement agreed that integration was best achieved by inclusive, "full-service" schools. The Salamanca Statement further recognised that all-inclusive systems and schools are only possible with the co-operation of and in collaboration with teachers, parents, families, and volunteers committed to inclusion. The commitment of entire communities is required to develop a positive environment supportive of inclusion of all individuals (UNESCO, 1994). The Salamanca Statement impacted internationally on the development of educational policies striving towards integration, equalisation and equal opportunity.

As a follow-up to the Salamanca Statement in 2000, the signatory countries including South Africa, again reassembled in Dakar, Senegal to reflect on the progress in implementation of the recommendation of the Salamanca Statement and the achievement of the goal of Education for All. These discussions acknowledged that the goal of Education for All as accepted in Jomtien, Thailand, ten years previously had not been realised. New goals were agreed to and linked with the movement for inclusion and the emphasis on inclusive

education. Although it was recognised that each country would need to chart their own path towards inclusion, the impetus towards inclusive education was clearly started. In 2005 the goals were again reviewed and six goals were set, three of which were timebound, namely that, by 2015: 1) every child would be completing a quality basic education; 2) literacy levels would increase by 50%; and 3) there would be gender equity in education (UNESCO, 2006). These international agreements at the United Nations convention on the rights of persons with disabilities influenced the South African inclusive education system. Through being a signatory to the international statements, South Africa was brought in line with international trends of inclusive education. These commitments informed the international inclusive dialogue and contributed to a shift in inclusive education practice and systems.

2.2.2 International Inclusive Education Discourse and Practice

The international commitments to inclusive education were strengthened by a major paradigm shift which took place in the 1970s to 1980s. Previously, a medical deficient or "within child" model had been used to diagnose what was "wrong" with the learner and provide "treatment" to "fix" the problem. This resulted in labelling and categorising followed by treatment which usually meant placing learners in special or separate classes or schools. This practice was perceived as being beneficial to mainstream learners and learners with specific learning "needs" (Engelbrecht, Nel, Smit &Van Deventer, 2016). This is in contrast to the social ecological model which emerged and which recognises the interaction between the environment and the person characteristics and seeks to remove stumbling blocks to enable learners to participate in mainstream classes and schools. This shift in understanding heralded the implementation of a social systems change approach in which attempts are made to transform the environment, including the schools, to accommodate the diverse needs of learners, rather than changing the learner to fit into the environment (Swart & Pettipher, 2016). As Prilleltensky (2014) contends, inclusive policies must be transformative by nature, transforming lives and developing relationships of fairness and equity.

The ongoing and current inclusive debates are again shifting towards a balanced view of the interaction between person factors and the environment. Acknowledgement is given to the unique risk factors confronting each individual, but in relationship with the environment. This requires the development of an environment which accommodates these individual risk factors and enables individuals to reach their full potential (Swart &Pettipher, 2016). The international debates informed South Africa's path towards inclusion.

2.3 The Development of Inclusive Education in South Africa

Inclusive education in South Africa has followed these international trends but differs in the extent of political and philosophical influence (Swart & Pettipher, 2016). South Africa's journey towards inclusive education is informed by the dismantling of Apartheid and the resulting commitment to the protection of human rights and principles of equity and inclusion. Throughout the Apartheid regime, black learners with disabilities or support needs either attended local schools and received very little support or in many instances didn't attend school. Teacher training consisted of content to enable one to teach in either an ordinary school or a special school (Walton, 2011). Inclusive education in South Africa cannot be separated from the inclusive movement and debates at an international level (Engelbrecht, 2006). Post 1994, the South African government used what was considered to be the best of international education policies and developed a vision for an education system based on equity, human rights and human resource development (Engelbrecht *et al.*, 2016). However South Africa has its own unique context, in particular the extreme societal disparities, which impact on the implementation of effective inclusive education. More than twenty years into the new South African democracy is an opportune time to reflect on the progress, successes and challenges of inclusive education and how these impact on learner support and teachers' perceptions thereof.

2.3.1 The History and Development of Inclusive Education in South Africa

Although there is recognition internationally that inclusive education seeks to develop a system and schools which democratise society (Nind, 2014), the development of inclusive education policies and practices in South Africa was located in a particular political context. With the shift to participatory democracy, the country was developing policies which sought to challenge the impact of exclusion on all levels of society. Thus, within the context of democratisation, inclusive education with its particular agenda and focus became included in South African education politics resulting in the development of inclusive education policies and guidelines (Engelbrecht *et al.*, 2016).

From 1994 onwards, the South African government attempted to address some of the wrongs of the past. The demise of Apartheid and the election of a democratic government in 1994 heralded the adoption of a constitution based on human dignity and human rights. This impacted on inclusive education and practices and philosophies of inclusion were introduced into the South African education system from 1996. With the election of a new democratic government, schools were no longer divided racially and the Education

Department committed itself to ensure access to education for all learners (DoE, 2001). Inclusive education in South Africa thus has a specific focus on the realisation of human rights and democratic principles recognising the importance of individual rights and equal opportunities to enable all learners to reach their full potential (Swart & Pettipher, 2016). This political context informed the inclusive education discourse emphasising international inclusive debates and embracing the shift towards social justice rather than diagnosis and treatment of learner deficiency.

It is therefore fitting that the underpinning legislation which provides a base for the development of South African education and informs policies of inclusion is the supreme law of the country, the South African Constitution. Stemming from the commitment of the Constitution, a number of policies were introduced. The initial policies were aimed at shifting from the medical model of diagnosis, labelling and placement in special schools towards recognising and addressing the social, economic and physical barriers which hamper learners' abilities to access education. (*Refer to section 2.4: Barriers to learning in the South African context).* Important policies and legislation which were developed include the White Paper for Education of 1995 (White Paper 1), The SA Schools Act, the White Paper on Integrated National Disability Strategy and in particular White Paper 6 on Special Needs Education, Building an Inclusive Education and Training System, which was released in July 2001. White Paper 6 includes principles of social justice, human rights, a healthy environment, participation, redress and equitable access. White Paper 6 also outlines the role of full-service schools, special schools and district-based support teams (Engelbrecht *et al.*, 2016). White Paper 6 is therefore of particular importance for this study which examines the role of full-service schools and the perceptions of teachers in full-service schools.

The Education Department's effort to establish an inclusive education system as noted in the Education White Paper 6 encompasses six broad, key strategies. These include the improvement of existing special schools and the conversion of these special schools to inclusive resource centres; the mobilisation of children of school-going age with disabilities who are currently not in school; the conversion of some mainstream primary schools to full-service schools; the orientation of staff in mainstream schools to the principles and practices of inclusive education; the establishment of district-based support teams to help support educators with the implementation of inclusive practices; and the implementation of a national advocacy campaign to orient South Africans to the ideas of inclusion and participation of people with disabilities in schools and society at large (DoE, 2001). These

measures are necessary to ensure that the paradigm shift towards inclusion rather than labelling and placement in special schools results in a shift in practice (Swart & Pettipher, 2016).

Although South Africa has made quantitative progress in terms of the number of full-service schools and enrolment statistics there is a gap between the idealism of the inclusive education policies and legislation and the realities at school level which impact on implementation (Engelbrecht *et al.*, 2016). The Department of Education introduced a transition phase towards an inclusive education system to be brought in over a period of twenty years with medium-, short- and long-term goals. There have been some successes in achieving these goals. One of the milestones was that an initial 30 pilot full-service schools would be established and that 500 full-service schools would be established within a period of 20 years; there are 510 full-service schools to date (Engelbrecht *et al.*, 2016). In terms of enrolment of learners there has also been good progress with enrolment figures increasing from 6 267 524 under Apartheid to 12 428 069 (DoBE, 2011). Although enrolment figures are now in line with international trends, the split between social class and the rural / urban divide still exists (Engelbrecht *et al.*, 2016).

What is apparent is that democracy, despite the expectations and political will demonstrated in 1994 to change education by adjusting legislation and policies, is not a sufficient condition to eliminate historical and structural inequalities in education. The failure to commit sufficient resources or to pursue clear implementation strategies has resulted in a situation in which the statement of rights within policies is not delivering rights in practice. The 2007 IDASA (Institute for Democracy in South Africa) report notes that, although funding for schools had increased significantly from 2000 – 2007 with an increase from R1,3 billion to R5,7 billion, the emphasis on allocation to the poorest 40% and the creation of no-fee schools to cater for learners from the poorest families had resulted in a growing category of poor schools being excluded from the protection for the no-fee schools. These are schools with learners whose parents cannot afford to pay fees that are not benefitting from no-fee grants and as such do not have sufficient resources (IDASA, 2007). Although disaggregation of schools has been addressed with schools no longer racially exclusive in practice, differentiated access continues with learners from middle to higher income families accommodated in well-resourced schools (previously white), the no-fee schools having some state resources, while learners from lower to poor families in the so-called "middle school" attend poorly resourced schools (IDASA, 2007). The failure of inclusive education to achieve the impact envisioned in policies is largely due to a lack of resources and funding, levels of teachers' capacity,

negative attitudes and a lack of clarity around the means to implement the policy. For inclusive education to succeed and for practice on the ground to mirror the content of policies, the Department of Education needs to hold itself accountable for implementation of its own policies (Engelbrecht *et al.*, 2016). A deeper understanding of the inclusive education discourse and how this impacts practice will assist in deepening analysis of the opportunities and challenges in the South African context.

2.3.2 The Inclusive Education Discourse and Practice within the South African Context

Understanding of the inclusive discourse is necessary in order to reflect on inclusive education in the South African context. Inclusive education is underpinned by the philosophy or value of inclusion. Inclusion can be described as a value and belief that views all people as equal and puts this value into action. Inclusive education is an example of an inclusive value put into action. It is widely accepted that inclusive education is a basic human right and the foundation for a more just and equal society (ARACY, 2013). In emphasising the complexity and far-reaching impact of inclusion,Swart and Pettipher (2016) argue that inclusion is part of "developing an inclusive community and education system" (p. 4). Inclusion takes the society as a whole into account: gender, culture, nationality, age, language and differing abilities. Values and principles of inclusion range from building a democratic society to the provision of equal and quality education and the development of schools which accommodate the diverse needs of all learners.

The principles of an inclusive philosophy as framed by the Constitution of South Africa encompass human rights and social justice, optimal participation and social integration of all individuals, and equal access to a single, inclusive education system (DoBE, 2010b). "An inclusive educational policy is not an addition to the process of transformation which must go on in all South African schools, but it is the means by which transformation can be accomplished" (DoBE, 2010b, p. 20). Inclusion, and therefore inclusive education, fosters transformation through ensuring the access, active participation and success of all learners regardless of differences (Swart & Pettipher, 2016).The theory of inclusive education is an attempt to create opportunities for equal education for all and move towards a more egalitarian society. Through recognising that all learners have the right to and are able to learn, inclusive education celebrates and values differences and creates learning structures, systems and methodologies which enable all to learn (DoE, 2001). Inclusive education thus shifts societal relationships and systems through equal access, recognition of the equal

value of all learners and ensuring the inclusion of non-dominant, traditionally marginalised groups. Inclusive education should result in an education system that is responsive to diverse learners. At the same time, inclusion is not about providing something different or additional to cater for needs of specific learners, but rather is about flexibility and extending what already exists to include all (Florian & Graham, 2014). This fundamental shift towards an inclusive philosophy is required at all levels of society, including community, parents, teachers and learners. Schools do not operate in isolation but are a reflection of political, economic and social development (Swart & Pettipher, 2016), therefore an inclusive education system requires a personal and societal paradigm shift.

This personal and societal transformation towards inclusion is reflected in inclusive education. Inclusive education must ensure that the school views all learners as unique individuals and attempts to meet all of their unique differences and learning styles by reconsidering and restructuring its organisation rather than expecting the learner to adapt (Swart & Pettipher, 2016). It requires transformation of practices, tools, policies and, ultimately, of the individuals involved (Kozleski *et al*, 2016). Inclusive education, as a policy, means that previously excluded children, who were taught in special classes and schools, can attend regular classes in mainstream and full-service schools, depending on the availability of appropriate and adequate schooling and support. Inclusion is therefore not just about finding a placement for an individual in a classroom; it is about ensuring that all individuals are appreciated for their own uniqueness – from those who face barriers to learning to those who excel. Inclusive education fosters a sense of belonging so that all learners, staff and families experience a sense of worth (DoBE, 2010a). It is the responsibility of an inclusive school, the community and ultimately,the government, to create workable policies that will safely include all children in general education. The education system needs to ensure that the needs of the learners are met as education should be seen as a basic human right to be received by all.

Inclusion is accompanied by exclusion. The inclusive theory is based on the understanding that exclusion is a result of barriers to learning which need to be eliminated. Learners are confronted by a myriad of barriers which contribute to exclusion. In South Africa with its specific history of exclusion, learners face a unique range of barriers to learning (*Refer to Section 2.4).* These barriers impact on levels of exclusion and inclusion in our education system. South African inclusive policies therefore need to be holistic, addressing barriers from a household and community level to a school level. However, it remains important to

understand the underlying principles, framework and language of inclusion at the same time as recognising South Africa's unique context.

From a South African perspective, inclusion is viewed as being value-based and being about community, rights and compassion, as well as belonging and respect. The history of inclusion within the South African Education Department mirrors international trends. From the 1960s, South Africa followed the medical model of categorising and labelling individuals according to which the source of any "special education needs" was looked for within the learner. This was followed by the consultation approach with individualistic intervention roles allocated to professionals (Nel *et al.*, 2014). Treatment usually meant that these individuals were placed in a special school or remedial class, very often determined along the lines of racial segregation. In the 1990s, South Africa started to view disabilities more holistically. Learning difficulties went from being seen as a 'problem' within the individual to recognition of the relationship between individuals' learning difficulties and the environment that they were interacting in (Swart & Pettipher, 2016). It was equally recognised that, given South Africa's history of inequality and discrimination, learners were confronted by a legacy of barriers to learning that placed many learners in an "at risk" category and emphasised the need for in inclusive education system informed by inclusive policies. The South African Department of Education has embraced the concept of inclusive education and a number of policies have been developed to guide the transition towards inclusion. However, as discussed in more detail in *Section 2.4: Barriers to learning in the South African Context,* the challenge has been to implement the policies in a manner which achieves the outcome at which the policy is aimed and to identify and address barriers to learning.

2.4 Barriers to Learning in the South African Context

As noted above, debates around barriers to learning historically were primarily restricted to medical barriers with limited recognition of the wide variety of socio-economic factors that contribute to exclusion. Recent discussions have expanded to acknowledge the plethora of barriers to learning and to recognise that challenging exclusion is a human rights issue rather than limited to a medical issue. The Assessment Guidelines for Inclusion (DoE, 2002) describe three main groups of barriers to learning. Firstly, there are those barriers which are caused by differing abilities, whether these be physical, neurological, sensory or cognitive. In addition, barriers to learning may also include inflexible teaching methods, unsuitable forms of assessment and underfunded support for the educators. Lastly, barriers could include socioeconomic factors, such as schools with insufficient support materials;

inadequate facilities or overcrowded classrooms are not environments that can foster principles of inclusion. Other factors such as absenteeism and severe poverty also contribute to barriers to learning and must be taken into account in the development of an inclusion policy (DoE, 2002). There is a continuum of barriers to learning in South Africa. These include intrinsic / organic barriers like physical disabilities as well as extrinsic / systemic barriers arising from the systems with which the learner relates (Engelbrecht *et al.*, 2016).

2.4.1 External Barriers to Learning

South Africa's history of exclusion, discrimination and inequality compound the systemic / external barriers. The South African legacy is one of unequal distribution and access, particularly along racial lines, but also geographic location between urban and rural. The National Commission on Special Needs in Education and Training (NCSNET) and the National Committee for Education Support Services (NCESS) identified a range of external barriers to learning that occur in a South African context and are still prevalent today (DoE, 1997c). Social structures have changed rapidly since 2000 and impact on communal life, education and socioeconomic contexts. These have resulted in severe barriers to learning compounded by poverty with the resulting under development, unemployment and unplanned urbanisation, the disintegration of family life, rising levels of violence and child abuse, the HIV pandemic and language and cultural differences (Prinsloo, 2005). Household living conditions and the context of the broader community where the home is located plays a role. Children from disadvantaged households are more likely to have inadequate access to housing and live in overcrowded conditions without sanitation that place severe strain on them. They are also susceptible to illness impacting absenteeism. Hunger and malnutrition are rife and impact on development, concentration and school attendance. Social factors like violence, including domestic violence, gang warfare and xenophobia also place children at risk. Parental illiteracy and a lack of skills to counteract the impact of disabilities further exclude learners. These children are more likely to be orphaned making them particularly vulnerable (DSD, DWCPD & UNICEF, 2012). All of these factors impact on barriers to learning and must be taken into consideration within inclusive education.

Societal attitudes within communities, amongst teachers and amongst learners compound the environmental barriers to learning. Discrimination towards people who are seen as "different" continues, emphasising the imperative necessity of including communities, and particularly parents, in raising awareness around inclusion. Statistics indicate that in South

Africa, there are 12,239,363 learners in ordinary schools and 19,034 of these learners are in special needs classes (Walton, 2011). A failure to acknowledge the central role of parents and include them in awareness raising and from diagnosis and assessment to curriculum development and ongoing assessment can be a major barrier to inclusive learning (DoBE, 2014). There likewise is often insufficient recognition of the importance of care givers and the need to ensure that care givers have the attitude and skills to adequately support children with disabilities and challenge attitudes of discrimination (DSD, DWCPD & UNICEF, 2012).

Findings of research undertaken in 2014 by the Human Rights Watch in five provinces of South Africa note key barriers contributing to exclusion which are still prevalent in the South African education system as being: 1) Discrimination in accessing education, with schools having the power to decide who will be accepted or not and often discriminating against children with disabilities. 2) Difficulties in securing suitable accommodation, including physical and attitudinal barriers. 3) High costs of fees and other expenses incurred by parents of children with special needs, including special food, transportation, diapers, etc. 4) Violence, abuse and neglect to which children with special needs are particularly vulnerable. 5) A lack of quality education and negative and discriminatory teacher attitudes. 6) A lack of skills to prepare learners for employment after school. The report highlights the impact of uneven learner support and concludes that schools are complicit in exclusion (Human Rights Watch, 2015). Within this context, policies and systems of inclusion in South Africa have to take into account the extreme inequalities and legacy of racial discrimination. While this is a challenge, a successful inclusive education system has potential to shift prejudices and attitudes and impact positively on society at large.

2.4.2 Internal / Learner Specific Barriers to Learning

External and internal barriers to learning do not exist in isolation but are interactive and complex with a wide spectrum of systems and interrelations which impact on learners' ability to access and benefit from education. As discussed in the previous section, these external barriers are primarily societal. Learners, however, also confront internal / intrinsic barriers to learning which are specific to individual learners. These may include physical impairment of varying degrees, usually in the area of mobility and therefore emphasising the need for improving mobility and learners' ability to move on their own. Visual impairment, although regarded as low-incidence, impact teachers, particularly, who need special support in accommodating visually impaired learners in the classroom. Deaf or hard of hearing is one of the most prevalent disabilities but it is difficult to recognise and to appreciate the extent

of the barrier to learning because it is invisible. Learners on the autism spectrum disorder face specific barriers. Those which manifest early in the child's life, especially, can lead to serious barriers to learning often manifesting as behavioral disorders and making early recognition important. There is a range of learning and intellectual impairments. These range from barriers which prevent learners' ability to cope with curriculum subjects to those which are less conspicuous. Behavioral barriers are increasingly prevalent and are largely linked to the disruption of a safe and secure family life; teachers' inability to cope with diverse learning requirements; and the breakdown of communal life.

As mentioned at the beginning of this section, external and internal barriers to learning do not exist in isolation but are interrelated as they co-exist. Bronfenbrenner's bio-ecological model was introduced as a useful tool for understanding the learner in contextin Chapter 1. This is now examined in more detail to better understand the interrelatedness of relationships and context and the impact on barriers to learning.

2.5 The Bio-Ecological Model

To better understand the complexity of influences between an individual learner and the many other systems with which the learner interrelates, and how these compound or reduce barriers to learning, it is useful to examine the bio-ecological model. The model was first introduced by Bronfenbrenner in the 1970s and initially referred to as the ecosystems theory (Engelbrecht *et al.*, 2016). *Figure 2.1: Bronfenbrenner's bio-ecological model* illustrates the interrelatedness of the various systems and relationships between the individual and the environment which will impact barriers to learning and therefore the implementation of inclusive education.
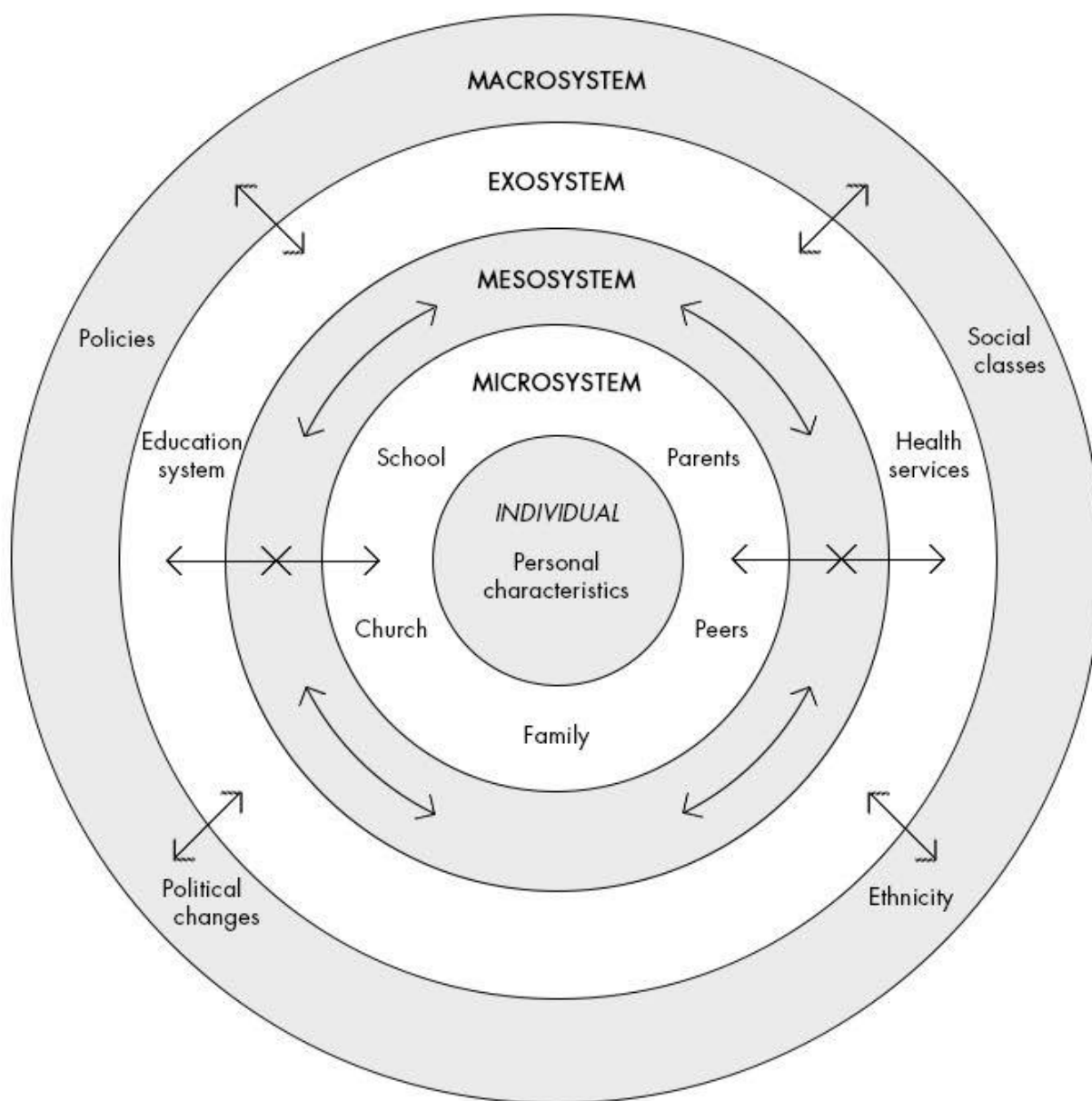
Figure 2.1:   A schematic diagram of Bronfenbrenner's Bio-ecological Model (Hyman, 2014)

Bronfenbrenner's bio-ecological systems model as illustrated in Figure 2.1 is often used in inclusive education discourse as a tool to understand the layers of interactions and interrelations which have an impact on learners (Swart & Pettipher, 2016). Bronfenbrenner's theory examines the multidimensional, contextualist model of human development. Bronfenbrenner recognised the physical, biological, psychological, social and cultural layers which impact on an individual's development and the interaction between development and these systems (Donald, Lazarus & Lolwana, 2010).

