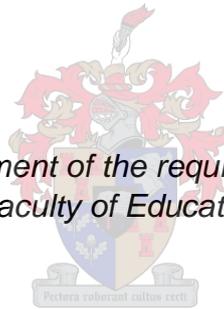


# **Perspectives on the roles and responsibilities of an Inclusive Education Outreach Team in one rural education district of the Western Cape**

by

Sarah Elizabeth Barratt

*Thesis presented in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree Master of  
Educational Psychology in the Faculty of Education at the Stellenbosch University*



Supervisor: Prof. Estelle Swart

March 2016



## DEDICATION

For my son and the thousands of other learners in South Africa  
struggling with disability



*I would never change you,*

*Why would I?*

*When you are the starlight in my life,*

*Why would I?*

*When you make me happy to be alive.*

*I promise you with all my heart you are just as perfect as you are!*

*Anonymous*

## ABSTRACT

Inclusive education around the world, considers both the rights of learners and how education systems can transform to respond to learner diversity in just and humane ways. In this regard, White Paper 6, introduced by the Department of Education in 2001 has been hailed as a post-Apartheid landmark policy which provides the vision and framework for transforming South Africa's divided and unequal education system into an inclusive one. It represents a fundamental shift from a continuum of educational placement to an infusion of education support services throughout the education system.

The Western Cape Education Department has interpreted this 'infusion of support' to include the establishment of Inclusive Education Outreach Teams. These teams are based at special schools' resource centres in order to support designated full service/inclusive schools.

This study looks specifically at how one rural Inclusive Education Outreach Team in the Western Cape perceives its role and responsibilities. A qualitative research design within an interpretive paradigm was used to explore these perspectives. This exploration was conducted from within an ecological community psychology approach. Doing so allowed a view of the research question as the dynamic interaction between research participants and their environment. Convenience and purposive sampling methods were used to select the four participants in the study. Data was collected by way of in-depth individual interviews and a single focus group interview and analysed using thematic data analysis.

The data revealed the following key findings. On the one hand, there are significant enabling factors to support the effectiveness of Inclusive Education Outreach Teams as enabling agents of inclusion. These include:

- A significant degree of convergence between inclusive education theory and existing inclusive education policy;
- Enabling Inclusive Education Policy and guidelines;
- Research participants' understanding of inclusion and the intentions of inclusive education are in line with policy, which they view as a reference to guide and support their practice;

- The Inclusive Education Outreach Team's view of their role is fundamentally that of a support service with the primary responsibility of enabling the implementation of inclusive education.

On the other hand, there are disabling systemic factors that significantly undermine the effectiveness of these teams. These include:

- No official policy pertaining to the functioning of these teams;
- No uniformity in the way in which these teams function across education districts within the Province;
- The team members' respective job descriptions are unofficial draft documents, effectively rendering their status in the district and in schools 'unofficial';
- Uncertainty, confusion and even dissent about the roles and responsibilities of Inclusive Education Outreach Teams at many levels of the education system.

Within the broader context of the failure of Inclusive Education Policy to impact on the education system in any significant way, 14 years after its introduction, the key challenge remains the translation of enabling policy rhetoric into meaningful practice at every level of the system. At the District level, this requires visionary leadership across, and firm management within, the Specialized Education Support Component (which includes the Inclusive Education Outreach Teams and the Special School Resource Centres), to enable systemic alignment and inter-sectoral collaboration within an integrated community framework.