The theory is a useful tool towards deepening the understanding of inclusive education, which is also about systems like mainstreaming and full-service schools, the individual within these systems and the relationship between them. The model can also be used to understand classrooms and schools, all of which are systems, and the impact which these have on individual learners' development. Each of these relationships has potential to help or hinder the individual's development. Thus understanding the impact of relationships between individuals and systems provides opportunities for enhancement of the positive relationships and reduction of the barriers (Swart & Pettipher, 2016).

In addition, the theory can be used to examine the multidimensional nature of the change required for inclusive education and serves as a useful tool to place the challenges facing our education system into context (Swart & Pettipher, 2016; Mahlo, 2013). As illustrated in Figure 2.1, the various systems are nested within each other and no shift towards inclusion can be undertaken in isolation but will impact on and be influenced by factors within the micro-, meso-, exo and macrosystems. A holistic intervention is required for inclusion to work. Swart and Pettipher (2016) also point out that this theory is useful for understanding the complexity and interactional nature of the continuum of barriers to learning and development as they manifest within the South African context. According to Bronfenbrenner's theory, it is impossible to separate individual development from social development, especially in a developing country like South Africa (Swart & Pettipher, 2016). Bronfenbrenner (2005) stated that the external influences that affect the individual's behaviour and development are dependent on objective physical conditions and events which therefore, in terms of inclusive education in South Africa, make allowance for the inclusion of several key components – the government, community, culture, schools and economic status – all of which affect what support learners are receiving and therefore how teachers perceive learner support in a full-service school.

The complexity of the influences, interactions and interrelationships between the individual learner and the multiple other systems in which he or she functions, becomes evident through the bio-ecological model. As illustrated by the direction of the arrows in Figure 2.1, the factors influencing the individual are not in one direction, but rather are bi-directional at the same time. Just as the environment impacts on the individual, so to the individual affects the environment through interaction with it so changes within a system affect and influence other changes (Bronfenbrenner, 2005). As demonstrated in Figure 2.1 Bronfenbrenner puts forward five levels of systems that influence an individual's development. These levels of environment include the microsystem, the mesosystem, the exosystem and the

macrosystem. The above systems all interact with a fifth system called the chronosystem. This captures how time relates to the interaction between systems, as well as the influence each has on an individual's development. A closer examination of these systems is useful.

The microsystem describes the interaction between the individual and the structures and systems with which they have direct contact. The microsystem is nested within the meso/exosystem at the centre of the theory with direct influence on the individual. This describes the individual and their interpersonal relationships with parents, family, school, peers and church. These interactions occur regularly and they shape the individual's development. A positive microsystem plays a role in supporting an individual's sense of belonging (Berk, 2000; Donald *et al.*, 2010; Swart & Pettipher, 2016).

The interactions that occur in the microsystem are nested within the mesosystem. The mesosystem connects the structures of an individual's microsystem (Berk, 2000). An example of this is that the school connects the home and peer group of an individual. All interact and therefore influence one another, whether in a negative way which will serve as a barrier and have a negative influence on an individual's development or in a positive way which will influence the individual positively (Donald *et al.,* 2010; Swart & Pettipher, 2016).

The exosystem refers to the larger social context in which an individual is not directly involved as an active participant, but which will have a direct impact on the individual. Included in the exosystem would be systems like the educational system, health service, etc. The impact of the exosystem presents on a continuum ranging from examples of barriers to learning,such as when an individual has no access to adequate health services and is therefore absent from school for extended periods, to being a protective factor, as in an individual benefitting from an effective inclusive education system (Swart & Pettipher, 2016).

All three of the above systems are influenced by the macrosystem. The macrosystem represents the system that is the most distant from the individual but still affects his or herenvironment. It can be seen as a cultural guide which predetermines certain structures within society. Macrosystems include social classes, ethnicity and geographic location (Swart & Pettipher, 2016). Although it is the system which is farthest away from the individual, the macrosystem will ultimately have an effect on the individual in the micro-system; for example, an inclusive education policy will influence the school, classroom, parents and, of course, the individual learner. In South Africa, the change in government structures and policies from the Apartheid regime to a democratic government had an impact on all citizens and societal systems, including the education system. These changes on a

macro level affect interactions between the microsystems within the mesosystem: the teachers, learners, schools and communities are thus affected. More closely related are the changes in the education system. An example is how Education White Paper 6, as a policy structure, has impacted the role of inclusive education in this country (Donald *et al.*, 2010; Swart & Pettipher, 2016).

Every system within an individual's context is influenced by the dimension of time, the chronosystem. The chronosystem offers ways to understand differences across time as experienced by individuals and how time relates to interaction between the systems. The introduction of a new education system at a time which coincided with the demise of Apartheid in South Africa provided both opportunities and threats amongst teachers and learners (Swart & Pettipher, 2016).

Central to the bio-ecological model is the concept of proximal processes which state that development takes place when there is interaction between an individual (person) and the environment. Proximal processes impact on development and are a result of person-environment interaction. Ever more complex reciprocal relationships between person and environment are necessary for development to take place. These relationships can lead to positive or negative developments. However, for proximal processes to be effective, they need to occur regularly and over extended periods of time. Although proximal processes evolve over time, they are minimised by interruptions. For an individual learner's development, factors like poverty, violence and homelessness will reduce the efficacy of proximal processes. An effective inclusive education system equally requires continued, reciprocal, regular interactions (Swart & Pettipher, 2016). Thus, for processes like learner support services to be effective they need to occur regularly and over an extended period of time.

Bronfenbrenner's later work placed more emphasis on the role of the individual in influencing their own development. The theory evolved to explore a continuum of relationships from Process – Person - Context – Time (Tudge, Makrova, Hatfield & Karnik, 2009; Swart & Pettipher, 2016). These relationships are influenced by the characteristics of the individual (person) and their relationship with the context. Person characteristics which impact development outcomes include: 1) Demand characteristics which provoke immediate reaction from the social environment. These would include gender, age, physical appearance and skin colour. Demand characteristics evoke expectations based on people's perceptions and prejudices. 2) Resource characteristics which are not immediately apparent

but which influence the capacity of individuals to engage effectively (Tudge *et al.*, 2009). These would include resources like abilities, knowledge and skills, as well as social and material resources like housing, family relationships and physical impairments, all of which have an impact on the individual's ability to engage. 3) Force characteristics which can mobilise or limit and even prevent processes. This includes an individual's disposition, feelings of insecurity, levels of aggression, etc. (Swart & Pettipher, 2016). The development of individuals who have experienced similar contexts can therefore vary according to their dispositions; a will to succeed in an individual will result in a different outcome to one who lacks the same will although the context may be similar (Tudge *et al.*, 2009).

Bronfenbrenner's theory facilitates understanding of the relationship between the different systems at play in an individual's life. Relationships between the environment and characteristics of individuals are in constant interplay and impact an individual's development. Thus, while one works with individual teachers, learners or parents, one can never lose sight of the complex systems in which the individual functions (Swart & Pettipher, 2016). Just as learners' development is constantly being informed by these inter-relations, so, too, will teachers and all other roleplayers in the school system be affected. The research utilised this model to inform the understanding of teachers' perspectives. Teachers' perspectives depend on their interaction with their world, the complex systems with which they are relating and their personal characteristics, and how they interpret and make meaning of their experiences through their teaching careers (Bronfenbrenner, 2005; Rogoff, 2005). As a researcher, it is not possible to understand the teachers' perspectives unless one is sensitive to the different systems and personal and contextual influences affecting the teachers and the learners. Taken into account for this research included the personal characteristics of teachers, the length of time of their involvement with inclusive education as well as the context of the full-service school where the research was undertaken and the relationship between these factors and how this impacts teachers' perspectives.

Using the bio-ecological model as a framework to understand inclusive education and the interrelatedness of the various systems, I now go on to the main body of the research and examine some of the processes within the various systems which impact on learner support. These are processes which are part of the inclusive education context in South Africa and which particularly impact on learner support, the first of which is full-service schools.

2.6 Full-Service Schools in South Africa

One of the primary strategies towards inclusion located within the microsystem is the

development of full-service schools. As explained in Chapter 1, the development of full-service schools in the South African education system is guided by White Paper 6 and the Guidelines for Full-Service Schools published by the Department of Basic Education in 2015. These policies define a full-service school as a school "that will be equipped and supported to provide for the full range of learning needs among all our learners" (DoE, 2001, p. 22). The Department of Education's 20-year plan to transform the education system into an inclusive education system referred to earlier, included the development of 30 pilot full-service schools in 9 districts as one of the key strategies. These schools were ordinary primary schools which were to be supported with the necessary physical, material, human resources and professional development of teachers to accommodate a diverse range of learner needs and become models which other schools could emulate (Engelbrecht *et al.*, 2016). In line with principles of collaboration, as examined in Section 2.6.1, it was envisioned that full-service schools would also co-ordinate area clusters for inclusive education, by supporting surrounding schools and teachers in shifting towards more inclusive practices. Full-service schools should provide site-based (school level) support through a functioning Institutional Level Support Team (ILST); support neighbouring schools in transforming towards inclusive education; collaborate closely with special schools serving as resource centres in exchanging knowledge and skills; and work closely with District-Based Support Teams (DBST) (Engelbrecht *et al.*, 2016; DoBE, 2005b).

Full-service schools are developed to cultivate an inclusive culture and practice that will improve all aspects of the school (Swart & Pettipher, 2016). The ethos and guiding principles of a full-service school include the development of an inclusive society celebrating diversity and reducing stigmatisation and labelling; pursuing a holistic, flexible approach to learning in the spirit of collaboration whereby everyone is responsible for the education of learners; respecting diversity and encouraging inclusive attitudes; and becoming a beacon of transformation in the areas where they are located. Full-service schools aim to achieve access, equity, quality and social justice in education while promoting a sense of belonging so that all learners, staff and families experience a sense of worth in the learning community. A successful full-service school will foster a climate of respect among teachers, parents and learners and will combat and reduce prejudice. These schools should therefore welcome all learners and celebrate the diversity of each learner walking through their doors (DoBE, 2010a). In the full-service school where the research was undertaken participants referred to the respect among teachers, learners and parents and noted that the school makes an effort to ensure that inclusive values and attitudes are reflected in the way the school

operates within the systems and structures and permeate all aspects of the school's life (Middlewood *et al.*, 2005).

Priorities in full-service schools include training of personnel in new roles; a focus on multi-level classroom instruction; co-operative learning and teaching; and the development of learners' strengths and competencies, rather than focusing on their shortcomings (DoE, 2001). Participants in the research referred to each of these priorities as essential to a full-service school and noted examples where they were evident (*Refer to Chapter 4: Research data and findings).* The fundamental focus of full-service schools is to encourage a mind shift in the way schools regard barriers to learning, including disabilities. A full-service school should not use the medical deficit model to categorise learners, but should rather seek to address barriers and enable learners to participate in mainstream classes (Engelbrecht*et al.*, 2016). Full-service schools need to be advocates for all learners who are at risk of becoming marginalised, including learners with disabilities, chronic illness, learning difficulties and social, emotional and behaviour problems. Full-service schools demonstrate how all children of school-going age can attend school and achieve their full potential (DoBE, 2010a). According to White Paper 6 (DoE, 2001), teachers in full-service schools will be assisted and "developed" to be able to cope with learners and enable them to reach their full potential.

The development of teachers will enable them to ensure that full-service schools respond to diversity by providing appropriate education for all individual needs (DoBE, 2010a). Full-service schools have to ensure that all learners can access the curriculum through the way in which teaching is conducted and provide support to learners in multiple ways so as not to refer them to different institutions or "special schools". In order to address diverse barriers and learning requirements of learners, full-service schools are responsible for establishing methods to assist curriculum and institutional transformation. Within a full-service school there is a need for flexible curriculum and teaching practices catering for diverse learning styles. During the research, participants gave examples of flexibility and of using various teaching practices including taking learners out of classrooms for short periods of time, as well as making use of technology and extending or adapting the curriculum *(Refer to Chapter 4).* A well-functioning full-service school will be able to provide models of curriculum and inclusive teaching practice to serve as a resource for other schools and teachers who are striving for inclusion. This will ensure both an awareness of diversity, and that support will be available to those learners and teachers who need it (DoBE, 2005a) (*Refer to Section 2.8: Inclusive pedagogy in a full-service school).*

Full-service schools should have the capacity to respond to diversity and to address diverse barriers to learning. In order to do so, they should provide appropriate education and facilities catering for the specific needs of each learner, irrespective of the difficulties and barriers experienced by the learner. While teachers and school leadership are of paramount importance, the need for adequate resources to accommodate all learners in full-service schools is crucial. Resources would include sufficient personnel, including facilitators; accessible buildings; access to professional services; and collaborative networks. Schools must be safe and secure for teachers and learners (DoBE, 2010a). The first challenge is to ensure transport to school is accessible for learners so that all learners of school-going age can attend school. The DBST is supposed to play a role in ensuring adequate and safe transportation. Furthermore, an access audit should be undertaken to ensure that schools, classrooms and ablution facilities are sufficient and accessible. This would include facilities like wheelchair ramps and at least one wheelchair toilet per school. Individual parents should not be expected to pay for resources (DoBE, 2010d), although participants noted that parents finance facilitators and that the Governing Body uses income like school fees to employ additional teachers in this school. In addition, it is important that there are material resources to support learners with diverse abilities. The schools need access to adaptations like braille and appropriate software that reduce the barriers of learners with disabilities. Teachers must be trained in how to assess and recommend devices according to learners' disabilities. Teachers also need to be trained in how to use the devices in order to be able to support learners. One of the functions of the DBST is to establish resource centres where apparatus is available for learners (DoBE, 2010a). A full-service school requires physical and infrastructural resources to make it accessible and to reduce the barriers of learners, especially those with disabilities.

As with all inclusive education strategies, a collaborative way of working with all roleplayers, learners, teachers, parents, members of the community and other mainstream and special schools in the area is key for full-service schools to function effectively. Full-service schools should network with and benefit from collaboration with district-based support teams and special schools functioning as resource centres (Makhalemele & Nel, 2014). Full-service schools have potential to become a collaborative hub holding and implementing collaborative principles and practices. The research showed that the full-service school received limited support from district-based support teams, but confirmed that the school functioned as a learning resource for other schools, with principals wishing to improve inclusion.

The theory underpinning the development of full-service schools and the realities within these schools are not always congruent. Although the system has achieved the quantitative goal of establishing 510 full-service schools, it has been argued that the Department of Education has failed to provide adequate support for the transition. This is demonstrated by inadequate provision of learning materials, a lack of physical infrastructure and ineffective or inaccessible district-based support teams. Without adequate support, resources and training, full-service schools continue to use the medical deficit model and to place learners in special needs classes, thereby failing in their mandate to extend an inclusive, mainstream education for all learners. The Department of Education's report on the implementation of Education White Paper 6 notes that full service schools are not operating to full capacity and that there is no consistency in how learners with disabilities are identified, assessed and catered for (DoBE, 2015). Findings of research undertaken in a South African full-service school demonstrated that teachers in some full-service schools remain ambivalent about the value of inclusion and were more focused on curriculum than on developing support strategies. The practice of referring learners with disabilities to special classes continues. Teachers' responses indicated that they did not believe South African full-service schools have the necessary resources to cater for diverse learning needs (Engelbrecht *et al*., 2016).

While full-service schools have the potential to be models of inclusion and are a central strategy in inclusive education, many of these schools are struggling to achieve their ideals. A lack of infrastructure; inadequate support from the Department of Education; and negative attitudes of teachers hamper the full potential of full-service schools and highlight the need for adequate learner support systems.

2.7 Learner Support in Full-Service Schools

The point of departure for learner support in inclusive education systems like full-service schools is that every learner can learn and that schools, teachers and the education system as a whole must provide support for all learners to succeed. As noted before, this is in contrast with the medical deficit model and the belief that children have "special needs" which must be "fixed" in special classes or schools. Thus learner support addresses barriers to inclusion and acknowledges the potential of learners to grow and reach maximum levels of independence. Learner support includes all activities which uncover and reduce barriers to learning and which mobilise resources (Booth & Ainscow, 2011). Based on the bio-ecological model and the recognition of the centrality of the person-in-environment, learner support requires that it is essential that all interacting factors are taken into account when a

learner is identified as experiencing barriers. This means the gathering of comprehensive information around the learner including home, community and school circumstances. Thus, learner support involves teachers, learners and their families. The 1997 report of the NCSNET and NCESS recommended holistic and integrated learner support through inter-sectoral collaboration and community-led support systems focusing on preventative and developmental approaches. The complexity of learner support therefore highlights the need for a functional support service (Makhalemele & Nel, 2014).

One of the challenges of learner support, however, is how to offer support without perpetuating segregation and discrimination. Although inclusive education seeks to facilitate a shift from the medical deficit model to the social model of difference, White Paper 6 still approaches learner support from a deficit model in stating that learners require differing levels of support according to the barriers to learning which confront them (Engelbrecht *et al.*, 2016).

Three Tier Pyramid of Support

Tier 3 : Intensive, Individual Interventions
- High Intensity
- Long duration

5%
Seen as having high needs

Tier 2 : Targeted Group Interventions
- Moderate Intensity
- Short term

15%
Seen as learners who are at risk

Tier 1 : Core Interventions (for all learners)
- Preventative
- Proactive

80%
of learners
seen as needing only core interventions-
including learners with reading difficulties, teenage pregnancy, victims of abuse, poverty, language barriers

Figure 2.2; The three-tier pyramid of support (DoBE, 2015)

The three-tier pyramid of support and intervention illustrated in Figure 2:2 and described in the Department of Education's Consolidated WP6 Progress Report 2013–2015 argues that 80% of learners will need core interventions which are both preventative and proactive. These include learners with specific learning difficulties like reading challenges, teenagers who are pregnant, victims of abuse, orphans and learners with language barriers. These learners are accommodated in conventional mainstream schools. The 15% of learners classified as "at risk" will need moderate intensity interventions which are often short termed. These would include grade repeaters and learners with more serious learning difficulties. These learners are accommodated in conventional mainstream or full-service schools. In the third tier, 5% of learners may have high needs requiring intensive and individual support interventions (DoBE, 2015) and may be accommodated in full-service or special schools. The Department recommends that rating of learners should take place on a flexible scale from 1 (low intensity support) to 5 (high intensity support) and that assessment should be flexible and continuous in recognising that levels of support can be adjusted as learners overcome barriers.

While these measures remain within the deficit model it can be argued that it is idealistic to expect a fully inclusive educational system to be in place while the South African education system continues to be mired in the challenges of inadequately trained teachers, overcrowded classrooms and ineffective support services (Makhalemele &Nel, 2014).

Placement of learners on the pyramid of support and designing learner support programmes requires continuous assessment. The Department of Basic Education's Policy on Screening, Identification and Assessment Support (SIAS) is aimed at supporting teachers in identifying the level of support required in schools and in the classroom to ensure maximum participation (DoBE, 2014). SIAS gives guidelines as to how needs are identified and how to decide on the level of learner support needed. SIAS also assists with allocation of roles and responsibilities within the learner support programme and guides the school with regard to support services. Support services detailed in SIAS cover the provision of specialised staff including teachers, institutional level support teams and district-based support teams; the provision of assistive devices and specialised equipment; curriculum differentiation; training and guidance; and environmental access. SIAS emphasises the importance of the assessment process and the importance of ensuring that learners, teachers and parents lead the assessment. To ensure co-operation, assessments must be undertaken in a respectful and transparent manner that accommodates the individual's particular context in terms of race, gender, culture and differing abilities. It is important that assessments are

multi-dimensional and holistic to identify all barriers to learning. Assessment is an ongoing and continuous process rather than a once-off process. Outcomes should be clearly documented and communicated to all involved while at the same time being sensitive to confidentiality. Individual assessments and support programmes need to be ratified by the district-based support teams (DoBE, 2014).

Based on the outcomes of this assessment learner support programmes should be developed, using all available support resources. One of the resources is the Department of Education which contributes to learner support through the provision of support personnel at a district level through the establishment of district-based support teams (DBSTs) and institutional level support teams (ILSTs).

2.7.1 District-Based Support Teams (DBST)

Formal and professional support service is essential for learners to achieve their optimal potential. International research shows that teachers and learners acknowledge that formal support mechanisms had a positive impact on academic progress (Makhalemele &Nel, 2014). White Paper 6, which was followed by the Conceptual and Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of Inclusive Education; District-Based Support Teams (DoBE, 2005b) highlighted the need for holistic integrated support through inter-sectoral collaboration. A key structure of these policies for learner support systems is the District-Based Support Team (DBST) (Makhalemele & Nel, 2014).