**Key words:** Inclusive Education Outreach Teams; inclusive education; education support services; rural education; special school resource centres; district-based support teams

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

*This has been an extraordinarily challenging journey. Yet, in retrospect, a journey I am grateful to have been able to take and fortunate enough not to have had to travel alone. There have been many willing travelling companions, who have walked alongside me, held my hand, offering guidance and support at times when the journey has felt almost more than I could bear.*

- First and foremost, I would like to thank David whose unwavering belief in me, whose love, care and support have made it possible for me to fulfil my dream. David you are my rock; you are my safe place; you are my person.
- To Sandy, my very best, dearest friend, thank you for always listening and the many hours of conversation and valuable insights you have contributed to my thinking.
- To William, the starlight in my life, it is because of who you are that I am and for this I am eternally grateful.
- To my parents, thank you for allowing me to be your 'golden girl'. Believing in and supporting me have helped create this opportunity for me. For this I will always be truly grateful.
- To Mr Cook, thank you for trusting me and making the necessary accommodations; for your support and encouragement.
- To my long suffering colleagues, Antonette, Gikmah and Maira; thank you for your friendship and being my sunshine at those times when the world felt grey and bleak.
- To each participant, thank you for being willing to give of your precious time to contribute to the richness of this study. I am indebted to each of you.
- To Prof. Swart, thank you for your support and insightful feedback. It was greatly appreciated.

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## LIST OF ACRONYMS

CAPS	Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statements
CBST	Circuit-based Support Team
DBST	District-based Support Team
DET	Department of Education and Training
ELSEN	Education for Learners with Special Educational Needs
FG	Focus Group
FSS	Full Service/Inclusive School
ILST	Institutional Level Support Team
KI	Key Informant
LSE	Learning Support Educator
LTSM	Learning and Teaching Materials
NCSNET	National Commission on Special Education Needs and Training
NECC	National Education Coordinating Committee
NCESS	National Committee on Education Support Services
NEPI	National Education Policy Investigation
OBOS	Onderwysbestuur-en-ontwikkelingsentrum
OT	Occupational Therapy/ Therapist
P1	Participant 1
P2	Participant 2
P3	Participant 3
SIAS	Screening, identification, assessment and support
SES	Specialised Education Support
SLES	Specialised Learner and Educator Support
SMT	School Management Team
SSAIS-R	Senior South African Individual Scales Revised

SSRC	Special School Resource Centre
UNCRPD	United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization
WCED	Western Cape Education Department

# Chapter 1

## Context and rationale for the study

### 1.1. My personal context: Daring to cross the bridge



Imagine two worlds: a rickety wooden bridge swaying precariously between them. Dangerous in its height above the lashing waters, its distance across and the brittle timber of its design give rise to the fear that has been lurking in my belly!

My son is on the one side and I am on the other. I beckon to him, cajole and plead with him to take that first step and to walk across, to enter my world where people engage and live together.

Yet he vehemently resists, withdrawing, remaining firmly where he feels safe; he in his world and I in mine. I grow weary with trying. My dreams shattered, shrouded in hopelessness I begin searching for answers. Yet, it seems there is none to be found.

From my side of the bridge his world appears lonely; my heart aches. Why won't he venture over? Tentatively I decide to walk across to him, but he refuses to let me in. Crushed I return to my world and he remains steadfastly in his.

Then one day he calls to me! Overcome with joy, my fear aside, I run across to meet him. For a brief moment, the sun shines across the waters, its gentle warmth against my face. I glimpse the boy inside. He is funny, articulate and insightful!

Just as suddenly, the sun moves behind the clouds and the waters grow dark and menacing. It is time to go back. Each day I wait, longing to be invited over to him once again, to feel the sun against my face and to see the boy inside.

So many years have been consumed in search of suitable schooling, to no avail. From schools simply unable to meet his needs, to others completely unwilling to entertain the notion of accommodation, we travelled across the Western Cape, searching!

So many education support professionals have been consulted, but not one has communicated with any other. Psychologists, psychiatrist, speech therapist, social worker and occupational therapist - all their recommendations leading nowhere, amounting to nothing. Now, so many years later, depleted and disillusioned, my son has been an out-of-school youth statistic since he turned 15 in 2013.

In 2001 it was estimated that some 280 000 children with special needs, all younger than 18 years were not in school. Kader Asmal, the then Minister of Education, wrote the following in the foreword to Education White Paper 6 on Special Needs Education: Building an Inclusive Education and Training System: “I hold out great hope that through the measures that we put forward - we will also be able to convince the thousands of mothers and fathers of these [280,000] disabled children that the place of these children is not one of isolation in dark backrooms and sheds. It is with their peers, in schools, on the playgrounds, on the streets and in places of worship where they can become part of the local community and cultural life, and part of the reconstruction and development of our country” (Department of Education, 2001, 4).

In 2002 only 73% of learners with disabilities aged 7 to 15 years were in school. By 2012 this figure had increased to 92%. While this represents a 19% increase in the school attendance of 7 to 15 year-olds with disabilities, a positive indication of the improved inclusive nature of schooling in South Africa, it also means that 8% of such learners did not attend school (Department of Basic Education, 2013, 21).

In 2010, of the country’s 14.6 million children and youth, it was estimated that close to one million were disabled and/or experienced barriers to learning (Department of Basic Education, 2010). In 2013, only 88% of South African children and youth attended school (Statistics South Africa, 2014) and in 2014 this figure dropped by 1% to 87% (Statistics South Africa, 2015). Nonetheless, the figures for 2013 and 2014 included almost universal school attendance amongst the 7 to 15 year age group.

For the learners not attending school during either 2013 or 2014, 8 specific reasons were cited. Illness and disability were ranked fifth amongst them. This translates into approximately 10% of the learners who are of school-going age, but are not attending school (Statistics South Africa, 2014; Statistics South Africa, 2015).

Therefore, as a matter of urgency, 'mobilisation' of the many out-of-school learners of school going age (Department of Education, 2001, 8) has been identified as one of numerous key strategies for the successful implementation of inclusive education. Another of these strategies, which is of particular relevance to this research, is the restructuring and reconceptualization of education support services (Department of Education, 2001, 8).

## 1.2. Introduction

South Africa is now 21 years into democracy. It is 18 years since the National Commission on Special Needs Education and Training (NCSNET) and the National Committee for Education Support Services (NCESS) was commissioned to explore issues related to 'special needs and support' in education (Department of Education, 1997) and make recommendations for a new national education policy. The NCSNET/NCESS report set out a vision of 'Quality Education for All' (Department of Education, 1997) and articulated the need to reconceptualise education support services as a system of support, which is preventative, health promoting and developmental in orientation. This report formed the conceptual framework for White Paper 6 on Special Needs Education: Building an Inclusive Education and Training System (Department of Education, 2001).

Education White Paper 6 (Department of Education, 2001) adopts the principles of inclusion in line with international perspectives. It also acknowledges that "all children and youth can learn and that all children and youth need support" (Department of Education, 2001, 16); and the necessity for the adaptation and increased availability of existing support systems, thereby enabling learners who experience barriers to learning, equitable access to the education system. In addition, it reflects a perspective which highlights the significance of the interaction between individuals and their environment; essentially an ecological, community psychology approach to support provision (Nel, Lazarus, & Daniels, 2010).

Naicker (2005) argues that 'new' education support services (as advocated in White Paper 6) cannot be successfully delivered within the confines of South Africa's past. Therefore, it is imperative for education support professionals to shift their thinking,

planning and action, from traditionally based positivist<sup>1</sup> assumptions, to the constructivist<sup>2</sup> ideology, embodied by the intentions of White Paper 6.

However believing in and supporting a policy of inclusive education alone, is not sufficient. The key challenge is how to integrate the new philosophy into existing educational structures and systems, in order to transform day-to-day practices. Simultaneously, there is a need to develop appropriate support structures inside an 'integrated and community-based framework' (Lomofsky & Lazarus, 2001).

Thus for the South African education system to take policy from strategic intent to operational reality, White Paper 6 envisages a continuum of support provision from low intensity to specialised, intensive support across three types of schools<sup>3</sup> (Naiker, S. personal communication, March 17, 2014). Furthermore, it proposes the institutionalisation of multi-disciplinary District-based Support Teams (DBSTs). These teams comprise of staff from provisional district offices as well as from special school resource centres and their primary function is to 'spearhead' the reconceptualisation and restructuring of education support services to schools across the country.