The function of the DBST is to assist education institutions to identify and address barriers to learning and promote effective teaching and learning (Engelbrecht*et al*., 2016). The DBSTs spearhead the reconceptualisation and restructuring of education support services away from the conventional consultation and referral approach. A DBST should include specialists like psychologists, counsellors and therapists and health and welfare workers employed by the Department of Education, NGOs and local community-based organisations (Makhalemele & Nel, 2014). DBSTs offer classroom / teacher and organisational support, including specialised learner support where necessary. The DBST should support the development and functioning of Institutional Level Support Teams (Mfuthwana, 2016). Curriculum specialists support teachers in developing dynamic and flexible curriculum and in adapting teaching practices to enable maximum participation, while management specialists and administrative experts provide guidelines on school management, administrative and financial systems (Landsberg, 2012).

Research has shown that DBSTs in South Africa are generally not equipped to carry out their function. This is compounded by a lack of common understanding of the role and responsibilities by many of the roleplayers within the education system (Barratt, 2016). Primary challenges faced by DBSTs include the vast distances which DBST personnel need to travel to schools which they are supposed to service and the lack of available transport or time to travel; inadequate training of personnel, especially from the Department of Basic Education; lack of infrastructure including buildings and communication systems; insufficient personnel; and a lack of clarity about what their role is and how to fulfil this. The result is that DBSTs in the main are not equipped to carry out their function as set out in White Paper 6 (Makhalemele & Nel, 2014). In the context of the failure of DBSTs, the development of functioning institutional level support teams becomes even more important.

2.7.2 Institutional Level Support Teams (ILST)

The support provided by the DBST needs to be supplemented at a school level through the establishment of institutional level support teams (ILSTs) within the school. ILSTs are based within schools and should consist of teachers, other staff like administrators and learners (Makhalemele & Nel, 2014). ILSTs are important for providing in-service training and enhancing capacity for assessment skills amongst teachers; establishing networks within the school and community to challenge barriers to learning and promote inclusion; tracking learner development through continuous assessment; overseeing the placement of learners where necessary; facilitating the sharing of resources; and ensuring parental involvement (Landsberg, 2012). As part of the practice of collaboration, ILST teachers are encouraged to network with teachers from other schools and particularly with professionals from special schools serving as resource centres (Makhalemele & Nel, 2014). Full-service schools are encouraged to appoint a designated learning support teacher who will facilitate consultations with parents and teachers to ensure all learners succeed; support teachers' growth; and facilitate support programmes in schools (DoBE, 2010a). In the Department of Basic Education's report on the implementation of White Paper 6, it is recommended that all full-service schools be allocated a dedicated post for a Support Team Co-ordinator (DoBE, 2015). In the full-service school at whichthe research was undertaken, the ILST plays a central role with regard to inclusion. The ILST has three dedicated inclusive support staff enabling the team to manage all support services, provide one-on-one or individual support to learners where needed, and to set up and maintain collaborative networks *(Refer to Chapter 4).*

While inclusive education methodology reduces the need for individual support there may still be cases when learners may require focussed individual support programmes, always with the intention of encouraging independence and integration into the collective learning space. These individual support programmes are coordinated by the teacher together with the ILSTs and with participation of learners and parents and require careful preparation, planning and monitoring. Individual learner support programmes have five basic requirements: 1) Assessment to ascertain what the learner has already mastered. This includes taking home and community circumstances into account;interviews with previous teachers; review of academic records and workbooks and curriculum-based tests. 2) Formulation of expected outcomes. These flow from the assessment and should be clear outcomes agreed upon with learners and parents. 3) Curriculum development, which must work from the level at which the learner is and be based on the learner's experiences. 4) Choosing learner support strategies and methods. These must be adapted to the learners' preferred style of learning (some learners,for example, prefer visual or experiential learning). 5) Continuous assessment to determine progress both in the classroom and in everyday life to ascertain progress and inform ongoing support programmes (Landsberg, 2012).

Learner facilitators are engaged to support the ILST in providing one-to-one support to learners,. The learner support facilitator provides support to enable the learner to remain in a mainstream classroom and will interact with the curriculum and support learning. Facilitators need to have rapport and empathy with the learner while at the same time setting boundaries and constantly working towards independence. Learner facilitators are either assigned by the school or ILST, or requested by parents (Bergstedt, 2016). A number of learners in the school where the research was undertaken are assigned facilitators.As discussed in Chapter 5, however,the fact that parents pay for these services excludes learners who are part of poorer families.

To support the ILSTs and to accommodate learners with disabilities who have not yet been mainstreamed or are in the top 5% of severe disabilities (*Refer to Figure 2.2),* provision is made for special schools which will serve as resource centres.

2.7.3 Special Schools as Resource Centres (SSRC)

The function of SSRCs is to improve educational services to learners. SSRCs should be integrated into the DBSTs to provide specialised professional support and resources to full-service and mainstream schools. SSRCs have a particular roll to play in supporting schools through early detection of barriers, to develop curriculum and instructional practices which

accommodate all learners and to prepare learners with disabilities for mainstreaming (Makhalemele & Nel, 2014).

Challenges that hamper the effective functioning of SSRCs include geographic location, with many rural schools not able to access the resource centres. This impacts learners who are not able to access the infrastructure and equipment in the resource centres and teachers who are unable to benefit from skills transfer regarding how best to accommodate learners with disabilities. The Department of Education in their report on the implementation of White Paper 6 note that special schools do not have adequate specialist professional support staff or non-teaching staff (DoBE, 2015). The inadequate support provided by SSRCs and insufficient number of these schools has resulted in a high percentage of dropouts among learners with disabilities who struggle to be included in mainstream schools and cannot be accommodated in SSRCs (Makhalemele & Nel, 2014).

South Africa's history of learner support mirrors societal inequalities. Historically, support services were reasonably well developed in white, coloured and Indian schools, but radically underdeveloped in black schools. This resulted in a support system that, although highly specialised and very expensive, only benefitted a limited number of learners (Swart & Pettipher, 2016). There remains a number of challenges in shifting towards inclusive learner support. Engelbrecht *et al.* (2016) argue that support services in South Africa remain inadequate, fragmented and un-coordinated, especially in rural.

Learner support in inclusive education should be dynamic and inclusive requiring inter-sectoral collaboration and commitment from all roleplayers, from parents and community leaders, to teachers and schools and to learners. At the same time, teachers play a central role in a successful learner support programme. For learner support to be effective, teachers need to be committed to inclusion and be prepared to accommodate diverse learning requirements in their classrooms. The next section examines the role of teachers in providing learner support and implementing inclusive pedagogy methodology in greater depth.

2.8 Inclusive Pedagogy In A Full-Service School

The "quality" of teachers is recognised as the most important aspect in the quality of inclusive education. What teachers do is recognised as the single most important factor in addressing barriers and facilitating learning (Kozleski*et al.,* 2016). In a full-service school particularly, teachers need to implement inclusive practices which accommodate diverse learning styles

and use varied means of ongoing assessment to promote academic success as well as social, cultural and physical well-being. One such inclusive teaching practice is referred to as inclusive pedagogy and is central to teachers' ability to accommodate all learners and will inform their perceptions of learner support. Participants in this research project referred to examples of teachers using both behavioural and constructivist methods of teaching and being creative and flexible in providing learner support and creating a climate conducive to learning.

Inclusive pedagogy requires teachers to recognise the limitations of traditional approaches to learner difference and to adopt an inclusive pedagogical approach (Florian & Graham, 2014). Investing in equipping teachers with attitudes and skills of inclusion therefore is of utmost importance. Many teachers are not adequately prepared for inclusive education (ARACY, 2013). Research has shown that primary school teachers in SA, although supportive of inclusion in principle, have reservations around implementation (Swart & Pettipher, 2016). It is of primary importance that teachers receive support to change attitudes and gain confidence in preparing themselves to cope with the challenges of inclusion. Academics in the field of inclusive education promote an orientation towards enabling teachers to use and expand on their existing skills and knowledge. There is an assumption that teachers have knowledge and understanding of the specific needs of learners and that inclusive "training" should build on these skills (Florian & Linklater, 2010). Walton (2011) suggests that, along with inclusive teaching strategies, teachers also need to question value systems, beliefs, structures and practices that reinforce the pattern of exclusion in South African society.

The adaption of strategies from traditional teaching approaches is referred to as behavioural teaching. Behavioural teaching places teachers at the centre and uses strategies like prompting, reinforcing, technology and multi-level and multi-sensory methods of instruction. Within the behavioural teacher model, teachers would vary methods of instruction according to learners' needs (Makoelle, 2014). Behavioural teaching can be complemented or replaced by constructivist pedagogy which is based on the principle that learning is a two-way process. Within the constructivist approach, the value of questioning is appreciated and, in particular, voluntary, mutual and creative decision making. In a classroom where constructivist methods are pursued, a partnership with learners which fosters mutual learningwill therefore be developed. Such a practice enhances self-esteem, encourages learners to think critically and uses problem solving as a strategy for learning. Within a constructivist learning environment, learning will take place through discovery, thereby

making learners part of the learning and teaching experience (Makoelle, 2014). A successful full-service school should encourage teachers to use both behavioural and constructivist methods, thereby requiring teachers to be flexible and creative in instructional methods which cater for differing abilities, and creating an interactive learning environment. An inclusive teacher will be able to set tasks for a group of learners which they can tackle according to their varied abilities and to manage situations where some learners are working according to the curriculum while others are exploring outside of the curriculum (European Agency for Development in Special Needs Education, 2010b). From my observations in the full-service school where the research was undertaken I would argue that not all teachers are able to make the shift to inclusive pedagogy and that staff may be resistant and even leave a school which is uncompromising in its insistence on inclusion. To counteract resistance, it is important that there should be an emphasis on transforming attitudes at the same time as promoting inclusive methods of teaching, that institutions like schools and society at large should be sensitive to and inclusive of diversity in terms of gender, sexual orientation, physical disabilities, culture and race (European Agency for Development in Special Needs Education, 2010a; 2010b).

To facilitate a shift in attitude and enable teachers to adapt to changes in context requires that teachers pursue lifelong learning rather than rigid specialisation. The UNESCO International Report on Education supports theview that specialised training and "highly qualified teachers" do not necessarily equip teachers to deal with the diversity of learners with which they are confronted and advocates for a more general training equipping teachers with mainstream educator skills including behaviour management and social skills. Inclusion is a continuous and evolving process requiring a process of ongoing or lifelong learning (ARACY, 2013). Dynamic teachers are life-long learners. Inclusive pedagogy is an aspect of teachers' professional knowledge that begins with initial teacher training and continues throughout the teachers' career. Inclusion, moreover, is not a separate body of knowledge or an additional course to be studied, but is integral to a teachers' everyday practice. Inclusive pedagogy is a way of working rather than a skill to be acquired. Inclusive pedagogy is differentiated by the way teachers respond to individual differences; the choices they make about the group and how they utilise their specialist knowledge. This requires teachers to be able to make a situational analysis or practical judgement, the skill for which is sharpened by experience and ongoing self-reflection and learning. It requires teachers to be sensitive to the context and, rather than marking learners as different or less able, or simply ignoring differences, to extend the range of options available to learners.

Experienced teachers are often able to include learners which other less experienced teachers would feel ill equipped to cope with and would refer to specialised teachers. It is therefore important to seek ways in which the more experienced teachers who adopt an inclusive pedagogy can continuously support less experienced teachers. A collaborative system, attitudes of collaboration to support each other and activities like peer exchanges and field experience in an inclusive classroom help to equip teachers to challenge their own prejudices and those of the learners, develop empathy with individuals and recognise and use the resources for learning which minority groups and learners with disabilities bring to the classroom (European Agency for Development in Special Needs Education, 2010a). This requires teachers to reject the status quo, hone their perceptual skills and transform classroom practices towards extending opportunities for all to learn, rather than pre-judging and limiting learners (Florian & Graham, 2014). To teach in inclusive schools, teachers' pre-service training and in-service experience need to equip teachers with a common vision;a conceptual framework and language of inclusion and teaching skills; and inclusive classroom practices to cope with learners withdiverse needs (Swart & Pettipher, 2016).

While South Africa has embraced inclusive pedagogical practices in theory, challenges in the implementation remain. Research undertaken in a South African full-service school thathad been identified as a full-service school by the Department of Education in 2008 shows that mainstream teachers still felt that they were not equipped to teach children with disabilities and that they continued to refer these children to special classes where there were qualified health care professionals (Engelbrecht*et al.*, 2016). Another challenge is the large degree of variability in the practice of inclusive pedagogy which points to the fact that, while experience and intuition are important for teachers, there is also a need for more clarity about inclusion and its enactment to be taught to and fostered in teachers (Florian & Graham, 2014).

It is clear that inclusive pedagogy can only be successful in an atmosphere of collaboration or a learning community. Teams of teachers, collaborative practices and mutual support are imperative. The next section presents an in-depth consideration of the centrality of collaboration.

2.8.1 The Centrality of Collaboration in Inclusive Pedagogy

Teachers have a key role to play in inclusive education, but this cannot be an isolated responsibility (Makhalemele & Nel, 2014). To counter isolation and support teachers in facilitating a shift to an inclusive pedagogy, trans-disciplinary collaboration is regarded as

central (Nel *et al.*, 2014). Holistic support within a socio-ecological approach rather than the individual intervention approach requires interrelationships between roleplayers and relevant systems in collaborative partnership. Collaboration is key to inclusive pedagogy and to providing efficient support to learners who experience barriers (Makhalemele & Nel, 2014). Inclusive pedagogy thus requires an effective team approach, with professionals like psychologists and health care specialists; the school community including teachers, parents and learners; as well as roleplayers within the school district, like churches, NGOs and community-based organisations forming part of the team (Nel *et al.*, 2014).

Successful collaboration requires open communication, collective decision making, shared responsibility for decisions that are taken, a supportive environment, sharing of resources andvaluingall partners as equal (Makhalemele & Nel, 2014). Collaboration is especially important between schools, parents, institution and district level support teams, and community (Swart & Pettipher, 2016). In an effective collaborative community, roleplayers realise the value of interdependence whereby there is a realisation of the value and contribution of all and a culture of promoting one another's efforts to succeed (Nel *et al.*, 2014).

Research undertaken across a sample of schools in South Africa to ascertain how teachers view collaboration in an inclusive education system showed that collaboration systems were not functioning effectively (Nel *et al.*, 2014). Teachers' attitudes towards collaboration were affected by demotivation deriving from the education system in general; limited understanding of inclusive education; inadequate training; a lack of resources; and the large numbers of learners in the classroom. Access to collaborative supportive structures like District-Based Support Teams (DBST) was found to be unequal and contributing to the frustrations of teachers; in the Western Cape 88% of schools had access to a DBST while a mere 0,5% of schools have access in provinces like the Eastern Cape and in Limpopo it was as low as 0,3% (Nel *et al.*, 2014). Compounding the problem was the knowledge that collaboration requires training in collaborative strategies and teachers are not yet comprehensively trained in establishing collaborative partnerships. Teachers find themselves isolated and therefore continue to regard themselves as not having sufficient skill to accommodate learners with specific barriers in their classrooms. This means that the practice of medical diagnosis and referral of learners continues (Engelbrecht et al., 2016).

Inclusive pedagogy requires an attitude shift towards recognising that the learning of all learners is the teachers' responsibility, and providing support to teachers to imagine

alternative possibilities and a functioning collaborative network (Florian & Graham, 2014). In South Africa, unequal access to support systems, the varied capacity and confidence of teachers and insufficient collaboration continues to hamper inclusive pedagogy. An attitude of collaboration is often dependent on the collaborative example set by the leadership of the school. Leadership sets the tone for inclusion.

2.8.2 School Leadership in Inclusive Pedagogy

School principals must set the tone and shift the school towards becoming a community that is caring, as well as supportive (Swart & Pettipher, 2016). Supportive and visionary leadership backed by inclusive policies is necessary for a school to transform towards inclusion. Davidoff and Lazarus (2003) believe that principals are paramount for developing policies, aims and strategies of inclusion. The attitude of the principal to inclusion will impact on the attitudes of staff and parents, therefore principals must be visible and vocal advocates of inclusive practices. Principals must create a climate of support and collaboration which would include sufficient common planning time; ensuring that teachers have time for care and support programmes; the effective use of staff; and provision of learner support services and resources (DoBE, 2010d; Davidoff & Lazarus, 2003).

Principals take responsibility to ensure all children are accommodated and educated in the classrooms (Engelbrecht, 2006). Principals need to ensure that community members and parents are involved wherever possible and that the prescribed institutional level support systems are functioning. What I have become aware of so far in my experience of the full-service school where the research was undertaken confirms that a principal who actively promotes an ethos and practices of inclusion is the inspiration and energy behind a successfully functioning inclusive school.

School governing bodies (SGB) also need to take a lead in transformation and transition to inclusive systems. The governing body is the legal body which takes overall responsibility for the policies of the school. Davidoff and Lazarus (2003) point out that the SGB plays a central role in the transition of schools towards inclusion. In the ethos of inclusion it is important to recognise that every parent and community member can be a leader and therefore responsible leadership roles must be acknowledged and developed, both within the school and the community.

2.9 Conclusion

The literature review has highlighted the complex nature of inclusion and the centrality thereof in the shift towards a democratic society. Framing this review within Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems model facilitates the expansion of the concept from medical diagnosis to a more holistic recognition of the extent of barriers to learning and emphasises the imperative to support learners in overcoming barriers towards participation in mainstream education and society at large. While acknowledging that inclusion requires collaboration witha wide range of roleplayers, the importance of dynamic and committed teachers implementing inclusive pedagogical practices has been emphasised. Thus the need for learner support services which strengthen teachers' abilities to create an inclusive environment for learning is apparent. Following from this, the research explored teachers' attitudes to learner support in an effort to highlight successes and opportunities for improvement.

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

As discussed in Chapter 1, the aim of this study was to gain an in-depth understanding of teachers' experiences with regard to the support that learners receive in the full-service school in which they work. As this study was conducted from the perspective of a full-service school, it was also important to consider the teachers' recommendations for ensuring sufficient learner support. It was important to understand the research paradigm first, as the methodology and process to follow could be outlined and implemented once this had been identified and studied.

This chapter presents a discussion of the research approach that I followed in order to address the purpose of the research and to answer the research questions of this qualitative case study. The research methodology involves the role of the researcher, the setting of the research, the selection of participants, data collection methods, the process followed to analyse the data and data verification strategies. Ethical considerations as well as issues of data verification pertaining to this study are also considered.

3.2 Research Design

Durrheim (2006) described the research design of a study as "a strategic framework for action that serves as a bridge between research questions and the execution or implementation of the research" (p. 34). The design of the current study can be described as a qualitative case study design. As mentioned previously, the central characteristic of a case study lies in its "intensive descriptions and analysis of a single unit or bounded system" (Merriam, 2009, p. 19).

As mentioned in Chapter 1, Stake's (2006) single-instrumental case study was used because the focus was on a single phenomenon. This entails a case study of one case for acquiring knowledge of and insight into a specific phenomenon. An instrumental case study design implies that one can use the knowledge to generalise if the context, boundaries, unit of analysis and trail of evidence are all described very carefully and clearly. A case study may also be used to further develop theory; in the case of this study, though, the limitations of the study must be kept in mind. A full-service school is a bounded phenomenon limited to the different groups and individuals that play a role in its functioning and an instrumental

case study therefore was an appropriate design. It is of particular importance in this study to understand that this full-service school is just one example of a full-service school and that not all full-service schools function in the same way. The phenomenon of learner support in a full-service school could be understood in its own authentic framework by means of a case study (Baxter & Jack, 2008). Although a case study design was used in which the focus was on one specific school/setting, a wide variety of data was still required, as noted in Chapter 5, as follow-up contact with participants was necessary in order to answer the research question.

In this research design, several principles were looked at in order to achieve design coherence. These were: the theoretical framework, the purpose of the research; the context in which the research took place; the research paradigm; and the techniques used in order to carry out the research. The research process is represented in Figure 3.1. The paradigm, the context of the research as well as the research methodology and methods of data generation are discussed in the subsections that follow.
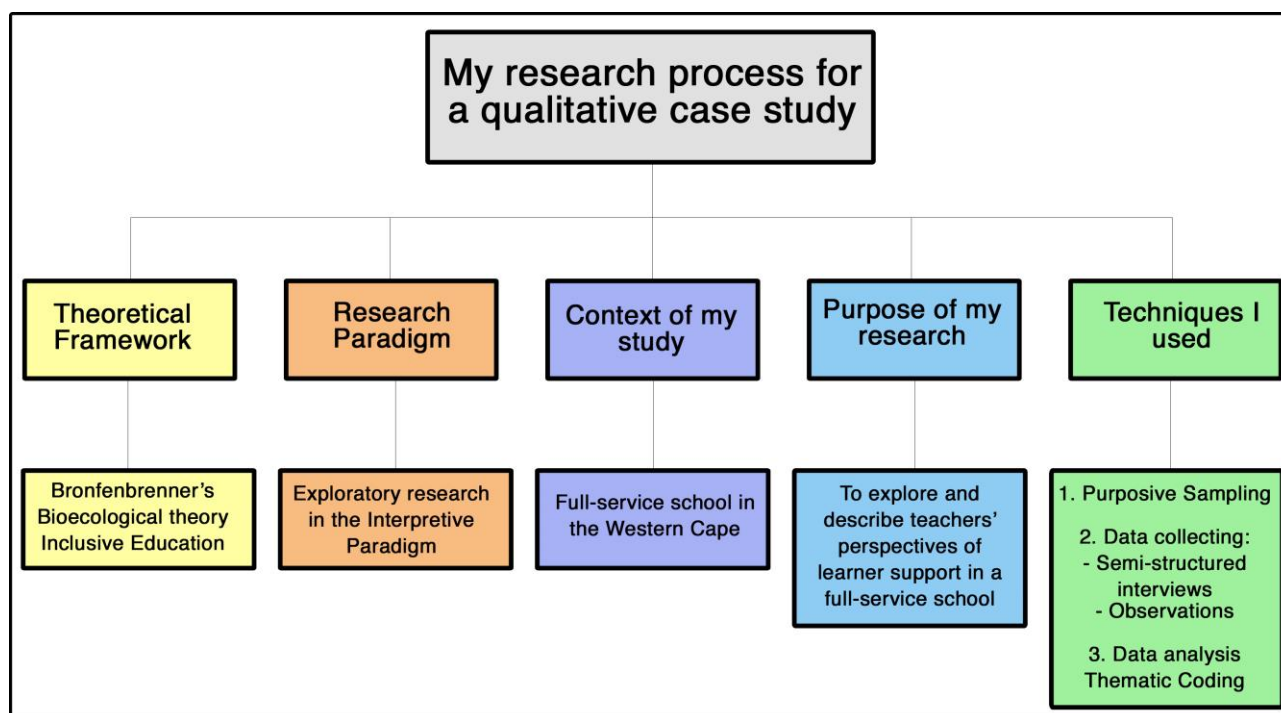
Figure 3.1: My research process

3.2.1 Research Paradigm

A paradigm is a 'pattern of thinking' adhered to by a particular person (Henning et al., 2004, p. 6). Bogdan and Knopp-Biklen (2007, p. 274) describe it as "a loose collection of logically related assumptions, concepts or propositions that orient thinking and research". A

paradigm is a model according to which design actions are taken within research. Terre Blanche and Durrheim (2006) stated that "(p)aradigms are all encompassing systems of interrelated practice and thinking that define for researchers the nature of their enquiry along three dimensions: ontology, epistemology and methodology" (p. 6). As mentioned in Chapter 1, this study was conducted within the interpretive paradigm. It is therefore necessary to first address the discussion involving the epistemology, ontology and methodology of the interpretive paradigm (Terre Blanche & Durrheim, 2006).

The ontological dimension of a paradigm refers to its stance on how the nature of reality is understood. This includes the description of concepts and relationships that are discussed in the study. Epistemology describes the relationship between the researcher and the acquired knowledge and how this knowledge becomes understood (Maree, 2007; Merriam, 2009). The epistemology of this study based in the interpretive paradigm would refer to the subjective meanings of the participants. The methodology of a study is the way in which the researcher approaches the question of epistemology and then attempts to bring the unknown reality into the known by studying the participants' subjective realities and perspectives. This allows the researcher to appreciate the feelings, attitudes and behaviour of the participants (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011; Terre Blanche & Durrheim, 2006). In the setting of this study, it was possible to understand the participants and experience their emotion and the passion for their jobs as they spoke.

Within the interpretive paradigm, the nature of reality or ontology, is viewed as the manner in which each individual holds a socially constructed view of their reality. Merriam (2009) has suggested that "there is no single, observable reality, rather, there are multiple realities, or interpretations, of a single event" (p. 8). Maree (2007) suggested that the unknown can only become known by asking questions about the reality of the individual and the meanings people attribute to events in their lives. This leads to a situation where knowledge is constructed interactively, between researcher and research participant. The contexts in which these participants exist can be understood because they play an important role in the manner in which they influence the way in which the participants construct reality (Maree, 2007).

The nature of reality is subjective, and an interactional space is therefore needed to form differing realities. The interpretive paradigm relies on specific methods which facilitate knowledge production (Strydom, 2011). The methodology of the interpretive paradigm then needs to ensure that it is possible to create a situation where the reality becomes known

through positive interaction between the researcher and research participant, which usually requires qualitative research, as is the case of this study (Terre Blanche & Durrheim, 2006). Appropriate methods used within the interpretive paradigm in the study include interviewing participants as well as observation and interaction with the school.

A collection of research methods that logically fit together for the purpose of the research and provides answers to the research questions is known as the research methodology (Durrheim, 2006; Henning *et al.*, 2004). A qualitative methodology is characterised by empirical, descriptive and detailed data. The way of working with the data is inductive and interpretive. This study soughtto gain insight into and understanding ofthe perspectives and experiences shared by the teachers as research participants (Maree, 2007). The researcher is central to the processes of the research methodology in qualitative studies, as none of the research procedures would be possible without the researcher's presence (Creswell, 2014; Henning *et al.*, 2004; Merriam, 2009). Qualitative research was therefore applied in this research study to understand the perspectives onlearner support of teachers who teach in a full-service school. Qualitative research is characterised by the fact that individuals, and therefore research participants, construct their own reality which is influenced by their social context and experiences.

3.2.2 Purpose of the Research and Research Questions

I chose a qualitative case study design within an interpretive paradigm for the purpose of this exploratory study. The purpose of a research study confirms the overall objective of the study (Creswell, 2014). The purpose of the research was to contribute to a deeper understanding of teachers' perspectives of the support which learners receive in a full-service school. It is important to keep in mind that this is a study of limited scope that is bound within its own system. Before engaging in further discussion on the research process and design implemented, it is necessary to revisit the research questions which were formulated in Chapter 1.
The main research question was:

What are teachers' perspectives on and experiences of support for learners within a full-service school?

The following sub-questions also guidedthe study.

What are the teachers' perspectives on Inclusive Education and the role of a full-service school?

How are learners with disabilities/barriers to learning, both external and internal, supported in participating in a full service school?

What are the teachers' roles in supporting learners in the classroom?

What recommendations would teachers give with regard to successful support to further the development of full-service schools?

3.2.3 Context of the Research

One of the defining characteristics of a qualitative design is the importance of the context in which the phenomenon being studied occurs. In a case study it is often difficult to distinguish between the unit of analysis and its context as they often go hand in hand (Yin, 2008; Baxter & Jack, 2008). As this study was conducted within an interpretive research paradigm, the meaning people attributed to various situations and experiences were understood through researcher and participant interaction. The context is essential because meaning is understood to be socially constructed and therefore the case under investigation cannot be seen in isolation. Henning *et al.* (2004) describe interpretive research as a collaborative practice and explain that the context is interrelated with the phenomenon under investigation. This research made use of semi-structured interviews as well as observation to find the meaning shared by the participants. Through interacting with the participants, I was able to gain an understanding of their thoughts and the emotions that accompanied their perspectives of learner support in the school in which they work.

The selected full-service school is a primary school situated in a middle class suburb in Cape Town. The school aims to provide a happy and safe yet stimulating learning environment for learners in Grades 1 to 7. With a team of staff members whom the principal reports to be committed, the school seeks to develop each child's full potential while providing learners with a voice and acknowledging them as individuals. According to the principal, the school encourages family involvement and values the relationship that they have with the wider community and environment. The school seems to take pride in working in a collaborative manner to enhance all learners' experiences. The full-service school in focus is one of only fifteen public primary schools in the country that is recognised for excellence in their inclusive approach to learning by being named one of Ashoka's 'changemaker' schools due to the fact that such a wide range of learning needs are met in and out of the classroom. Start Empathy (n.d.) describes these schools:

Changemaker Schools, in aspiration and practice, cultivate students as changemakers. They are vision-oriented and focused on the 'who' rather than the 'what', developing children as active contributors rather than passive recipients. They have high standards of excellence for students, teachers, and staff alike. They are also making the development of empathy a priority in their curricula, culture, and systems. They may be far advanced in these efforts or just beginning, but school leadership is committed to an aligned vision and has taken steps in pursuit of it.

The school is also recognised for having a diverse staff and including each staff member, as well as their community, in all school activities. The school's capacity building model is aimed at ensuring that teachers, facilitators and teacher aides, in collaboration with various specialists such as psychologists and occupational therapists, help all children to learn more effectively. This placed the school in the position of being an information rich site for conducting the research.

3.2.4 The Role of the Researcher

In qualitative research, the researcher plays an integral part and is actively involved in the research process. The subjective experiences and interpretation of the researcher must be recognised in qualitative studies. I aimed to conduct the data collection within the context in which the participants experience the investigated phenomenon, in this study, of learner support in a full-service school (Creswell, 2014). One such data collection method was using interviews so that I could explore different perspectives and understandings of participants in a relatively flexible manner (Mason, 2012). As previously stated, when working within an interpretive study, I, as the researcher, was the primary instrument in collecting and analysing the data by staying close to the research and being actively involved and continuously working with the data. According to Terre Blanche and Durrheim (2006), researchers in the interpretive paradigm do not follow a rigid, structured process when conducting the research, but make changes to the research questions when coming across new material, or make changes to the original sampling strategy based on new findings. Throughout this research, I was constantly interacting with all data in order to ensure that nothing of importance, interest or relevance went unnoticed.

3.2.5 Research Participants

Participants in a qualitative study need to have the relevant knowledge and experience needed for the study and be willing and reflective in their sharing of information. The process of selecting of the participants, within qualitative research, has an influential effect on the

outcome of the research (Coyne, 1997). Qualitative research studies commonly employ purposive sampling strategies (Marshall & Rossmann, 2011). Purposive sampling gives the researcher scope to choose a specific case because it demonstrates and highlights the specific topic or phenomenon that the researcher wants to study. It allows the researcher to think about the boundaries of the population being studied and then decide on a sample of participants. Selecting participants for the research study was a decision-making process used by the researcher. The selection process identifies the group, individual or organisation that is pertinent to the study. The participants, in this case the principal and teachers at a full-service school, are the unit of analysis defined within the research study as the population on which the study is focused, and the group from which the data is collected (Bless, Higson-Smith & Kagee, 2006; Durrheim, 2006; Patton, 2015). These participants are viewed as key informants and are generally regarded as expert sources of information. Fetterman (2008) says they "are individuals who are articulate and knowledgeable about their community" (p. 477). Their personal skills and the position they hold within a community, in this case within the selected full-service school, make it possible for them to provide deeper insight into the issue under research. Another advantage of using key informants relates to the quality of information that can be collected within a short period of time.

Merriam (2009) introduced the term criterion-based selection as an alternative term for purposive sampling, and suggested that the researcher create criteria in order to select participants. The process begins with identifying the characteristics required by the researcher in order to answer the research questions for the study. Creating the criteria involves outlining the particular features needed by the researcher for the study. These participants in the current study were chosen on the basis of their knowledge of the inclusive education system and experiences of teaching and providing learner support in a full-service school.

The sampling strategy employed was influenced by two requirements, the availability of participants and their knowledge. In order to meet the knowledge requirement, a non-probability sampling strategy by means of purposive and convenience sampling was used. The following criteria were formulated in order to facilitate the selection of the sample of this study:

- The sample was drawn from the chosen full-service school situated in the Western Cape, as the teachers have experience of learner support and would therefore be able to provide

rich information to assist in answering the research questions. This school is classified as a full-service school catering for learners from Grade 1 to Grade 7. The particular full-service school was purposefully selected as the researcher had attended a training course presented by the school's learning support coordinator and became familiar with the school.

- A sample of four staff members was selected to take part in the interview process, as it is a study of limited scope and the intention was to seek information rich, deep data from a few participants, rather than shallow data from many participants. The principal of the school, the head of inclusive support, the learning support teacher as well as another teacher volunteered on the basis of their shared experiences of teaching in the full-service school.

Table 3.1:Table of demographics of research participants

Participant	Position	Years at specific school	Years as a teacher
P1	Principal	29 years	35 years
P2	Learning support teacher	9 years (1 year as a facilitator)	8 years
P3	Head of inclusive support	2 months	16 years
P4	Teacher	10 years	20 years

Table 3.1 shows the demographic information of the participants. It was beneficial to have the four different roles within the school as well as variety in the years spent at the school in order to gain varying perspectives.

3.3 Data Collection

To answer the research question and address the aims and objectives of this study, data were collected by means of the literature review, four individual, semi-structured interviews and observations made while spending time at the school during break, staff meetings and in classrooms; the unit of analysis are the participants with whom I interacted. Methods used

to collect data during the research process need to be congruent with the research paradigm and methodology of the study. Throughout the process of this research it was also important to reflect on my actions. I did this by means of process notes and diary entries. This section discusses the research procedures, specific methods of data collection and data analysis.

3.3.1 Literature Review

The study commenced with conducting a literature review in order to position the research of this study and to orientate the study in terms of what research on the topic had been done previously. My aim was to research the primary elements of this study extensively until the information was saturated. The importance of the literature review (see Chapter 2) in the research process is to contextualise the research study in the investigation field as research without context is essentially meaningless (Henning *et al.*, 2004). Research essentially is the combined effort of many researchers who make their findings public, accumulating knowledge as a scientific community. This gives researchers the opportunity to learn from and build on the work done by one another (Neuman, 2003). Although the majority of the research efforts were initially focused on the literature review, I continued reviewing scholarly work and included it in the research in the later phases of the study. The literature review in the build-up to this study was a blend of "self-study, context, historical and integrative reviews" (Neuman, 2003, p. 97). The literature was sourced from many different channels which included: scholarly books, academic journals, dissertations, education policy documents, relevant legislation, media reports and the internet. Document analysis comprises the understanding of written material that addresses information on the key issues being researched (Strydom & Delport, 2005). It was necessary to understand related policy documents with regard to inclusion. The topics that I covered included literature on inclusive education, full-service schools, learning support and qualitative research.

3.3.2 Semi-Structured Interviews

I chose to conduct semi-structured interviews as the research took place within the interpretive paradigm. This assisted me in maintaining a certain amount of structure in my interviews but also allowed flexibility when necessary, as the semi-structured interview format allows structure while following theinterview guide, but also allows additional questions to be asked, if necessary. In this way, the necessary depth and insight can be generated in order to comprehensively address the research question. Two separate interview guides (appendices D and E) were used as the principal was interviewed as well as teachers. Fontana and Frey (2005) describe the interview as a narrative where both the

interviewer and interviewee construct the story surrounding the situation within the context of the research study. Interviewing requires qualitative researchers to be good communicators who are capable of empathy and sensitive observers who also have the ability to build rapport. I was aware of this while engaging with the participants and the rapport that was developed gave me the opportunity to gain a deep understanding of each individual's subjective experiences. "Empathy is the foundation of rapport. A researcher is better able to have a conversation with a purpose – an interview – in an atmosphere of trust" (Merriam, 2009, p. 23).

I met with each participant in his/her office/classroom for an interview of approximately 60 minutes. By the completion of the interview it had been possible to gain a better understanding of the experiences of the participants, but teachers were pressed for time and I had to be both understanding and productive during the interview, so was given the opportunity to follow up on certain questions via email or a phone call. The interviews were conducted with the help of written questions in the form of an email as a follow up process afterwards (appendix F). The follow-up questions were presented to participant 1 and 2 in a more formal format via email and focused on gaps in the interview process in order to ensure data was saturated.

3.3.3 Observations

Besides conducting the interviews, it is important for the researcher to employ field notes as a means of reflection as well as data collection. Field notes broadly refer to observations captured in written format or they may be recorded mechanically and used as a source of raw data (Merriam, 2009). In this study I made observations in the following ways.

3.3.3.1 Inclusion Open Day

The chosen school hosted an inclusion open day for prospective parents as well as the general community. The school has been identified as one of a number of 'change maker' schools (Start Empathy, n.d.) in the world and therefore is very often in the public eye. The group of visitors who attended this open day were taken on a tour of the school grounds. It was very interesting and beneficial to see how the school is set up to accommodate learners' diverse needs. This gave me the opportunity to explore the school for myself and ask questions that arose in my mind while being given an informative guided tour. It helped me to describe the context of the school as well as enrich my understanding of the data.

3.3.3.2 Lesson/Break Observations

By visiting the school regularly, I was given the opportunity to sit in on multiple lessons and learning experiences and made notes about my observations. This was beneficial as it gave an indication of how all the staff members at the school interact with each other as well as the learners in order to ensure that maximum learning wastaking place. It gave me the opportunity to observe how the school functions from the perspective of an onlooker, without being involved myself. I was able to take notes and reflect on what I had seen. This was beneficial to seeing how learners' needs are accommodated in the learning environment. Learners are constantly being encouraged to use their voices in a way that they find comfortable. The notes that I made were helpful in the putting the school into context but were also included in the thematic analysis generated from the interviews.

3.3.3.3 Social Media

The principal, staff and learners at the school see themselves as advocates for inclusion and therefore regularly post videos on social media sites in order to keep the community up to date with what is happening in the school. I was able to refer back to these videos and watch/listen to them repetitively as they remain on the website for several weeks. I made notes of important contextual information in order to gain a greater understanding of the school. The learners, together with the staff, create videos explaining inclusion and what it means to be involved in a full-service school. It gave me an idea of the day-to-day life at the school, rather than just hearing about it from the participants alone.

3.3.4 Analysis of Data

When one is conducting a case study, data analysis entails a dynamic process of making sense of the data gathered, as well as interpreting what is said. The researcher then aims to convey a holistic understanding of the case (Merriam, 2009). The researcher must make sense of what has been gathered and compile the data in a structured and meaningful way, as qualitative research can often result in data that may seem to be chaotic, ambiguous and laborious (De Vos, Strydom, Fouche & Delport, 2005). Qualitative data analysis does not progress in a linear fashion but rather alongside data collection. There very often is no clear point of ending of collection of data and beginning of the analysis of data (Merriam, 2009). Collection and analysis of data therefore often overlap (Terre Blanche & Durrheim, 2006). The constant comparative method of analysis was used in an attempt to understand the experiences of each individual case of teachers who are teaching learners in full-service

schools. This method explicitly allowed me to code the data systematically while generating theory at the same time as this approach supports that this concurrent process. As mentioned in Chapter 1, the constant comparative method is described by Elo and Kyngäs (2007) as a means of describing phenomena that allows the researcher to make valid deductions from data within the specific context.

The data analysis process for this study comprised two stages. Data collected from the four interviews were analysed separately during stage one. In stage two, cross-case analysis was used in order to find common themes across all the participant interviews. After this, information acquired during observations was also categorised into the relevant themes. Braun and Clarke (2006, p. 82) explain that "A theme captures something important about the data in relation to the research question and represents some level of patterned response or meaning within the data set". Qualitative content analysis is one of the more commonly used methods of data analysis by qualitative researchers (Flick, 2009).

Qualitative content analysis can only be used once the sources of the data are available, which means that the interviews need to be transcribed verbatim and read attentively so that the researcher has a good overall sense of the data. The transcribing of the interview data is an excellent way for the researcher to become familiar with the data and start interpreting the information that has been gained (Lapadat & Lindsay, 1999). Merriam (2009) suggested that the researchers actually immerse themselves in the data and look at it deeply. The researcher listens to it, reads it, touches it, plays with it, copies it, writes on it and colour codes it during the process of analysis (Merriam, 2009). Through this process, the research generates themes and patterns.

The first step of the analysis process, according to Henning *et al.* (2004) is known as 'open coding'. Through coding, the researcher is able to identify meaningful units of information and allocates labels or explanatory terms to pieces of data (Maree, 2007). Once the open coding for this research was complete, it was possible to group together various connected codes, a process referred to as categorisation. Categorisation allows the researcher to obtain a general view of the data and identify themes (Henning *et al.*, 2004). The open coding process allows the researcher to become familiar with the data but at the same time prevents the researcher from establishing a narrow focus about the data. Codes can be shorthand labels, usually such as a word, short phrase, or metaphor and are often taken from participants' accounts that are assigned to sections of data with similar meanings. Identifying the codes is a repetitive process because the researcher has to move back and

forth numerous times through all of the transcribed text while identifying and grouping various units of meaning (Maree, 2007). Appendices G and H provide examples of how thematic analysis was applied to the data gathered during this research project. After interviews were transcribed and read repeatedly, all the gathered data sources (transcriptions, observations and reflections) were colour coded according to the categories and sub-categories that had emerged. All coded responses were then clustered together according to the categories and sub-categories and axial coding was carried out by clustering patterns of data categories. This helped me to form an overall picture of my findings.

Henning *et al.* (2004) suggest that researchers should ask themselves a few key questions regarding the data:

- What are the relationships in meaning between all the categories?

- What do the categories say together?

- What do they say about each other?

- What is missing?

- How do they address the research questions?

- How do these categories (together) link what I already know about the topic?

- What has been foregrounded in the analysis?

- What additional data gathering and/or analysis has to be completed? So what was the outcome of you asking these questions?

Once these questions are answered, the researcher's perspective of the data is expanded. The researcher can apply these questions to the coding and categorising processes and support the emergence of patterns from the texts (Flick, 2009). The researcher is required to read the transcribed data a number of times in order to become very familiar with the data and the context of the data. I became familiar with the data by taking notes throughout the data analysis process and writing down all thoughts, impressions and reflections, which added to the process of engaging with the data. My reflections were useful when used in conjunction with the impressions recorded during the note taking process. The observation

notes were analysed by categorising according to the four identified themes as well as used to describe the context of the school and therefore the research. Following analysis, the themes are discussed and used by the researcher to address the research questions (Henning *et al.*, 2004; Maree, 2007).

3.4. Validity and Reliability

In qualitative research, the researcher acts as the data collection instrument and his or her ability will therefore affect the validity and reliability of the data collected. The data in qualitative research are not based on statistics and numbers so it is important to conduct 'the investigation in an ethical manner' (Merriam, 2009, p.209) to establish validity and reliability and for the reader to find the research believable. The terms credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability are used when we make reference to ensuring trustworthiness inqualitative research studies (Merriam, 2009). It is important to note that it may not be able to strictly apply these criteria for evaluation to the qualitative paradigm, as the researcher is interested in understanding and interpreting a phenomenon. Merriam (2009) points out that the debate is ongoing as the constructs of reliability and validity are quantitative and positivist and may therefore not necessarily be applicable to qualitative research. When it comes to qualitative research, assessing the accuracy of findings is not easy. We can, however, use the above criteria to enhance the trustworthiness of qualitative research findings.

3.4.1 Credibility

According to Boudah (2011), the credibility of the researcher is a component of quality. Credibility of research refers to how believable the research is for all involved parties. This aspect of the research is crucial when establishing trustworthiness. Credibility was established in this study by the thoroughness of the literature review, which made use of internationally recognised scholarly journals as well as authors who are experts in the field. This was enhanced by the use of different databases for my literature review (Boudah, 2011). Accuracy was maintained during the data collection process by means of recorded, transcribed and then coded interviews. I constantly referred back to the transcribed interviews when drawing conclusions.

3.4.2 Transferability

Transferability refers to the degree to which research findings can be transferred to other contexts. The reader compares the specifics of the research with other research they have

read or are familiar with. In the cases where the specifics of the research are comparable, the original research gains more credibility. Merriam (2009) stated that it is necessary "to think of generalisability in ways appropriate to the philosophical underpinnings of qualitative research" (p. 224). Results can therefore only be generalised in contexts where the research questions are applicable to other cases as well as the context of the research. In the current case, transferability is relatively low as the data are specific to the case study of one school but the themes might be applicable, depending on the readers' contexts. The reader can read the context of this school and decide for him/herself whether the circumstances are applicable. A process of building evidence and developing theory may also apply in other cases.

3.4.3 Dependability

Dependability ensures that research findings are consistent and that they can be repeated over time. It involves the description of possible changes that may have occurred during the course of research, as well as an understanding of how these changes may have affected the research.

3.4.4 Confirmability

The issues of neutrality and objectivity are described under the term confirmability, an issue that is not easily achieved with the subjective nature of qualitative research. Confirmability asks questions regarding the quality of the research. In qualitative research, the researcher is required to understand how his or her own susceptibilities could influence the research process (Patton, 2015). In this study it was essential to check and recheck the data throughout the study. It was also important to consult literature by other authors with regard to the findings.

3.4.5 Data Verification Strategies

There are certain strategies that can be used to ensure the validity of data; these include: triangulation, peer examination, an audit trail, engaging with the data, and the use of rich descriptions.

3.4.5.1 Triangulation

Triangulation involves using multiple data sources, methods, measures and perspectives which, in turn, increases credibility. Credibility, which can be seen as the link between how

the researcher interprets the research data and the actual meaning and perspectives of the research participant, can be increased by using different sources of data (Merriam, 2009). Credibility is one of the essential aspects in establishing trustworthiness and refers to whether the research is believable and the findings are accurate. The data was collected from multiple research participants via semi-structured interviews as well as from various literature sources and observations.