In the Western Cape this translates into one DBST in each of the eight education districts; four of which are urban, and four rural. In South Africa "rural areas are typically remote and relatively underdeveloped, and their schools are poor and disadvantaged" (Surty, 2012, 8).

Each education district is further divided into a number of circuits. Each circuit, comprising between 35 and 40 schools, has a Circuit-based Support Team (CBST). In addition to these CBSTs, each district also has a maximum of two Inclusive Education Outreach Teams, each of which is based at special school resource centres. The focus of this research is on an Inclusive Education Outreach Team in one of the four rural education districts of the Western Cape. Chapter 3, section 3.2.3, provides a more comprehensive description of the context of this study.

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<sup>1</sup> The nature of knowledge, reality, and existence which recognizes only that which can be scientifically verified or which is capable of logical or mathematical proof

<sup>2</sup> Construction of one's own understanding and knowledge of the world, through experiencing things and reflection on those experiences

<sup>3</sup> The three types of schools are identified and discussed in chapter 2.

### 1.3. Background and motivation

South Africa has long been regarded as a country 'born of conquest and shaped by conflict' (Nussey, 2005, 1). 1948 saw the institutionalisation of a racist social, political and economic system called 'Apartheid'. Every aspect of South African society, including education, reflected gross inequalities and discrimination, based primarily on race, and disability second.

Large numbers of South African learners with disabilities, especially 'Black', 'Coloured' and 'Indian' learners, were either 'mainstreamed by default', without support, or excluded from accessing appropriate education altogether (Department of Education, 2001). Funding and highly specialised education support services were limited to, and the preserve of, the very small minority of 'White' South African learners (Swart & Pettipher, 2011). In addition, a separate education policy was developed for mainstream and special education, "a strategy that is at best inefficient and wasteful and at worst unjust" (Green, 2001, 6).

Moreover, thinking in education has traditionally focused on a medical deficit approach to support services. By and large, support professionals subscribed to a belief system which viewed learners as inherently deficient and in need of individual 'fixing'. This often resulted in uncertain identification criteria and predominantly direct, one-on-one support provision.

It was not until 1994, 46 years after the institutionalization of Apartheid, that South Africa experienced the birth of a new social dispensation, the dawn of democracy. The new democratic government made significant efforts to move the country in the direction of non-racism while promoting a culture of equality, human rights and social justice. This new era in South Africa's history, in interaction with the current international socio-political changes, made it possible to begin thinking about education and education support services in terms of inclusion and inclusive education (Swart & Pettipher, 2011, 8).

This shift in thinking is clearly reflected in the Bill of Human Rights (Chapter 2 of the South African Constitution) which states that 'all learners have a right to basic education including adult basic education and further education' (Republic of South Africa, 1996). Moreover, White Paper 1 on Education and Training (Department of

Education, 1995), and the South African Schools Act no 84 of 1996, which legislates that all learners may have access to a school of their parents' choice (Department of Education, 1996), together provided a platform for educational transformation in South Africa.

To a large extent, South Africa's move towards inclusive education has mirrored that of most other countries around the globe. Inclusive education is viewed as the strategy most apt at addressing the diverse needs of all learners (Stofile & Green, 2007). Moreover, it is widely touted as the educational approach most conducive to building a just and democratic society (Engelbrecht, 1999). Therefore, given the nature of South Africa's discriminatory past, the above resonated loudly with post-1994 policymakers, with the concept of inclusion becoming highly politicised in a country defined by exclusionary practices. This makes inclusive education primarily a political decision (Corbet & Slee, 2000). Peters (2004), therefore, argues that while it has been assumed that an increase in political will by the South African government would empower educators and other relevant stakeholders to be effective in their implementation of inclusive education, the social context in South Africa poses many complex challenges to its successful implementation.