3.4.5.2 Peer Examination

This study was completed as part of a master's degree and was therefore conductedunder supervision at the university. The final product was then reviewed by an external examiner. Through this process, a researcher is exposed to the ideas and perspectives of others (Merriam, 2009).

3.4.5.3 An Audit Trail

An audit trail as an account of decisions and descriptions of the research process which focuses on the collection and analysis of data. It can be seen as a "running record of your interactions with the data as you engage in analysis and interpretation" (Merriam, 2009, p. 223). In this study, Chapters 3 and 4 describe the research process and the data analysis.

3.4.5.4 Rich Descriptions

Rich descriptions imply that the depiction of an event is not reducible to simplistic interpretations. In this study, I analysed the understandings, thoughts and feelings of the participants (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2007). When the phenomenon is described in sufficient detail, one can start to think about the extent to which these findings can be transferable. The perspectives of these participants are described in detail.

3.5. Ethical Considerations

Ethics are the "moral principles or standards that should be met and upheld when working in the field of health care" (Department of Health, 2006, p. 42). Ethical research includes every decision made throughout the entire research process. The researcher's ethical values will also be influential in the research process. In this study, it was important as an ethical and moral individual that I consider various aspects needed in order to consider this research ethical. I as the researcher understand that I am bound by the prescribed code of ethical conduct as prescribed by the Health Professions Council of South Africa in Booklet

6 entitled General Ethical Guidelines for Health Researchers. The first step to conducting the research was to obtain ethical clearance. Addendum A and B are the permission letters required from the Western Cape Education Department as well as from the Research Ethics Committee. A number of ethical principles which were to be considered, are discussed below.

3.5.1 Autonomy and Informed Consent

Autonomy and informed consent form part of the four basic principles of ethical decision making. Individuals have the right to make their own decisions as long as no harm is caused to others. For the individual to make a decision, she or he needs to be properly informed with regard to what is being researched and the potential limits to confidentiality, if any. In this study, participants had the right to view any information that they required regarding the research. They were allowed access to information that explained the purpose of the study. Each participant received a letter (Addendum C) outlining the study and each was asked to participate voluntarily. I informed them fully of their responsibilities should they volunteer to take part in the study and allowed them to carefully consider the risks and benefits of taking part in the study. A researcher's full disclosure shows a 'commitment to respect' the participants involved in the study (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011, p. 66).

The Department of Health (2006) offers a list of eight guidelines for informed consent which can be summarised by the four components of informed consent. These include: a) provision of appropriate information; b) participants' competence and understanding; c) voluntariness in participating and freedom to decline or withdraw after the study has started; and d) formalisation of consent, usually in writing.

3.5.2 Non-Maleficence and Beneficence

Non-maleficence and beneficence are key ethical principles in research. Non-maleficence refers to the absence of harm, and beneficence refers to the moral obligation of psychologists to act for the benefit of others. In the case of this research, non-maleficence was applied by ensuring that I did not harm the participants in any way. Before the research started, it was important that I identify any harm that could occur and then put strategies in place to prevent the harm (Allan, 2016). The participants were offered an opportunity to debrief after being interviewed, which would have taken the format of a short interview. This research is viewed as low risk as there was minimal risk to participants and therefore debriefing was not required. Beneficence refers to action that is taken for the benefit of

others. The contribution from the participant would hopefully benefit them in the future and the recommendations made in this study are based on the research findings creating a beneficial contribution (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011). The outcome of this research could hopefully benefit the staff of the particular full-service school, as well as staff in other schools.

3.5.3 Confidentiality

Confidentiality describes the participants' right to privacy and ensures that the names of the participants are kept private. In the case of research like this, I got to know the names of the participants and grew to know them well, so confidentiality was therefore very important. It was important that the participants understand that their names have been changed so that their anonymity and the information obtained will remain confidential and not accessible to anyone except myself and my supervisor (Kvale & Brinkman, 2009). In this study, no information which may identify participants has been included in this final research report. The participants gave permission for the interviews to be recorded and they were assured that these recordings, together with the transcribed data, will be stored on a password protected hard drive and stored for five years as per the law.

3.5.4 Fidelity

The principle of fidelity refers to the degree to which a researcher is trustworthy. One way of ensuring this is to put the participants' interests before the researcher's interests. The participants were provided with a safe space in which they were able to respond to questions in a genuine manner.

3.5.6 Justice

The principle of justice is about fairness, rightness and equity (Allan, 2016) and refers to the fair treatment of all research participants, therefore there should be no discrimination or favouritism. All participants in this research were treated fairly and with respect.

3.5.7 The Process of Ethical Research in this Study

To gain permission to conduct this investigation, a research proposal was presented to the University of Stellenbosch Research Ethics Committee (REC), according to the university's protocol. Official institutional consent forms were submitted to the REC once these were received from the Western Cape Education Department (WCED) (Addendum B) and the school where the research was conducted and final and official consent to proceed with the study was obtained (Addendum A). Once ethical approval was granted, I approached the

school where I followed the purposive sampling methods described above and met the participants. The participants were informed about the study and of their right to confidentiality. They were also informed that participation in the study was voluntary and that they were free to refuse to answer questions, as well as to withdraw from the study at any stage. Participants were advised that they had the right to view transcripts if they wished to do so and were informed on how the final thesis would be put together. After these aspects had been explained fully, participants were asked to sign a written informed consent form (Addendum C).

3.6 Conclusion

The focus in this chapter is on a discussion of the research paradigm and methodology. This was used to outline the research design and to show how it attempted to answer the research questions of this study. The method of sampling, as well as the data collection procedures, was included in the discussion. In addition to this, an explanation of how the data were analysed is presented and the issues of data verification and ethical considerations are highlighted. The analysis of the data is presented in Chapter 4.

CHAPTER 4

RESEARCH DATA AND FINDINGS

4.1   Introduction

The inquiry represented an attempt to deepen the understanding of inclusive education and in particular how this translates into practice in terms of teachers' perspectives of learner support in a full-service school. This understanding will assist in understanding the conditions that promote inclusion and where the challenges are which would hamper inclusive education. In order to explore the topic and facilitate a collection of data and analysis thereof the research focused on one specific research question:

What are teachers' perspectives on and experiences of support for learners within a full-service school?

The following sub-questions also guidedthe study.

What are the teachers' perspectives on Inclusive Education and the role of a full-service school?

How are learners with disabilities/barriers to learning, both external and internal, supported in participating in a full-service school?

What are the teachers' roles in supporting learners within the classroom?

What recommendations would teachers give with regard to successful support to further the development of full-service schools?

The study was aimed at exploring answers to these questions and eliciting as much in-depth and qualitative information as possible through semi-structured interviews with teachers at a particular full-service school.

The school chosen as a case study for the research is an established full-service school which is recognised for its innovative practices and inclusive values and attitudes. The school has been acknowledged internationally as one of the 'Ashoka Changemaker' (Chapter 2) schools.The website and media advertising the school highlight this inclusive culture.

As recorded in Chapter 3 the research was undertaken through four semi-structured, qualitative, individual interviews with the principal, the head of inclusion, the learning support teacher and an additional teacher. The interviews were followed up through the participants being given written questions by email. The interviews were conducted in a relaxed and conversational manner allowing participants to contribute factual information as well as exploring their emotional responses and feelings. The follow-up questions were presented in a more formal format and focused on gaps in the interview process in order to ensure that data were saturated. Using both of these methods was important in order to collect information and gain an in-depth understanding and insight into the central research question: What are teachers' perspectives on and experiences of support for learners within a full-service school?

The data were organised under themes and sub-themes which I generated from the interviews and which were identified using the open coding process of identifying code words and key themes by using the constant comparative method, as explained in Chapter 3. The second phase recorded in Chapter 5 was to analyse the data under the sub-questions which framed the research and, finally, to examine the primary research question aimed at exploring teachers' perspectives on learner support in a full-service school

4.1.1   Research Participants

As noted in Chapter 3.2.5, the research participants were staff members of a full-service school in the Western Cape Province of South Africa. Bronfenbrenner's bio-ecological model was used as the theoretical framework to underpin the research with the understanding that theory is a set of meanings which give insight into and understanding of people's behaviour (Makhalemele & Nel, 2014).

Thus the research recognises that the perceptions of the teachers are influenced by their relationships and interactions, their personal characteristics and how these influence their behaviour (Makhalemele & Nel, 2014). The research recognises that the continuum of process – person – context – time will impact on teachers' perceptions, behaviour and therefore their responses. Table 3.1: Demographics of research participants providesa detailed breakdown of the demographics.

The principal of the school (Participant 1) has been principal for 20 years and was instrumental in the conversion of the school into a full-service school. When the principal was appointed, the demographics of the school were homogeneous with all learners and

teachers being white and from middle class backgrounds, resulting in a school microsystem dominated by exclusive attitudes and rigid teaching and behaviour styles. The personal force characteristics of the principal (Tudge *et al.*, 2009) are demonstrated by her uncompromising commitment to inclusive education and the accompanying inclusive practice which she prioritises above personal popularity. The fact that she was appointed during a time of political transformation in South Africa is an example of a chronosystem which strengthened her ability to lead the school's transformation towards inclusion.

While the transformation initially was difficult for some staff members, positive attitudes have been cultivated amongst the teachers and rigid teaching and communication styles have shifted towards an inclusive and creative culture and praxisover the 20-year process. This has resulted in some of the more conservative, 'old-school' staff members leaving and being replaced with a more diverse staff sensitised around and committed to the benefits of inclusive education. By taking extracts from the data, it is evident that participants communicated the following:

> P1: Initially I thought that it was because of me (that people were leaving) but now I realise it was not because of me. But I got to the point where I realised, were complete change to happen for inclusion as I saw education to happen, it had to happen, because all those people who wanted the rigidity to happen were fighting me all the time. (Participant 1 Interview)[4]

The learning support teacher (Participant 2) is part of the Inclusive Support Department which fulfils the function of the Institutional Level Support Team (ILST) described in more detail in Chapter 2 as one of the learner support mechanisms within the inclusive education system (Makhalemele & Nel, 2014). The team collaborates with one another, with learners, parents and specialists to provide the necessary learner support.

> P2: I do administration for the InclusiveSupport Department so basically like setting up meetings, helping with the structure of the support programme, maintaining files and monitoring who does what. (P2I)

Participant 3 is the head of inclusive support. She heads the inclusive support departmentat the school.

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[4]Differentiation between data generated from interviews (I) and emails (E) are referenced as in this example (Participant 1 Interview – P1I or Participant 2 Email – P2E).

P3: So I am officially the head of inclusive support... and my passion is inclusion being the norm rather than the exception. (P3I)

Participant 4 is an experienced teacher who has taught in the school for the past 10 years. Understanding the impact of relationships between individuals and systems and the potential to reduce barriers, she has a holistic understanding of inclusive teaching practice and the need for relationships rather than the imparting of knowledge.

P4: As soon as learning is teacher or learner centred, you automatically exclude something or someone, so here we try to learn in a relational way by interacting with each other in the classroom. (P4I)

4.1.2 The Full-Service School

Bronfenbrenner's theoretical framework which underpins the research places the person in the environment (Makhalemele & Nel, 2014), therefore it is important to understand the school as the micro-system in which teachers are participating in inclusive education and experiencing learner support. The school is a full-service school with 462 learners ranging from Grade 1 to Grade 7. It is a government school; as such fees are more affordable, thus learners from various socio-economic backgrounds are accommodated and some benefits from government support systemsare secured. Teachers are appointed by both the Western Cape Education Department (WCED) and the school's governing body, with the majority of teachers being governing body appointments. The school caters for a wide range of barriers including Downs syndrome, Autism Spectrum Disorders, other specified neurodevelopmental disorders such as Foetal alcohol syndrome, learning disabilities and a learner with Rubinstein-Taybi syndrome. The school acknowledges that it is not yet adequately resourced to cater for learners with high need physical disabilities who are currently accommodated in Special Schools (*Refer to 4.2.1.4 Learner Support Systems)*. All learners are accommodated in mainstream classrooms with an average of 32 learners in a class. The lower number of learners in a class in comparison with other government schools in South Africa is the result of an active governing body and commitment towards governing body teacher appointments.

The school views inclusion as a value and practice of celebrating diversity and accommodating the diverse needs and expectations of all sectors within the school body from learners, to teachers, to parents and to staff. The school actively promotes a welcoming culture while recognising individuals and celebrating their differences (Swart & Pettipher,

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2016).The school acknowledges that an inclusive practice is not dependent on any single person or position but requires the collaboration of the whole school and an open, creative and flexible attitude. According to their website, the school is one of 15 schools in the country recognised for their excellence in an inclusive approach to learning. The website goes on to say that teachers and teacher aides, in collaboration with various specialists, help all children to learn effectively. In this regard, participants had this to say:

> P2. Inclusion is when we try to do the best within our ability to accommodate all learners, teachers, parents and staff with their challenges and try to make different options to meet these. (P2E)

> P2. Inclusion is viewed as a whole-school approach, inclusion does not happen because one person does something right, this happens when everyone is on board and each of us do the best we can always, to help and to accommodate everyone. (P2E)

From the interviews with the four participants and from general observations within the school, it appears that there is a genuine commitment to inclusion. There is an atmosphere of everyone seeming to feel included and that they have the right to participate in the life of the school. From maintenance staff to the principal and from learners to the few parents whom I met, people seemed confident to express their opinions and happy to participate in the life of the school. I attended the annual concert where maintenance staff occupied the VIP seats and teachers, teacher aides and facilitators were performing on stage with all learners, irrespective of their barriersto learning, while parents were collecting tickets and selling refreshments to raise funds and actively participating in the spirit of the event.

> P3: It's a combination of the teachers being open to the idea of inclusion and the fact that the school is living it. (P3I)

To ensure that the school can be as inclusive as possible and cater for the learning needs of diverse learners, the Governing Body, parents and staff raise funds for additional personnel and infrastructure.

> P2: That is a huge advantage here because parents know that the school is doing wonderful stuff with their children and getting really the very best they could possibly out of them. And so they put the money up front. (P2E)

P1: We have a big fete every two years in March and next March 2017 is our next one and I want us to use the money from that to change our toilets to ones opening on the passage and to create inter-sex toilets. This will be a big project but we think that it will benefit everybody. (P1I)

4.2   Research Discussion and Emerging Themes

Using the methodology of undertaking and transcribing the semi-structured interviews and open coding and categorisation (Addendum G) by means of axial coding, which requires rearranging the data according to themes,a number of themes emerged. These themes concur with the themes arising from the theory on inclusive education as discussed in Chapter 2. The data were therefore organised into themes and linked with theory by referring to the theoretical analysis in Chapter 2.

Table 4:1 captures the themes and sub-themes which emerged from the research questions. The research questions had beenused to frame the discussions and findings were organised around the generated themes.

Table 4.1: Research themes and sub-themes

Theme 1: Learner support and accommodating diverse learning requirements
1. Creating an environment conducive to learning 2. Every learner can learn, expectations and academic progress 3. The importance of emotional support and strengthening the learners' voice 4. Learner support systems
Theme 2: Collaboration as a central practice for Inclusive Education
1. Collaboration among staff 2. Collaboration with parents/community 3. Collaboration with the Western Cape Education Department and other specialist support services
Theme 3: Committed leadership in a full-service school
1. The impact of a committed and dynamic principal 2. The need for a supportive governing body 3. Cultivating an inclusive ethos
Theme 4: Staff developmentand support
1. Inclusive education training 2. Continuous learning experiences 3. Change in staff attitude 4. Staff support

4.2.1 Theme 1: Learner Support and Accommodating Diverse Learning Requirements

As a full-service school catering for learners with diverse learning needs, the school has developed a range of learner support systems and inclusive practices and has begun to shift attitudes towards a more inclusive culture. The chapter explores some of these inclusive gains.

4.2.1.1 Creating an Environment Conducive to Learning

The school has created an environment conducive to learning and to accommodating diverse learning needs and overcoming barriers to learning. The school environment is friendly and accommodating. Bright colours have been used to paint the doors and in the artwork which adorns the walls to create a welcoming and attractive environment. Animals and plants are part of the learning environment and learners are encouraged to take responsibility for caring for these members of the school. Office doors are left open and furnished with soft chairs and shelves of toys and other things which would attract the interest of children.

As a full-service school and in line with principles of inclusion, there is a commitment to support all learners and restructuring the organisation to accommodate learners' needs, rather than expecting learners to adapt to a rigid and inflexible system. According to the Department of Basic Education (2010a), there is a need for a flexible curriculum and teaching practice catering for diverse learning styles in a full-service school. This is reflected in comments by participants.

> P4: Each child has needs and we want to help the learners to find their needs and then assist. We ask ourselves "how can we make this child learn best?" and teachers are free to explore what works for each child. (P4I)
>
> P3: I find myself connecting with places where the system is what is flexible and where the children are the priority, so the power is not resting in the system that the children need to fit into but rather that the system is a fluid one and it allows for each child to excel on their own learning journey. (P3I)

Teachers practise a behavioural teaching style in which the specific learning needs and requirements of learners are acknowledged and provision is made to accommodate these

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within the learning environment making teaching learner-centered (Makoelle, 2014). This behavioural teaching style may include for example interaction between the teacher and learners rather than a teacher just delivering information. The school does not have a "special class" but extends existing classes and teaching methods to include all learners. This is done by means of small groups sitting with a learning support teacher or by means of a learning support assistant being present in the class. The teacher incorporates multiple teaching styles to be able to reach multiple learning styles for example having visial aids, auditory lessons, engaging in activities requiring movement and groupwork. The school accommodates the diverse learning barriers of learners and provides individual support where needed, while at the same time including all learners in mainstream classes. While undertaking the research, examples were observed of learners who could not cope with the tactile experience of using papier-mâché being provided with wooden blocks to complete the task. The primary objective is to support all learners, including those with barriers, within the mainstream class.

> P2: We prefer not to pull children out of class but rather to support them in the class. (P2I)

> P2: For me how it works is you do one lesson plan obviously for the whole class but you adapt it to whatever the learner (or child with a barrier to learning) is capable of. (P2I)

In line with the principle of flexibility, however, when learners have a specific short-term need the pull-out system is used.

> P2: Sometimes if a kid needs to work outside or if they need to work in the library our learning support teacher actually takes some children out either in a group or she will take one on one to go and work with them specifically, we've got a child now in grade three that we actually take out and we do a comprehension with them for the next week so he knows what is coming. (P2I)

> P2: I mean if the child can't work in the class for the day, or not for the day but for some periods, he will come to us (the inclusive support department) to our work room and will sit with us and we'll help him work through it. (P2I)

Teachers make use of diverse tools and technical resources to address learners' learning needs. These include the use of audio and visual media. There is a functioning computer

laboratory which is open after school hours as well, to support learners in undertaking research and developing computer skills. Classrooms are equipped with interactive whiteboards.

The school accommodates learners' social and personal interactive needs and styles. Playgrounds are divided into quiet areas where learners who have a specific barrier triggered by noise, or who prefer a more solitary respite, can be accommodated, as well as areas which accommodate those who prefer social interaction and noise. The library is also always open during recreation time and for periods after school for learners who prefer a quiet space and there is a succulent garden outside the principal's office where learners can enjoy the therapy of tending plants.

> P4: We have different playgrounds here because we empathise with each other. There is a playground for loud and rough play and for those who find it challenging to be in a noisy stimulated environment, we have a playground for quiet play. So everybody is involved in play at break time but learners can choose how they want to play. (P4I)

The school recognises that learning is not restricted to the classroom. Outings and camps as well as sports tours are organised to complement classroom learning. Music, singing and rhythm are used in the classrooms as additional stimulation.

To encourage interdependence and foster leadership and responsibility amongst learners, animals are introduced into the school environment. Learners interact with animals and are tasked with caring for the animals and the plants, thereby learning to respect all forms of life. This feeds and expands the inclusive culture to include the broader environment and recognise the interdependency of all living things.

This conducive learning environment is planned towards enabling learners to learn and achieve academically.

4.2.1.2 Expectations and Academic Progress

The school expects all learners to learn. The school website[5] implies that performance is high but so are the expectations. Participants noted that one of the features of the school

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[5]The school's website is not included in the research report in order to protect the school's identity as per confidentiality agreement.

was the recognition that all learners have the potential to learn, a guiding principle of Inclusive Education (DoBE, 2010a). It was noted that, whereas some learners had been rejected from mainstream schools in the past, they had managed to achieve academic success in this full-service school.

As a government school, the national curriculum is followed. This is enhanced through extra subjects, namely Economic Management Science and Technology and isiXhosa. According to the website, the school encourages learners to practise lateral thinking and to develop a questioning attitude and an ongoing desire to learn. The school claims, via the website, that this broader range of subjects and flexible thinking strategies enables an easy transition to high school. According to one of the participants, feedback obtained from parents of past pupils and tracking the results of high schools to which learners progress, it appears that learners from the school, including those with barriers to learning, manage and often achieve above average in their high school career.

> P2: We've got high expectations for all our children. I think academically the school has got quite a high rate as we expect more of the kids, when they go to high school they breeze through it because we've got such a high expectation of them in the primary school. (P2I)

> P2: Every year we get the programme from the local high school where the prize giving happens and we are amazed at who receive what prizes and often children with the barriers have achieved in areas that they were interested in. Sometimes parents also write us thank you letters noting how their children have been doing and what they have achieved with the foundation that they received at this school. (P2E)

Participants cited examples of learners who are included in the school despite being in the middle need spectrum referred to in Chapter 2 of the Pyramid of Support designed by the Department of Basic Education (DoBE,2015). These are learners with barriers which could be considered as insurmountable within the medical diagnosis model for example a learner with Rubinstein-Taybi syndrome (*Refer to 2.2.2 International Inclusive Education Discourse*

and Practice). Including learners with diverse barriers requires that the schoolprovide both academic and emotional support.

4.2.1.3 The Importance of Emotional Support and Strengthening of the Learners' Voices

As discussed in Chapter 2, learners need to be supported in order to ensure that maximum learning is taking place. Part of this support includes learners' emotional support. In line with the bio-ecological model discussed in Chapter 2, learner support is holistic, taking into account the systems and relationships which impact on learners. It follows that learning will be compromised if a learner is experiencing emotional distress.

Within this school, emotional support includes ensuring that learners feel valued as individuals and that self-esteem is enhanced. This is reflected in the discipline system of the school. A "restorative justice approach" is pursued. Rather than punishing learners who step out of the bounds of "acceptable behaviour", means are sought for learners to practise self-discipline and foster socially acceptable behaviour. Shouting at learners is discouraged in favour of "positive attitudes" to reinforce positive behaviour and encourage learners to take responsibility for their own behaviour.This includes an effort to notice and reinforce learners when they are doing something right. In line with the constructivist approach, the attitude of the school to discipline and social problems like bullying is to include learners in finding the solutions themselves *(Refer to 2.8 Inclusive Pedagogy in a Full-Service School).* Teachers understand that the microsystem of the school is replicated in broader society and that learning social skills of tolerance and inclusion will better equip learners to cope with the demands of the society at large.

> P2: We give children the opportunity to restore the bad behaviour and put things in place to help them become better people within society. (P2I)

> P2: Our new thing is putting them (learners) in a group, like a counselling group, together, so four or five kids in a group and as the problem arises we will train them through it, so you put all the kids together that don't actually get along, because in society that's just how life is, there are people you don't like and that's just life but you've got to work with them. (P2I)

Teachers recognise the importance of strengthening the voice of learners and challenging traditional skewed power relations. One of the participants noted that the school discouraged

traditional teaching styles by which learners are perceived as empty vessels and teachers as having all knowledge to impart to passive recipients. The emphasis is on shared learning, on self-discovery and on enabling and hearing the learner's voice. This feeds into inclusive societies and confronts entrenched power relations.

> P4: Children have a right to share their views in any way in a society that accepts them and therefore we try to give children a voice. The children are not empty vessels that the school needs to fill. They come with a voice, they are citizens and their voices need to be heard without us putting power over them. (P4I)

> P3: I'm co-coordinating a team of people in a way which makes the child's voice stronger and louder rather than the child's voice coming secondary, so the primary focus of my role is to make sure that the children's voices are being heard and that we are breaking binaries where other aspects hold more power, so either the system or the curriculum or whatever it might be, where we are constantly asking how we can do things differently rather than how we can fit things into the norm. (P3I)

One of the participants noted that learners are encouraged to articulate their feelings and to develop skills like anger management to manage strong emotions, as well as learning communication skills.

> P2: We encourage emotional growth, speaking out their feelings and how to manage these feelings. This is especially important for the gifted children that are socially awkward. (P2E)

Another skill which is developed in order to support learners in reducing stress levels is time management. The school implements a "time management policy" by which learners are supported in prioritising tasks and managing their time effectively.

A range of learner support systems to enable the school to succeed academically and to provide the necessary emotional support is evident.

4.2.1.4 Learner Support Systems

According to the school website, the learner support systems are aimed at removing stigmas and negative labels, at celebrating diversity, and at supporting the principle that all can learn. There are a number of learner support systems within the school. These include the employment of additional support personnel and volunteers; an extension programme for

creative and talented learners; and learner assessment and support programmes to address individual barriers.

The hub of the support systems is the Inclusive Support Department. The department fulfils the role of the Institutional Level Support Team as required by the DoE and discussed in *2.7.2 Institutional Level Support Teams*. The department co-ordinates the inclusive programme including learners, staff and parents within the school.

> P3: I am co-coordinating a team of people and included in that team are the teachers, parents and the children. (P3I)

In line with the requirement of the DoE that a dedicated learner support teacher be employed, the school has three full-time staff members in the Inclusive Support Department.

> P2: The head of the Inclusive Support Department manages the team and all outside therapists and facilitators. This person is part of the management team and has an overview of the "emotional running" of the school, supporting teachers, learners and parents as far as possible. The head also teaches in the Creative and Talented Programme. This is an emotionally draining role, as you need to support and have knowledge about many topics and hold things together. It requires being a flexible thinker and problem solver. (P2E)

> P2: The Inclusive Support Administrator fulfils the administrative duties for the Department. This includes setting up parent meetings and maintaining the report sheets and specialised programmes for specific learners. The Administrator also runs the Creative and Talented Programme for learners who are academically gifted. In addition she is tasked with planning the spatial layout of the classrooms and other learning spaces to make them work as effectively as possible. The Administrator facilitates the volunteers, specifically the identification and use of adults with "special needs" as part of their integration into society. The position also requires a flexible thinker and problem solver. (P2E)

> P2: The Inclusive Support Teacher is employed by the Western Cape Education Department. Her focus is mainly on providing academic assistance for each child in the school. The Support Teacher assists each class, providing extra academic support to individual learners or groups of learners primarily around academic skills, often mathematical skills, but also emotional support where required. The Support

Teacher designs and monitors the Individual Support Plans. She also provides art therapy to support learners in overcoming barriers. (P2E)

To provide specialised support to learners with specific barriers, outside specialist professionals are brought in as the need arises and based on individual assessment of learners. Specialists include Occupational Therapists, Speech and Language Therapists, Psychologists and Language Support experts. Specialists are paid for by the parents of the learner in need of specialist intervention, which has the potential to exclude learners from poorer families. These external therapists also are managed by the support department.

P3: Generally children who need therapy it's so diverse that some children might just need one kind of intervention and then that's sufficient… but when it comes to more complex situations where we have children who would benefit from a facilitator, or they would benefit from a speech and language therapy or they would benefit from occupational therapy or they would also benefit from, in some cases, medication. (P3I)

P2: We make use of a counsellor who takes individual children that need one on one support once a week and she has a chat and tries to debrief on situations. Group sessions would also happen for some children that have behavioural issues. The children change as the needs arise. (P2E)

P2: Therapists are brought in to support individual learners or maybe groups of learners. The therapists are paid privately through the parents and in lieu of payment of rent to the school therapists form part of a team who helps with specific children that can't afford to pay for specialist support. So therapists will give an observation or a free assessment per term. To ensure inclusion and that therapists observations are fed back into the school, therapists go with the children and do in-class support and attend meetings with parents and teachers to give feedback on how the learner with barriers can be integrated back into the class, or to report on progress and change which has happened already. (P2E)

To strengthen learner support, and in accordance with the principle of collaboration and the recognition of the need to include the broader society in inclusive education, the school makes use of a number of volunteers. Volunteers are managed by the Inclusive Support Administrator. In an attempt towards shifting societal attitudes and fostering inclusive communities, the volunteers often are adults with their own learning barriers or are members of society wishing to improve their skills and learn more about inclusive education.

Volunteers can also be from the parent body. The relationship between the school, the learners and the volunteers is mutually beneficial.

> P2: Volunteers help with anything and everything, depending on the need of the school at that specific time and the learning need of the volunteer. Volunteers do easy marking and administrative tasks like typing, laminating outside boards, help with distribution of items and creating new worksheet. Volunteers are very directed as we give them specific tasks depending on the capacity of the volunteer and what they have come to learn from this opportunity. Some volunteers need socialisation skills and therefore we would give them tasks to do in a classroom with children and adults around to help them build up this skill. Other volunteers want to become teachers and want to learn as much as possible and therefore we put them into classes and move them around to take part in all aspects of the school life. Volunteers are invited to functions and they become part of the staff. We are very fortunate to have this extra help. (P2E)

To provide one-on-one support for learners with specific barriers, the school makes use of facilitators. These facilitators accompany the individual learners and are paid for by the parents of the learner, but are managed by the Inclusive Support Department. In cases where the parents cannot afford a facilitator and have the required time, they may fulfil that role themselves. It was noted, however, that, although the school tries to put all possible support in place, the learner may go without the necessary facilitationif the parent works. This could contradict the inclusive ethos and the intention of the Department of Education however *(Refer to 5.2.1).*

> P2: Facilitators are there for the specific child or children they have been employed to work with to provide support in overcoming specific barriers. These barriers are discussed and documented in the Individual Support Plan and then put into action. The facilitator helps the child and the teacher, meaning the facilitator and the child do not become co-dependent on each other and eventually, hopefully, the facilitator would work themself out of a job. When the teacher works with the specific child that has a facilitator the facilitator's role would change and they would have to work with a group of children or whatever is required at the time. Facilitators have many different roles which are really dependent on the needs of the child. (P2E)

In line with the bio-ecological model, the school understands that learners' ability to learn and participate in school activities is impacted by the relationships within their particular microsystem. Thus, when the school becomes aware of conditions in a learner's home or community which compound barriers, the school will call on the support of a social worker. These social workers are employed by the government.

> P2: The social worker intervenes when there are reports of violence at the children's home and advises on how the school can deal with the situation after all othermeasures have been put in place. (P2E)

While curriculum differentiation and accommodating the specific needs of learners is acknowledged as being central to inclusive education, the participants noted that this adds to teachers' workloads and placesadditional pressure on them. To provide administrative support to teachers, besides offering learner support, the Governing Body employs sixteacher aides whom the school trains by means of a teacher aide course. Participants cited examples of learner support by teacher aides as listening to reading groups and coaching sport. Examples of the administrative support that teacher aides offer were also mentioned.

> P2: The teacher aides are actually there for the school but they are based in classrooms. Their work is focused on admin, like helping to load off, like setting up outings and doing the paperwork for that because there is always a lot of admin. (P2E)

One of the learner support systems within inclusive education is the development, implementation and monitoring of Learner Support Plans (*Refer to 2.7 Learner Support in Full-Service Schools).* This system is implemented within the school and monitored by the Inclusive Support Department. Parents, teachers and learners are included in the development and monitoring of the plans.

> P3: Currently we're working on how do we make our Learner Support Plans more specific, so what is the reason for a support plan? How are those plans being helpful for the child first, before they become just a form of documentation. (P3I)

A Creative and Talented Programme has been implemented to cater for the specific needs of academically gifted learners. This programme is aimed at motivating learners to achieve to their maximum ability and challenging the lack of social skills which sometimes surface.

The programme focuses on enhancing the social skills needed in society through building self-esteem and skills to deal with authority and cultivate friendship. To extend academic and creative thinking, gifted learners participate in a multi-age class once a week where a variety of academic skills including research, recording of evidence and problem solving are enhanced.

Accommodating learners with severe physical barriers remains a challenge. The school is equipped with wheelchair ramps, however, with the number of learners in a classroom, space can be an excluding factor. The WCED has not yet provided the adequate infrastructure or equipment which is costly not only for the school but also for the parents.

> P1: Classroom space for disabled children is a problem. Ramps and access [are] challenging as they are not the right height and some classes have steps. We have built ramps to accommodate this challenge. (P1E).

> P1: If you were hearing impaired and needed a hearing auto tuner, your parents would have to provide this equipment. (P1E)

Such equipment comes at a high cost for parents. Another excluding factor is that the school is restricted by lack of space in the number of applicants it can accept, especially as individual learner facilitators also have to be accommodated. In addition to the application process, the website makes it clear that the school is a fee-paying school, which could exclude learners from poorer homes.

> P1: Application is problematic as to how many can be accommodated with or without a facilitator. Space once again, and also because parents must pay for the learners' facilitators. (P1E)

The school does receive some support from the Western Cape Education Department (WCED), although one of the participants expressed a view that this support was inadequate. While the WCED provides the resources to employ a learning support teacher, the perception of this participant was that the function of the teacher was determined by the school, rather than bythe WCED. This teacher focuses on reinforcing curriculum content in small groups, as well as assisting with group therapy, as the specific teacher is a registered counsellor.

P2: We have a very different view on the support she gives our school compared to the support the WCED would prefer her to do. Other support teachers get dictated by the WCED to do what they expect and this is not necessarily wrong but this does not work for our school. (P2E)

One participant felt that this school with its years of experience in inclusive education was a forerunner and could provide practical support to other schools, whereas the department was more theoretical.

P2: The school was asked to present four workshops last year on different topics to schools that have now been told to become inclusive schools and therefore we are really the forerunners of this process and the WCED are more paper people and that is not necessarily the best way to go forward. (P2E)

To provide such learner support requires a team effort. Collaboration between teachers, learners and parents is essential (*Refer to 2.8.1 The Centrality of Collaboration in a Full-Service School*).

4.2.2 Theme 2: Collaboration as a Central Practice for Inclusive Education

All participants noted the importance of collaboration in the successful functioning of a full-service school. The participants agreed on and emphasised the importance of a supportive and collaborative culture as recommended in the theoretical analysis of Inclusive Education (Makhalemele & Nel, 2014).

P3: The expectation is that the teacher needs to be running an inclusive classroom, operating in a way that every child's voice is heard, every child is being given an opportunity to learn, that's the philosophy but that can only carried out effectively as a collective, you cannot leave a teacher to do that by themselves. (P3I)

P4: Teachers here are never on their own, there is always support. We are always getting feedback, there are always people popping in and out of your class whether it be the OT, someone to read a story, or a puppy. Here we experience real collaboration. This journey is one that we are committed to but we need to support each other. (P4I)

4.2.2.1 Collaboration Among Staff

At this full-service school, there is an ethos of collaboration amongst staff and a willingness to help each other to cope with the demands of inclusion. Examples were given of staff members who were going through personal challenges and other teachers stepping in to temporarily relieve the staff member of extra responsibilities. Other examples were given of how staff members share their ideas and skills with each other to enable all staff to cope with the demands of catering for diverse learner needs.

> P2: We all collaborate, like, "You can do that", you know, which makes you feel part of a society and a bigger thing, it's not just you on an isolated little island (P2I).

Participants confirmed the theory as proposed by Florian & Graham (2014) that what works is that the more experienced teachers, and in this school specifically the learner support coordinator, are available to mentor teachers who do not have experience in working with learners that require specialised support (Florian & Graham, 2014).

> P2: We would obviously tell the teacher that this child has got whatever and we would help them through it and whatever challenge arises we will help them through it. (P2I)

The collaborative environment contributes to positive attitudes and staff who enjoy their work.

> P2: You know what's lovely about this place is that, yes most people know everything about you. If something goes wrong they're all there to support you. (P2I)

There was repeated reference by participants to the "open door policy" which the school adheres to. From the principal, to the teachers, to the ground staff, to the learners and parents, all are acknowledged as having a valuable contribution to the inclusive environment and as being part of the collaborative team.

4.2.2.2 Collaboration with Parents and Community

Three of the participants referred to the importance of including family, specifically parents and guardians, and the importance of collaboration in supporting learners to overcome barriers to learning. An inclusive education practice requires support of the community in order to challenge societal prejudices and exclusive behaviour (DoBE, 2014). The school prioritises the inclusion of parents in changing attitudes and in shaping and contributing to

learner support. Parents are included in the development of Learner Support Programmes and in monitoring the progress of learners. (*Refer to 2.7 Learner Support in Full-Service Schools).*

> P2: We believe everyone needs to be involved, it's not an island of isolation, so everybody must be involved because there's no point in us helping a child five days a week and he gets home and nothing happens. (P2I)

> P3: That's my role (as the learner support teacher), that I would meet with parents, I would meet with the team and we would try and figure out [what] is the best approach going forward and in the case where parents can't afford it what is it that we can do to make accommodation. (P3I)

Parents are included in discussions aimed at shifting and shaping prejudices and exclusive attitudes and actions. As an example, while the research was being undertaken one of the parents was invited to address fellow parents around the challenges which her transgender child was experiencing in the process of transitioning. This culture of inclusion helps to create a climate of respect and acceptance and to restore dignity to learners who do not adhere to what is acceptable as societal "norms".

> P4: We also take a collaborative approach with families and the community too. We set challenges for our families over weekends, something that they can learn from, spend time together doing, and that the school can benefit from, for example car tyre veggie gardens. This includes family involvement, recycling, and gardening, growing what you can eat as a family and growing for the school's veggie garden too. (P4I)

Through being proactively inclusive and advertising this in all school media and reports, the school has attracted families and staff who share the inclusive ethos. In addition to the ongoing interaction with parents and the open door policy of the school, annual School-in-Action days are organised during which parents and learners all take part in school activities. An annual grandparents' day honours the role of the extended family. School community meetings are used to discuss the budget, promote lines of communication and share the inclusive teaching and discipline styles used in the school. To promote reading, a Readers are Leaders Day is organised during which local leaders read to the learners.

P4: we have a great response from our families and the community as well. Our school is known for its inclusive culture, so people who come here know what they are up for (P4I).

The practice of collaboration extends to the Western Cape Education Department and other support services.

4.2.2.3 Collaboration with the WCED and other Specialist Support Services

Being based in Cape Town, the school benefits from some, if limited,WCED support services as well ascollaboration with specialists (*Refer to4.2.1.4 Learner support systems*). While one participant felt that the support of the WCED was inadequate, the department does fund a specialised learning support teacher.

P3: The team of learning support staff which comprises of a department-appointed, well the school appointed her but it's funded by the WCED, she's here to do learning support but she also steps in to do other aspects that the school might need. Her primary role is to provide academic support, working with different groups of children across the board. (P3I)

In addition, the school benefits from collaboration with various therapists and outside practitioners. As noted, these are funded by parents of the individual learners who have need of such support.

P3: Then externally we've got an occupational therapy practice that is, it's outside practitioners, and then we've got a speech and language practitioner as well and she comes in on certain days. We've got some people offering remedial work and then we've got a social worker that comes in as well. (P3I)

While collaboration is central to inclusion,without leadership which promotes an inclusive culture and leads by example, developing an inclusive school would be a major challenge.

4.2.3 Theme 3: The Importance of Dynamic and Committed Leadership and an Inclusive Ethos within a Full-Service School

The three teacher participants all acknowledged the central role of a leadership committed to inclusion and most especially of a principal who is leading the transition and who is unashamedly committed to inclusion.

4.2.3.1 The Impact of a Committed and Dynamic Principal

The full-service school where the research was undertaken has followed a 20-year transformation process towards inclusion. The leadership of the school changed completely in 1996 when the principal, the deputy and the head of the foundation phase left. The newly appointed principal began a process of conversion towards inclusive education which was both radical in that there was an absolute commitment to changing systems and practices within the school towards including learners with diverse learning barriers and incremental in that changes were brought in systematically.

> P1: …a tipping point; there is a point in an organisation where if you do not go one step further then you always stay on that side. Once you take that extra one step you tip and then once you tip you are fine. (P1I)

The process of change within the school began with the supposedly small step of painting the doors which were all white (as were all the walls) in different, attractive colours. Other changes which reflect inclusion are the composition of the staff, which has changed from being all white and predominantly male to being more reflective of diversity, the composition of the learners has also shifted from all white middle class to being more racially mixed and including learners with diverse barriers and disabilities. In addition, inclusive systems of discipline and teaching practice have been introduced. Many of these changes met with resistance from some of the more conservative and traditional teachers. Over the 20 years of transition, staff members who were not prepared to embrace the change have left and the school has ensured that all further appointments and replacements are made with the objective of strengthening inclusion and reflecting diversity.

> P1: Or they (teachers) could help us with diversity. We are talking now about where we are looking at employing a second black classroom teacher that will only be the second person that has been a class teacher that we have had that has been a black person in the 20 years that I have been here. So there are always those kinds of changes, all those firsts that you have to get past so you have to get to the point where more people on the staff are happier and appreciative. (P1I)

Teachers who were interviewed agreed that the driving force for inclusion is the principal. This concurs with the findings of academic research which notes the centrality of school leadership within an inclusive education system and a full-service school in particular (Swart & Pettipher, 2016).

P2: The energy comes from the boss. She's got a million ideas and we're like, we've got to incorporate this in everything? If you actually have a lazy person and just let things go then we're all going to be like that. (P2I)

In addition to the leadership and example provided by the principal, the Governing Body is supportive of the inclusive ethos.

4.2.3.2 The Need for a Supportive Governing Body

The school Governing Body plays a central role in creating an inclusive culture (Davidoff & Lazarus, 2007). This full-service school has a supportive Governing Body, that is democratically elected every three years, and is committed to inclusive education and to making the necessary resources available for employment of additional staff and facilitators *(Refer to 4.2.1.4 Learner support systems)* and for infrastructure which makes the school more accessible.

P3: The Governing Body realises and recognises the importance of resources, so they recognise the importance of human resources, so we can be inclusive but we need to have – the teacher can't lead that all the time, we need to have various teams of people involved, so, based on that, every grade has exposure to a teacher aide at some point. (P3I)

With a supportive leadership and systems which support inclusion in place, there still is a need to ensure an inclusive culture is fostered.

4.2.3.3 Cultivating an Inclusive Ethos within a Full-service School

The school places emphasis on supporting all staff members including teachers, administrative staff and maintenance staff in shifting attitudes towards an inclusive culture and challenging individual stereotypes and prejudices.

P1: …. so we have staff meetings for all staff whether you are a cleaner, a gardener, a teacher so everyone is on board or whatever so everybody knows… because what we found otherwise, was that people would make funny comments about a child who was odd. Whether they make them in the kitchen or in the garden, whatever, now people understand, yes. (P1I)

Parents and the community at large are invited to talks and inputs around inclusion and are informed of learners' needs where this does not conflict with issues of confidentiality, which are prioritised.

A leadership committed to inclusion will ensure that staff are developed and supported in developing inclusive attitudes and practices.

4.2.4 Theme 4: Participants' Perceptions of Staff Development

According to White Paper 6 (DoE, 2001), teachers in full-service schools will be assisted and "developed" to be able to cope with learners and enable them to reach their full potential. This school places an emphasis on continuous staff development with dedicated times created for staff learning. This happens every Friday after school for an hour and a half and a small lunch is served to all the staff. The principal decides on the final topic, but participants reported that she is very open to suggestions from all staff. Training is also provided through attending special training events and relevant courses. Inputs vary from curriculum strengthening to positive discipline techniques. This equips teachers with attitudes and skills of inclusion and inclusive education.

4.2.4.1 Inclusive Education Training

The school website notes the commitment to "grow people professionally". Equipping teachers with specific skills and enhancing capacity for inclusive education opportunities for training are identified. The staff are encouraged to attend various national and international courses aimed at deepening inclusive education practices and understanding.

> P1: The other thing we have had to do is more and more staff training when they do arrive, because even though they know they are entering an inclusive school… so we have "new staff meetings" for all new staff whether you are a cleaner, a gardener, a teacher. (P1I)

Training undertaken by individual teachers is shared with the whole staff in order to maintain the ethos of inclusion and enhance skills. Wherever possible, acquired skills are shared with the entire staff, including teaching staff, administrative personnel and ground staff. As an example, two of the participants attended a "Discipline for Peace" course facilitated by Karen Quail and shared what they had learnt with all staff members by means of a condensed input. Although passing on knowledge through condensed inputs is not necessarily the most effective manner of skills transfer, it appears to be a genuine attempt to bring all on board.

As a result, staff are more attuned to positive ways of discipline and all staff, including maintenance staff, are encouraged to intervene if they observe cases where teachers are reverting to shouting or punishing methods of discipline.

> P2: So, ja so let me explain this to you, so we did the Discipline for Peace course and then we just half condensed it into two hours or an hour or something like that, and then we presented it to the whole school again, to the teachers in the morning and then we did the ground staff one. (P2I)

This ongoing training is complemented by classroom experience and inclusive practice.

4.2.4.2 Continuous Learning Experience

Although it is not a requirement for staff to have specific skills to deal with learners with barriers to learning, the school acknowledges that ongoing staff development, sharing and learning is important. There is recognition amongst staff that, although one may understand the theory of inclusive education, it is only through practice and experience that skills will be enhanced.

> P3: Some people started here and then this was their first experience of inclusion three years ago, but because … they were open, it's a combination of the teachers being open to the idea of inclusion and the fact that they were going to learn, but that the school is living it. (P2I)

> P3: Even with my experience and theoretical knowledge of inclusion I'm still coming here and I'm learning and I'm growing. (P3I)

In addition to opportunities for continuous learning in the classroom, the school provides regular spaces for collective reflection and learning.

As a full-service school, the school serves as a model for surrounding schools. Two staff members are currently attending an inclusive education training course facilitated by the National Association of Professional Teachers of South Africa (NAPTOSA) and teachers from surrounding schools then come to the school to share the information.

> P2: …we've always got people visiting, we're always taking people into classes, it's like it is, what it is, bringing them in, it's just normal. (P2I)

This training and reflection on inclusive practice contributes to developing attitudes of inclusion**.**

4.2.4.3 Change in Staff Attitude

The school actively cultivates a positive and inclusive attitude amongst all staff members and the broader school community.

> P3: The ethos of the school is that every adult is responsible for every child even if you're employed to just look after that one. (P3I)

Inclusion is recognised as involvinga change in attitude rather than a skill which can be acquired through theoretical knowledge.

> P4: Inclusion is not always about resources. It is a mind-set and it is everywhere. It is in our environment, our animals, our work and our play. (P4I)

All staff members are recognised as being part of the inclusive culture and as having a role to play. Ground staff are encouraged to intervene if they identify areas of concern, even whenit means challenging a teacher's behaviour; if they hear teachers shouting at the children, they in particular are encouraged to intervene and to offer help to resolve the situation.

4.2.4.4 Staff Support

There is an emphasis on staff wellbeing and onensuring that staff members are "happy and appreciative", thus demonstrating the sense of "belonging" which is advocated in the Guidelines for Full Service Schools (DoBE, 2010a). The four participants all expressed enthusiasm for the inclusive practices and ethos within the school.

> P3: Ja, so I came from a classroom now where I had three facilitators in my classroom at any given time; I had a therapist coming in and out or whatever it might be, I thrived on that and I loved that approach. (P3I)

4.5   Conclusion

Chapter 4 has examined the data emerging from the interviews and reveals the themes that emerged repeatedly from the various data sources. The data collected from participants' stories and experiences emphasise the holistic nature of inclusive education and the

principles and practices which need to be in place to provide effective learner support in a full-service school. In Chapter 5 the focus is on the analysis of the data according to the primary and sub-questions which the research was meantto answer, and the discussion of and reflection on it.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUDING REMARKS, RECOMMENDATIONS, LIMITATIONS

AND STRENGTHS

5.1 Introduction

Chapter 5 attempts to answer the primary research question and sub-questions through analysing the collected data and the emerging themes. The analysis is informed by Bronfenbrenner's bio-ecological systems model and takes into account the systems and personal characteristics which impact the participants' (teachers') perspectives and responses. The analysis transitions from thefocus on individual perspectives presented in Chapter 4 towards an analysis of the collective perspectives of teachers regarding learner support in the particular full-service school.

Based on this analysis, recommendations are made about how to strengthen learner support in full-service schools and support full-service schools to become examples of good practice (Nel *et al.*, 2014). The recommendations are distilled through the lens of the theory of inclusive education discussed in Chapter 2. This includes Bronfenbrenner's bio-ecological systems model and the understanding of the impact of the relationship between the various systems on learner support and on teachers' perspectives thereof.

5.2   Interpretation of the Research

In the interpretation of the research the data and themes gathered through the research are used to answer the research questions and make recommendations with reference to aspects of the theory of inclusion discussed in Chapter 2. The full-service school where the research was undertaken with its various interrelated systems and proximal processes was used as the microsystem from which to draw conclusions and make recommendations (*Refer to 2.5 The Bio-Ecological Model).* As a functioning full-service school which, according to the participants,is committed to inclusion and which employs a number of the inclusive systems and practices discussed in Chapter 4, the school provided an information rich source data.

The interpretation of the research is organised under the four sub-questions and finally used to discuss and draw conclusions in response to the primary research question: What are teachers' perspectives on and experiences of support for learners within a full-service school?

5.2.1   How Are Children with Disabilities/Barriers to Learning Both External and Internal, Supported in Participating in a Full-Service School?

The full-service school where the research was undertaken has initiated a range of learner support systems and structures. These concur with and provide practical examples of learner support as identified in the literature on inclusivity, policies and studies on inclusive education as discussed in Chapter 2.

The starting point in supporting children with barriers to learning is the recognition that all learners can learn (*Refer to 2.7 Learner Support in Full-Service Schools)*. Maintaining expectations of the potential of all learners encourages learners, parents and teachers to explore ways to challenge barriers and to expect positive outcomes. However, to achieve maximum potential it is important to recognise that learners will need different levels of support to overcome barriers to learning, as demonstrated in the support pyramid in the Department of Education's Consolidated WP6 Progress Report 2013 – 2015 presented in Chapter 2. There is a somewhat paradoxical response in recognising the potential of all learners while at the same time acknowledging degrees of severity (the medical diagnosis) and the impact of barriers to learning. Thus the ethos of inclusion must be complemented by inclusive practices and systems aimed at overcoming barriers.

Flowing from the expectation that all learners can learn, is the creation of a climate conducive to diverse learning needs and the ability to be flexible in accommodating learning requirements. As discussed in Chapter 4, the school has endeavoured to create an environment conducive to learning in a number of ways. The government school curriculum is extended by the addition of two additional subjects which the school believes are important life skills and which offer practical ways of learning suited to some learners, and through a Creative and Talented Programme. Classrooms are organised in a way that encourages and accommodates learners and facilitators and teachers are supported in arranging classrooms by the Learner Support Administrator. While preference is given to enabling learners to participate in mainstream classes, the pull-out system is used to accommodate learners who require additional time or an alternative learning environment.

Teachers are encouraged to use creative methods to cover the required curriculum and positive and self-regulatory discipline methods are followed. Quiet places of recreation and an accessible library contribute to a climate conducive to development, as does the inclusion of animals and plants.

A functioning institutional level support team is central to learner support (*Refer to 2.7.2 Institutional Level Support Team).* The Learner Support Department (as it is called in the school) plays a vital role in providing and monitoring learner support throughout the school. The employment of at least one dedicated teacher to co-ordinate learner support is a requirement of the Department of Basic Education. The fact that this school has three dedicated teachers in the learner support unit enables the unit to provide support on many levels. In line with the DoE requirements of an ILST, the unit facilitates extension programmes like the Creative and Talented Programme, offers support to teachers and individual learners and groups of learners who need extra attention for short periods of time, manages specialist support services, co-ordinates learner assessment and the development of Learner Support Plans and maintains lines of communication with parents. As participants acknowledged, support systems (in particular Learner Support Plans) need to remain relevant and useful rather than becoming just another administrative requirement. In line with the defined role of an ILST, the unit is also responsible for staff development and for sharing skills of inclusion. While it is clear that efforts are made to share information with all staff and to cultivate an attitude of inclusion within the whole school, including the parents, the scope of the research did not allow testing how effective this is. How learners are included in the managing of the ILST, as recommended in the literature on inclusive education (Makhalemele & Nel, 2014), is not clear from the research. What is apparent and was noted by one of the participants is that members of an ILST need to be creative, flexible and able to function as part of a collaborative team.

Learner support is a collaborative process that includes parents and the broader community (*Refer to 2.8.1 The Centrality of Collaboration in Inclusive Pedagogy).* The school prioritises collaboration in a number of ways. Participants made repeated reference to how teachers collaborate with one another in providing support to overcome barriers to learning and cope with the demands of inclusive education. Parents are included in the collaborative network to strengthen the proximal process and extend the inclusive ethos beyond the school *(Refer to 2.5)*. Parents and other members of the community serve as volunteers to support both teachers and learners. Parents are also included in the design and monitoring of Learner Support Plans. As observed during the research process, parents are invited to take part in

discussions around specific barriers and diversities to combat stigmatisation and cultivate an inclusive attitude. Parents are also included in fundraising, budget discussions and parent / teacher communication. Collaboration is extended to specialist professionals, including counsellors and therapists who form part of the Inclusive Support Department while they are working in the school. While participants noted that the school served as a resource for other schools wishing to strengthen inclusion, it is not clear whether an effective collaborative network is functioning beyond the immediate school (Florian & Graham, 2014).

The use of facilitators to accompany learners with specific barriers is important in supporting learners and enabling inclusion. Facilitators play a role in supporting learning, keeping learners mainstreamed and constantly encouraging independence (Bergstedt, 2015). One of the challenges which emerged during the current research was the cost of facilitators and that parents carried this cost, which could exclude some learners and is contrary to the intentions of inclusive education. Access to specialists to overcome barriers is currently restricted to those who can afford to pay for specialist interventions or who can benefit from pro-bono services. This would confirm recent research undertaken by Bergstedt (2015) which recommended that schools, to be cost effective, could employ general or school-based learning facilitators who work on a roster-basis to support learning fordifferent periods of the day. This would alleviate pressure on parents to fund individual facilitators (Bergstedt,2015).

In addition to academic support, learner support includes emotional support. The school makes use of counsellors and teachers include methods like art therapy and music in the classroom. Participants in the current research noted that the school believes in the importance of the learners' voice. Learners' opinions are listened to and valued, even if this requires shiftingfrom rigid teaching styles and the curriculum. Opportunities are provided for learners to develop their own systems of discipline and positive reinforcement is preferred over punishment.

Learner support requires providing the necessary infrastructure to accommodate learners' physical and emotional needs. A full-service school must be accessible to learners who are in wheelchairs and must have bathroom facilities which are safe and accessible for all learners, including transgender learners. As noted in Chapter 4, this is an ongoing process within this school, which participants acknowledged.

5.2.2 What are the Teachers' Roles in Supporting Learners within the Classroom?

Teachers are central to learner support within the classroom and particularly to minimising the impact of barriers to learning and realising the potential of all learners *(Refer to 2.8 Inclusive Pedagogy in a Full-Service School)*. A teacher with an inclusive attitude and practice will set the tone within the classroom and will impact on learners' attitudes towards each other. Inclusive teachers recognise the limitations of traditional approaches and are prepared to adopt inclusive pedagogical approaches. Teachers should be well informed and supportive of the inclusive ethos of the school. As discussed in Chapter 2, teachers need to share a common vision, conceptual framework and language of inclusion (Swart & Pettipher, 2016). From appointment through to continuous learning as part of the teaching career, values and practices of inclusion must be a priority.

As noted in Chapter 2, and reinforced within the inclusive ethos of the full-service school, a fundamental principle of inclusion is that teachers need to believe in the potential of all learners to learn. A successful inclusive teacher will reject the status quo of inflexible teaching styles and curriculum in favour of flexible and creative ways of supporting learners (Florian & Graham, 2014). An inclusive teacher understands the need for flexibility which allows the school and the system to adapt, rather than forcing the learner to adapt. An inclusive teacher will therefore use both behavioural models of teaching which vary methods of teaching according to needs of learners and constructivist models in which a two-way process of learning is used. (*Refer to 2.8 Inclusive Pedagogy in a Full-Service School).*This means that inclusive teachers will diversify teaching styles within the classroom to accommodate learners with diverse cognitive, physical and emotional needs. At the same time, inclusive teachers will be seeking ways to strengthen the voice of learners and to adapt systems to accommodate all. Participants in this study confirmed the need for teachers to vary teaching methods as well as enable learners to express their feelings and strengthen their voices.

Teachers are central to collaboration – amongst themselves, with parents and the broader community, as well as with specialists, facilitators and the learners themselves. (*Refer to* 2.8.1 *The Centrality of Collaboration in Inclusive Pedagogy).* Teachers set the example and create the climate for collaboration within the classroom. Participants noted the importance of collaboration, and specifically amongst teachers, to support one another in practising inclusion.

5.2.3 What Recommendations Would Teachers Give with regard to Successful Support To Further the Development of Full-Service Schools?

Participants agreed that an ethos of inclusion must be paramount in every aspect of the school and should be a requirement for employment in a full-service school. Full-service schools need to reflect diversity in terms of the composition of the staff and learners. The structure, policies and systems within the school should all reflect this commitment to inclusion.

Participants acknowledge that a leadership committed to inclusion is the foundation for the development of full-service schools. Principals are charged with the role of managing a school along with a team which may include deputy principals, heads of departments and often parents of the school. In schools where inclusion has been successful, there is leadership committed to reducing exclusion. These principals have very often not waited for departmental instructions but have instead initiated inclusive policies and taken on an inclusive ethos in their schools. These principals have been proactive in responding to their community's needs (Walton, 2001). Changing a system to one that reflects equity requires having key people, in particular the principals, in place to manage the paradigm shift and the transformation of the school. Within this school,as is the case in many schools, inclusion is principal-driven with the help of a dedicated team (Gous, 2009). The principal and governing body must be committed to inclusion and constantly introducing and monitoring inclusive practices and principles.The research highlighted the importance of a leadership prepared to allocate resources towards strengthening inclusion and learner support. Examples of resources from the research include the provision of the necessary infrastructure, as well as sufficient personnel and support staff like teacher aides.The challenge is to raise funds for additional resources or explore ways in which the government budget could be reprioritised to provide the necessary support. While this is difficult in a developing country like South Africa with the complexity of budgetary demands and funding constraints, it is central to the process of democratisation and a culture of human rights (Nel *et al.,* 2014).

The establishment of a functioning ILST and the appointment of a learner support teacher, as recommended by the DoE, were noted by participants as important.It was emphasised that priority should be given to enabling the ILST to function in practice rather than to be established in name only. This would require the appointment of sufficient personnel within the ILST, as well as a culture of collaboration throughout the school.

Examples of sharing of models and developing a culture of learning around inclusion were cited by participants as being important if full-service schools are to be promoted or replicated. Models of successful inclusive practices and inclusive skills need to be shared within the teaching fraternity, as well as withparent bodies and communities.

5.2.4 What are Teachers' Perspectives on and Experiences of Support for Learners within a Full-Service School?

The participants from the full-service school where the research was undertaken are all extremely positive regarding inclusion. This is in contrast to the findings of research in other full-service schools (Engelbrecht*et al.*, 2016). Participants expressed commitment to inclusion and were generally positive around the current systems of learner support in the school.

Participants acknowledged that their positive experience of learner support was due to a committed leadership demonstrating energy and passion for inclusion. Inclusive leadership will demonstrate an inclusive attitude in their relationships with staff, learners and parents (DoBE, 2010a). In addition inclusive leaders will have an open door policy and be available to offer guidance and support. This facilitates learner support.

The participants reinforced the theory that collaboration is central to inclusion. Participants emphasised that all teachers are responsible for the learning of all learners (Florian & Graham, 2014). There was an agreement that, rather than compete, teachers should promote each other's efforts to succeed (Nel*etal.*, 2014). This collaboration extended to parents and support specialists.

The need for adequate resources was highlighted. The appointment of designated learner support teachers and a functioning learner support department is considered central (DoBE, 2010c). This requires resource allocation both by the WCED and by the Governing Body. The lack of infrastructure and space to accommodate learners with physical barriers to learning, for example learners in wheelchairs,was noted as a challenge which hampers learner support. Access to professional services is also important and the fact that parents pay for these is a major constraint to effective learner support for those families who cannot afford it.

All participants agreed that continuous learning and the development of inclusive teaching practices was more important than highly qualified teachers. Experiential learning and staff

development sessions inform the learning that occurs.Inclusive practices and trends are continuously changing and being developed and it is important for teachers to remain up to date and informed.

The support of the WCED was perceived as not effective enough at the time of the research. However, participants acknowledged their own responsibility for contributing to learner support, rather than being passive recipients waiting for an external intervention. The ethos of the school is to ensure inclusion and to make sure that all internal support systems are in place and functioning. Their taking responsibility shifts from an attitude of blame to one of co-operation and proactive action. It also illustrates the argument that inclusion is a process.

5.3   Recommendations

Recommendations towards understanding inclusive education and learner support in a full-service school, in particular, and the further development thereofare made on the basis of the literature review and the findings of the research

5.3.1 A Committed Leadership Building Networks of Support

The attitude and commitment of the leadership to inclusion is paramount. Principals would benefit from exposure to theoretical knowledge and,more important, practical experience of inclusion. Appointment criteria should include an understanding of and commitment to inclusion. Principals and governing body members could undertake training and visits to full-service schools like the school where the research was undertaken. A community of practice needs to be encouraged to provide opportunities to share ideas and skills for inclusion and space for reflection and collective learning. This, in turn, could feed into networks of support that promote collaboration. This could begin to overcome some of the prevalent negative attitudes towards inclusion as referred to in Chapter 2.

5.3.2 An Inclusive Ethos

Linked to a leadership committed to inclusion, is the importance of cultivating an inclusive ethos throughout the school in the leadership, all staff, learners and parents. This would entail developing a common vision, conceptual framework and language of inclusion. If a culture of respect and inclusion is to be fostered, a wider shift in attitudes and societal prejudice is important. This requires a collaborative culture of continuous learning and sharing. Theoretical frameworks include concepts like building a community of practice towards connecting theory with practice. The WCED promotes the concept of professional

learning communities. This should be group of teachers who meet regularly and share expertise and work collaboratively towards honing skills for learner support. Inclusive schools should ensure teachers are part of learning communities and collaborative initiatives and learning opportunities.

5.3.3 Community and Family Involvement

Families must know from the outset that the school where their children are enrolled is an inclusive school. The social media and publicity advertising the school must be unequivocally clear about an inclusive ethos and practice. Parents should be involved wherever possible to shift attitudes towards tolerance and respect and to harness the skills, energy and resources of families and communities in support of inclusion. Newspaper articles, social media and awareness raising events should be used to raise awareness and shift consciousness towards a more inclusive society. Parents and the community at large should be included in fund raising drives with the objective of extending inclusive practices.

5.3.4 Diversity within the School Composition

Inclusive education and a successful full-service school are facilitated by proactively fostering diversity of learners, teachers and support personnel like volunteers, facilitators and teacher aides. Teacher appointments must take diversity into account and strive for a balance in terms of race, gender andabilities. Diversity should ensure that learners, and therefore parents, are sourced from diverse socio-economic and cultural contexts whenever possible. The continued patterns of development in the country along racial and socio-economic lines makes this difficult and results in homogenous schools divided along racial, and particularly, socio-economic lines. This hampers inclusive education. Diversification and integration would enable parents with resources, be these financial, skills or time, to contribute to the effective functioning of full-service schools.

5.3.5 A Well-Functioning Support Team at Institutional Level

Attention must be given to the establishment and practical functioning of an ILST which reflects what is stated in the policy guidelines. A functioning ILST serves as the hub for an inclusive full-service school. The ILST should have sufficient resources and capacity to fulfil their role effectively, as isthe case in this school. Dedicated teachers tasked with monitoring and facilitating inclusive learner support systems must be identified and supported in fulfilling their role although it is understood that ALL teachers are responsible for learner support. The ILST should, of course, be linked to a functioning District-Based Support Team, but

should, in the absence of such a body, be networking with and supporting each other.This full-service school's ILST,for example, networks with other schools in the area such as the local high school.

5.2.6 Ecdc and Aftercare Facilities Incorporating a Collaborative Practice

An Early Childhood Development Centre (ECDC) and an aftercare facility operating as a collaborative practice could be a positive attribute to address learner needs of pre-school children after school hours and accommodate children whose parents or guardians work full days. To promote inclusion, these facilities should extend the inclusive ethos of the school. The National Health Policy promotes collaboration with ECDCs to promote the physical and mental health of children under fiveyears of age (Department of Health, 2015). This could provide opportunities for health services including specialist interventions like psychological services, paediatric and medical specialists and therapists. This would complement the full-service schools and ensure continuity in learner support.

5.3.7 Infrastructure and a Learning Environment which Accommodates Diverse Needs

Full-service schools should not only be accessible to learners with physical barriers but should also accommodate learners with fluid gender identities and emotional barriers. The full-service school where the research was undertaken is raising money for toilet facilities which would not be restricted to gender stereotypes and where all learners would feel safe and comfortable. Providing space for learners who prefer quiet social or relaxation times rather than being forced to socialise in a noisy and active atmosphere is also important. Spaces that accommodate diverse interests are important in creating a relaxed, safe and inclusive atmosphere.

5.4 Limitations of the Research

I, as the researcher, went into the research process with an idea of what outcomes the research may produce and what experiences the participants may have of learner support, expecting negative experiences. Although participants did note some shortfalls and areas which the school is still working on, attitudes towards learner support in this full-service school were that learners in the school were able to participate actively. The research provided an opportunity to gain a better in-depth description of teachers' perspectives of learner support in a full-service school, although the bounded nature of the research means

that the findings cannot be generalised. The learner support systems which participants promoted concur with those promoted in academic studies on inclusive education and could therefore be generalised in the form of theory as important for all full-service schools.

The school is situated in an urban centre in the Western Cape Province where support services, including professional experts and continuous learning opportunities, are more easily available. In addition, the parents are from a mixed socio-economic background, which places them in a better position to becomeinvolved and contribute time and resources to the school, even if just through paying school fees. Some parents are also able to pay for services, although, as debated above, the question of whether this is an inclusive practice remains. I find myself asking whether, if a school is to be fully inclusive, ALL support should not be provided by the school and funded by the Education Department. Teachers' positive attitudes to learner support services may therefore be influenced by the location of the school and the number of resources available to this school and may not reflect the attitudes of teachers in rural areas where services are not available or which are severely under resourced (Engelbrecht*et al.*, 2016).

The school still makes use of a pull-out system where necessary. This form of learner support is based largely on the medical model, but the participants would say that taking learners for one-on-one lessons strengthens their knowledge and therefore equips them to cope in the class in future lessons. Again, if a school is to be fully inclusive, this method of learner support is not in line with ideal inclusive support practices.

5.5 Strengths of the Research

The interpretive nature of the research design used in this study enabled insight into the perspectives of the participating teachers at this particular full-service school. The use of semi-structured individual interviews facilitated sharing of information and of emotions, all of which impact teachers' perspectives. The data delivered information and examples of learner support which can be used by other schools transitioning into full-service schools or wishing to strengthen their inclusive education practice. The research has potential to inform and influence parents and the broader community around the importance of inclusion in transforming society.

The primary strength of the research was to deepen understanding of teachers' perspectives on learner support in a full-service school. The themes which arose from the research are in line with academic literature on inclusive practices and provide real examples of

theoretical ideals. Although gaps have been noted, the research is encouraging in that it demonstrates the potential of full-service schools to adapt and cater for diverse learning needs and begins to challenge the medical model of diagnosis and exclusion from mainstream classrooms. Having undertaken the research in this full-service school, I am more than convinced that inclusive schools, through exposure to inclusive practices and diversity, have potential to impact societal attitudes and contribute towards more unified and inclusive communities.

5.6 Recommendations for Further Research

This was a study of limited scope and, being exploratory in nature, only focused on teachers' perspectives. A study that includes gaining insight into the perspectives of learners as well as parents, and even those of the broader community, would be beneficial to understanding how learner support in this full-service school is conceptualised. Research designs including ethnography, ethnomethodology and design research could be considered for studying the culture of the school, detail the actions and activities identified as support, and also to further develop evidence-based support practices.

5.7 Conclusion

The research study set out to understand the perspectives of teachers in a full-service school with regard to learner support. The study was undertaken using a case study approach in one functioning full-service school. Through the use of semi-structured qualitative interviews, observations and reflective notes, the research was able to examine the perspectives of teachers regarding learner support.

Based on the findings of this study, the fact that the selected school at which the research was undertaken is a functioning full-service school, confirmed much of the theoretical framework and guidelines for inclusive education .

The research was motivating and encouraging and provides opportunities for sharing and learning.

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Addendum A

Letter granting ethical clearance for study from Stellenbosch University

UNIVERSITEIT·STELLENBOSCH·UNIVERSITY
jou kennisvennoot · your knowledge partner

Approval Notice

Stipulated documents/requirements

02-Sep-2016

Conway, Cayley CL

Ethics Reference #: SU-HSD-002574

Title: Teachers' Perspectives of Learner Support in a Full-Service School – A Case Study

Dear Miss Cayley Conway,

Your Stipulated documents/requirements received on 19-Aug-2016, was reviewed and **accepted.**

Please note the following information about your approved research proposal:

Proposal Approval Period: 22-Jun-2016 - 21-Jun-2017

Please take note of the general Investigator Responsibilities attached to this letter.

If the research deviates significantly from the undertaking that was made in the original application for research ethics clearance to the REC and/or alters the risk/benefit profile of the study, the researcher must undertake to notify the REC of these changes.

Please remember to use your **proposal number** (**SU-HSD-002574**) on any documents or correspondence with the REC concerning your research proposal.

Please note that the REC has the prerogative and authority to ask further questions, seek additional information, require further modifications, or monitor the conduct of your research and the consent process.

We wish you the best as you conduct your research.

If you have any questions or need further help, please contact the REC office at 218089183.

Sincerely,

Clarissa Graham
REC Coordinator
Research Ethics Committee: Human Research (Humanities)

National Health Research Ethics Committee (NHREC) registration number: REC-050411-032.

The Research Ethics Committee: Humanities complies with the SA National Health Act No.61 2003 as it pertains to health research. In addition, this committee abides by the ethical norms and principles for research established by the Declaration of Helsinki (2013) and the Department of Health Guidelines for Ethical Research: Principles Structures and Processes (2nd Ed.) 2015. Annually a number of projects may be selected randomly for an external audit.

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Addendum B

Permission to conduct study from the Western Cape Department of Education

Western Cape Government
Education

Directorate: Research

REFERENCE: 20160510-171
ENQUIRIES: Dr A T Wyngaard

Dear Ms Cayley Conway

RESEARCH PROPOSAL: TEACHERS' PERSPECTIVES OF LEARNER SUPPORT IN A FULL-SERVICE SCHOOL – A CASE STUDY

Your application to conduct the above-mentioned research in schools in the Western Cape has been approved subject to the following conditions:
1.   Principals, educators and learners are under no obligation to assist you in your investigation.
2.   Principals, educators, learners and schools should not be identifiable in any way from the results of the investigation.
3.   You make all the arrangements concerning your investigation.
4.   Educators' programmes are not to be interrupted.
5.   The Study is to be conducted from **17 May 2016 till 30 September 2016**
6.   No research can be conducted during the fourth term as schools are preparing and finalizing syllabi for examinations (October to December).
7.   Should you wish to extend the period of your survey, please contact Dr A.T Wyngaard at the contact numbers above quoting the reference number?
8.   A photocopy of this letter is submitted to the principal where the intended research is to be conducted.
9.   Your research will be limited to the list of schools as forwarded to the Western Cape Education Department.
10.   A brief summary of the content, findings and recommendations is provided to the Director: Research Services.
11.   The Department receives a copy of the completed report/dissertation/thesis addressed to:
              The Director: Research Services
              Western Cape Education Department
              Private Bag X9114
              CAPE TOWN
              8000

We wish you success in your research.

Kind regards.
Signed: Dr Audrey T Wyngaard
Directorate: Research
DATE: 13 May 2016

Lower Parliament Street, Cape Town, 8001
tel: +27 21 467 9272   fax: 0865902282
Safe Schools: 0800 45 46 47

Private Bag X9114, Cape Town, 8000
Employment and salary enquiries: 0861 92 33 22
www.westerncape.gov.za

Addendum C

Informed consent form as provided to research participants

**STELLENBOSCH UNIVERSITY
CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH**

<u>Teachers' Perspectives of Learner Support in a Full-Service School – A Case Study</u>
You are asked to participate in a research study conducted by Cayley Conway, from the Department of Educational Psychology at Stellenbosch University. This research project is conducted in partial fulfilment of the Master's degree in Educational Psychology. You were selected as a possible participant in this study because you are involved in inclusive education by being a teacher or principal in a full-service school in the Western Cape.

1. PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

This study aims to explore teachers' perspectives of support that learners receive in a full-service school and how this assists in the development of full-service schools in South Africa.

2. PROCEDURES

If you volunteer to participate in this study, we would ask you to do the following things:

1. The researcher will explain the purpose of the study and answer any questions and concerns you may have. You will then be required to give your formal consent for participation in this study by signing this consent form in the space provided below.

2. Appointments will then be scheduled at a time and place convenient to you in order for the researcher to individually interview you. The interview/s will each be approximately 60 minutes long.

3. With your consent the interview will be voice recorded. This will enable the researcher to ensure that what you share is accurately transcribed and that the final analysis is a true reflection of your experience.

4. The researcher may need to contact you at some time after the interview either telephonically or via e-mail should there be a need to clarify anything that was said during the interview.

5. The researcher will, should you request it, share the transcribed interview/s with you so as to ensure you that what is recorded on paper reflects what was said during the interview/s.

6. A copy of the findings will also be shared with you at a later stage.

3. POTENTIAL RISKS AND DISCOMFORTS

The research cannot foresee any potential risk and/or discomfort as a result of participation in this study. However, should any discomfort arise, the researcher will make every effort

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to minimise this. If at any time you feel you would like to withdraw from the research study, you will be free to do so without any direct consequences for you.

4. POTENTIAL BENEFITS TO PARTICIPANTS OR TO SOCIETY

There will be no benefit to individual participants for participating in this research study. However, it is the researcher's hope that this research study will promote future research which will explore how schools develop as full-service schools, and to improve the establishment and maintenance of full-service schools in South Africa's inclusive education system.

5. PAYMENT FOR PARTICIPATION

There will be no financial gain for participating in this study or any other form of compensation.

6. CONFIDENTIALITY

Any information that is obtained in connection with this study and that can be used to identify you will remain confidential and will be disclosed only with your permission or as required by law.

Confidentiality will be maintained by assigning each participant a particular number. If the research results are to be published every effort shall be taken to protect the confidentiality of participants by further ensuring that no potential identifying information is included in the final report.

The voice recorded interviews will be stored under lock and key and the transcribed interviews on a password encrypted external hard drive. The researcher and supervisor will have sole access to the data. I will personally transcribe the recorded data. Both the voice recordings and the external hard drive will be kept for a period of 5 years, stored securely in a locked filing cabinet after which it will be destroyed.

7. PARTICIPATION AND WITHDRAWAL

Participation in this research study is completely voluntary. You are free to withdraw at any time from the study without fear of prejudice. You may also refuse to answer any questions you do not wish to answer and still remain in the study. The researcher may withdraw you from this research if circumstances arise which warrant doing so.

8. IDENTIFICATION OF INVESTIGATORS

If you have any questions or concerns about the research, please feel free to contact Cayley Conway (researcher) on xxxxxxxxxx or Professor Estelle Swart (supervisor) at xxxxxxxxxx.

9. RIGHTS OF RESEARCH PARTICIPANTS

You may withdraw your consent at any time and discontinue participation without penalty. You are not waiving any legal claims, rights or remedies because of your participation in this research study. If you have questions regarding your rights as a research participant, contact Ms Maléne Fouché [xxxxxxxxxx] at the Division for Research Development at Stellenbosch University.

SIGNATURE OF RESEARCH PARTICIPANT OR LEGAL REPRESENTATIVE

The information above was described to meby Cayley Conwayin [*Afrikaans/English]* and I am in command of this language or it was satisfactorily translated to me. Iwas given the opportunity to ask questions and these questions were answered to my satisfaction.

I hereby consent voluntarily to participate in this study. I have been given a copy of this form.

_____
Name of Participant

_____   _____
Signature of Participant or Legal Representative   Date

SIGNATURE OF INVESTIGATOR

I declare that I explained the information given in this document to _____ [*name of the participant]* and/or [his/her] representative _____ [*name of the representative]. [H*e/she] was encouraged and given ample time to ask me any questions. This conversation was conducted in [*Afrikaans/*English/*Xhosa/*Other*] and [*no translator was used/this conversation was translated into* _____ by _____].

_____   _____
Signature of Investigator   Date

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Addendum D

General interview guide for semi-structured interview with teachers

Addendum D

General interview guide for semi-structured interview with teachers

Teachers' perspectives on learner support in a full-service school –

Individual interview guide for teachers

PART A:

Briefly tell me about your teaching experience and background

      a. Subject taught – age range /education band

      b. Number of years teaching

      c. Number of years teaching in full-service school

      d. Level of education

PART B:

1. Tell me about support in your school

(The following questions may be used to guide the interview process)

2. What does inclusive education mean to you?

      a. Discuss the training you have received in this regard

      b. What does it mean to you to be called an inclusive school?

3. From your experience, explain to me what a full-service school is

4. How do you see the role of the full-service school within the inclusive education system

      a. Understanding of the role players within the school

      b. Function of the ILST, DBST

      c. Understanding of specialist practitioners (speech, OT, psych)

5. Who are the role-players involved / responsible for support in your school?

      a. Parents

      b. Teachers

      c. Community

      d. Senior management

      e. DBST

6. Discuss some of the specific difficulties experienced by learners that you as teachers deal with in this full-service school

      a. Physical

      b. Learning

      c. Sensory

7. How are children with disabilities in a full-service school supported (and examples)?

      a. Physical

       b. Cognitive

       c. Sensory

8. How are children with learning difficulties (intrinsic barrier to learning) in a full-service school supported?

       a. Literacy

       b. Numeracy

       c. Processing

       d. Concentration

       e. Behaviour

9. How are children with external barriers in a full-service school supported?

       a. Family support

       b. Finances

       c. Transport

       d. Social support

10. How do you see your role as a teacher in a full-service school

       a. Level of support you are required to give

       b. Teaching differentiation

       c. Support from all role payers (grade head, SMT, ISLT, outside specialists, principal)

       d. Type of support from facilitators

11. What support strategies would you recommend to ensure successful support within other full-service schools?

12. What training would you offer teachers in full-service schools?

Addendum E

General interview guide for semi-structured interview with principal

Individual interview guide for principal

PART A:

Briefly tell me about your experience in education

      a. Level of education and training

      b. Teaching experience

      c. Number of years teaching in full-service school

      d. Number of years in the role of principal

PART B:

These questions will be used to guide a conversation with the principal.

1) What are your views on inclusive education, more specifically full-service schools?

2) What do you believe are the benefits, if any, of a full-service school?

3) What do you believe are the disadvantages, if any, of a full-service school?

4) Tell me about support in your school.
   What support structures are in place at your school for both intrinsic and extrinsic barriers that learners experience?

5) What are your views regarding the curriculum policy development related to inclusive education?

6) Who are the role players involved in learner support in your school?

7) How do you keep the teachers in your school motivated and encouraged to support all learners in their class?

8) What training do your teachers receive with regard to supporting the learners in their class?

9) What support strategies would you recommend to ensure successful support within other full-service schools?

Addendum F

Questions sent via email to address gaps in the data

Questions sent via email as a follow up to assist in filling gaps in the data:

- How does the school view inclusion?

- Has the school ever followed up on the progress of learners' with barriers to learning when they leave the school and go to high school? Do they continue to do as well as they did at your school?

-What do you call the learner support unit/team and how does it function? Who works in it and what is their role?

-Who comprises the volunteers? Are they parents of children with barriers to learning or any parents? What is the role of the volunteers at the school?

-Who comprises the facilitators? What is the role of the facilitators?

-What is the role of the social workers and therapists? Who pays for them? How does their support get fed back into the classroom?

-Does the school receive any support from the WCED? What is the nature of the support? How would they rate the support / what works well and where are there gaps?

-What are the changes in the school and classroom which support inclusion?

Addendum G

Portion of the transcription from the individual interview – coding: themes and categories

Portion of an Individual Interview - Including Codes and Themes.

P3: Okay, so I am officially the head of inclusive support and I've being here for three weeks and my background is, I've done my honors in inclusive education, I'm currently doing my masters at UCT and my passion is inclusion being the norm rather than the exception. I find myself connecting with places where the system is what is flexible and that the children are the priority, so the power is not resting in the system that the children need to fit into but rather that the system is a fluid one and it allows for each child to excel on their own learning journey. I'm just mindful of words, because I know when you have to transcribe interviews.	System accommodates learners	Theme 1: Learning support and accommodating diverse learning. Creating a conducive learning environment
I: Thank you		
P3: okay.		
I: Because I understand your words which is helpful.		

P3: So I've come from St. Georges which is a private school but it's also an inclusive school so we've got a percentage of children in our care that have learning, everyone has learning needs but they've got higher needs that require, whether it's a facilitator or some kind of support. I accepted this post, it was amazing how it worked out because I met Rosanne at the same time on the day that she had resigned and it was at a time when I had started my master's research so it was incredible. Rosanne came -		
I: Okay, I think I'm jealous that you met her that day; I would have loved to have met her that day and got this post.		
P3: So it was just incredible because it just worked out to be the right thing for everybody at the right time. The way that I see my role here is <mark>that I am co-coordinating a team of people and</mark>		

inclusive in that team are the parents and the children, I'm co-coordinating a team of people in a way which makes the child's voice stronger and louder rather than the child's voice coming secondary, so the primary focus of my role is to make sure that the children's voices are being heard and that we are breaking binaries where other aspects hold more power, so either the system or the curriculum or whatever it might be, where we are constantly asking how we can do things differently rather than how we can fit things into the norm. Does that answer your question?	Giving the learners a voice	Theme 2: Collaboration as central to inclusive practices Between all role players Theme 1: Learning support and accommodating diverse learning. The importance of emotional support and strengthening the learners' voice
I: Absolutely. In terms of actual support in the school? What have you got in place or what have you got going?		
P3: What do you mean, in terms of systems or what does my day look like?		
I: Both, let's start with systems.		

P3: Okay, so we have got our system or the resources that we use as our support, because we don't necessarily, that's not the only way but it's part of what we do, is that there's myself who heads up the team of learning support staff which compromises of a department appointed, well the school appointed her but it's funded by the WCED, she's here to do learning support but she also steps in to do other aspects that the school might need. Her primary role is to do academic support, different groups of children across the board. Then we've got Michelle who is in an administrative role in the learning support department so she supports me in the work that we're doing overall but she also teaches and she is also part of our creative and talented program where we -	Working as a team WCED appointed members	Theme 2: Collaboration as central to inclusive practices Collaboration with the Western Cape Education Department and other specialist support services
I: Ja she was telling me that and it sounds incredible.		

P3: Ja, and then there's Shannon Martin who is the <mark>art teacher but she also does learning support as well. A lot of her work that she does takes the form of therapeutic approach but it's, ja it's very flexible so it's not specifically only counselling, there's a counselling component to it.</mark>	Teachers also being therapists	Theme 2: Collaboration as central to inclusive practices Collaboration between staff
I: And she's also school staff? She's not external?		
P3: She's school staff. Then <mark>externally we've got an occupational therapy practice that is, it's outside practitioners and then we've got a speech and language practitioner as well and she comes in on certain days. We've got some people offering remedial work and then we've got a social worker that comes in as well.</mark>	Professionals from outside	Theme 2: Collaboration as central to inclusive practices Collaboration with the Western Cape Education Department and other specialist support services
I: Okay.		
P3: But those are all to the cost of the parents.		
I: Okay, who are able to afford it?		

P3: Generally children who need therapy it's so diverse that some children might just need one kind of intervention and then that's sufficient and so in that case many parents can afford that but when it comes to more complex situations where we have children who would benefit from a facilitator, they would benefit from a speech and language therapy, they would benefit from occupational therapy, they would also benefit from, in some cases, medication, we then, and this is where I come in, we then look at what is the priority. In a situation where parents are living a reality where you've got so many demands so financially you cannot do everything, I'm a parent myself so that's why I am aware of that a lot more intensely. I think I was aware of that before I had children but I don't think I necessarily knew it completely until I have three children of my own now and that's	Learning support teacher prioritises support	Theme 1: learner support and accommodating diverse learning

Learner support systems |

also – ja so that's my role, that I would meet with parents, I would meet with the team and we would try and figure out is the best approach going forward and in the case where parents can't afford it what is it that we can do to make accommodations.		
I: So collaborative, everyone is involved in all areas of the life, the community, the kid, the parents.		
P3: Yes, currently we're working on how do we make our IEP's more specific, so what is the reason for an IEP? How are those IEP's being helpful for the child first before they become just a form of documentation.	Individual learning plans that are practical	Theme1: Learner support and accommodating diverse learning Every learner can learn, expectations and academic progress
I: And for the purpose of inspection.		
P3: Ja, and the incredible thing here is that the leadership of the school, so Anne particularly, but the governing body realizes and recognizes the importance of resources, so they recognize the		

importance of human resources, so we can be inclusive but we need to have – the teacher can't lead that all the time, we need to have various teams of people involved, so based on that every grade has exposure to a teacher aide at some point. So grade one's each have their own teacher aide, the other grades that share, like grade two share one, grade three share one, grades four and five share one as a grade, so recognizing that the higher they go up it becomes more of an administrative.	Principal and government body support	Theme 3: Importance of committed leadership in a full-service school

The impact of a committed and dynamic principal

The need for a supportive governing body |
I: So that's teacher support as well as learner support.		
P3: Ja, for sure.		
I: I expected that if I had gone to various schools I would have got more of a negative attitude from the teachers with regards to work load and stress and that kind of thing and here being nothing but positive from both you and		

Michelle and sitting in the foyer and listening and stuff like that.		
P3: And so, I did say where I came from hey?		
I: St Georges?		
P3: Ja, okay, I just need to be mindful of things that I say.		
I: Oh this is confidential as you know.		
P3: So, I shouldn't have necessarily told you where I came from because now it looks a bit skew, but St. Georges where I came from is doing inclusion amazingly, however the difference there is that the resources available to the teachers for support is not as heavy as it is here or as effective as it is here, so the ethos is the same but the matching with human resources is not necessarily the same. The expectation is that the teacher needs to be running an inclusive classroom, operating in a way that every child's voice is heard, every		Theme 1: Learner support and accommodating diverse learning

The importance of emotional support and |

<mark style="background-color:#00ff00">child is being given an opportunity to learn,</mark> <mark style="background-color:yellow">that's the philosophy but that can only carried out effectively, you cannot leave a teacher out to do that by themselves.</mark>	139	strengthening the learners' voice Theme 2: Collaboration as central practice for Inclusive education Staff collaboration <mark style="background-color:#ff00ff">Staff support</mark>

Addendum H

Portion of categorising of data according to codes

Theme 1: Participants' perspectives of learner support and accommodating diverse learning	
4 Creating a conducive learning environment 5 Every learner can learn, expectations and academic progress 6 The importance of emotional support and strengthening the learners' voice 7 Learner support systems	P4: Each child has needs and we want to help the learners to find their needs and then assist. P1: Yes, so the first things I also did was change the school times so that and it worked beautifully because we have so many Muslim families in the Western Cape. **P4:** Well one of the ways is we have different playground here because we empathise with each other. There is a playground for loud and rough play and for those who find it challenging to be in a noisy stimulated environment, we have a playground for quiet play. So everybody is involved in play at break time but learners can choose how they want to play. Our learners receive various channels of support. Some children don't always need a physical intervention, they sometimes just need a connection and teachers do that.
Theme 2: Participants' perspectives of collaboration as a central practise for Inclusive Education	
4. Collaboration between staff 5. Collaboration with parents/community 6. Collaboration with the Western Cape Education Department and other specialist support services	**P2**: Okay. So our school is quite different from other schools because we have a leaning support teacher and we have quite a big support team. **P2**: Yeah, so we're four on our team at the moment and then we have outside support as well like speech therapy, OT's, other counselling as well that the parents pay for. I do administration for the learning support

<table>
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<td>department so basically like setting up meetings, helping with the structure of how the kids, like their files and who does what. Another teacher does the academic side and then we have another teacher who does counselling, so I kind of –

P3: that's the philosophy but that can only carried out effectively, you cannot leave a teacher out to do that by themselves.

P4: Here we experience real collaboration. This journey is one that we are committed to but we need to support each other.</td>
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<tr>
<td colspan="2" style="background-color:#d9d9d9">Theme 3: Participants' experiences of the importance of committed leadership in a full-service school</td>
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4. The impact of a committed and dynamic principal
5. The need for a supportive governing body
6. Cultivating an inclusive ethos within a full-service school</td>
<td>P1: . But I said okay if you have to like… So I went from that and to the whole attitude that comes with that. We, children will sit down, shut up, be in their desks, do not stand up.

P2: I think if your leader is not showing you what to do, and she is hectic, don't get me wrong.

P3: Ja, and the incredible thing here is that the leadership of the school, so [the principal] particularly, but the governing body realizes and recognizes the importance of resources, so they recognize the importance of human resources, so we can be inclusive but we need to have – the teacher can't lead that all the time, we need to have various teams of people involved, so based</td>
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	on that every grade has exposure to a teacher aide at some point.
Theme 4: Participants' experience of staff development	
5. Inclusive education training 6. Continuous learning experiences 7. Change in staff attitude 8. Staff support	<u>**P2**</u>: Ja and also, that goes for our staff as well, so if they need support, for instance one of the ladies her mom passed away and she got two weeks off and we had another staff member looking after her class but we sent home meals, we all collaborated, like, "You can do that", you know, which makes you feel part of a society and a bigger thing, it's not just you on an isolated little island. **P4:** Teachers here are never on their own, there is always support. We are always getting feedback, there are always people popping in and out of your class whether it be the OT, someone to read a story or a puppy. P1: you come in with this understanding. The other thing we have had to do is more and more staff training when they do arrive because even though they know they are entering an inclusive school… so we have new staff meetings and a new staff meetings are for all new staff whether you are a cleaner, a gardener, a teacher