Moreover, Da Costa (2003) has noted that a gap exists at all levels of the South African education system, i.e. a gap between the conceptualisation of inclusive education and its implementation in the daily functioning of schools. However, there has not yet been any clear indication as to what this could mean and why it is so. Apart from lessons learned from the relatively successful implementation of inclusive education in a small number of schools where the policy guidelines have been piloted (e.g. Stofile, 2008), very little is known about how effectively the policy is being implemented in the majority of South African schools.

Research on South African education, post 1994, has focused largely on policy analysis and curriculum, leaving education support services as a relatively un-researched field (Mashau, Steyn, Van der Walt & Wolhuter, 2008). However, the research that has been conducted, (Dreyer, 2008) highlights that the success of inclusive education lies within the provision of adequate support for learners who experience barriers to learning as well as in the changing roles of teachers and support services staff.

*It is essential to increase awareness of the importance of Education Support Services in an education and training system which is committed to equal access, non-discrimination, and redress, and which needs to target those sections of the learning population, which have been most neglected or are the most vulnerable.*

*(Department of Education, 1996, 16)*

To increase awareness of the importance of education support services, professionals and other relevant stakeholders need to consider inclusive education policy within the larger education policy context (Corbett & Slee, 2000). Fundamentally it is quality education support that provides the foundation to successful inclusive education (Swart & Pettipher, 2011). Successful inclusive education requires vigilance at every level of the education system and school community, and demands critical analysis of the intentions of the articulated policy and between policy and actual practice. This notion is supported by Liasidou (2012, 16) who argues that inclusive education cannot be achieved “unless there is a synergetic relation between institutional and ideological dynamics, between pragmatic and critical approaches to policy and practice”. Essentially this means there is a need for alignment of legislated inclusive policy and the reality of inclusive educational practice.

Moreover, the way in which policy is developed has a significant impact on the success of its implementation (Lomofsky & Lazarus, 2001). The development of inclusive education policy in South Africa has been a unique process (Muthukrishna and Schoeman, 2000). The democratic, participatory and problem-centred approach adopted during the policy development process, boded well for the future effective implementation of inclusive education (Lomofsky & Lazarus, 2001). Nevertheless, this does not take away the on-going and inherent conflict, characteristic of any policy development process (Bowe, Ball & Gold, 1992).

Within this context, education support professionals have a significant role to play, and are in a privileged position to be a pivotal part of advocating for inclusive education and inclusive policy. Even if this requires engaging in political discussion and potential conflict, “psychologists [and other education support professionals] need to recognize their potential power and their humble place in influencing social [and education] policies” (Lazarus, 2011, 365).

## 1.4. Description of the problem and research question

The current reality in many schools is that new forms of exclusion are operating under the guise of inclusive education; essentially constituting sub-systems of specialized education functioning within inclusive settings (Liasidou, 2012). In South African schools, particularly in the Western Cape Province, the learning support model implemented to make provision for learners experiencing barriers to learning, included the establishment of a class for learners with special educational needs in mainstream schools (Dreyer 2008). These classes replaced the existing special, adaptation and remedial classes, providing for all learners who require specialised support. However, unlike past practices, the intention was for these learners to return to the mainstream as soon as they were ready.

An extension of this level of support was the establishment of ELSEN (Education for learners with special educational needs) units, each consisting of two or more ELSEN classes (Theron, 1999). The purpose of these units is to accommodate learners identified as candidates for special schools located far from their homes. A snap survey conducted in 2003, requested learner information needed for Special Needs Education and on the basis of this information these ELSEN Units evolved into 'full-time classes for learners who experience barriers to learning' and the learners were no longer viewed as 'remedial learners in the mainstream' (Western Cape Education Department, 2003, 3).

So it would seem that despite the ample rhetoric around inclusion and the progressive policy guidelines written in support of White Paper 6 (Department of Education, 2001), exclusionary, fragmented and often uncoordinated practices and support services are still alive and well (Graham & Jahnukainen, 2011). In addition, the research of Mashau Steyn, Van der Walt, Wolhuter (2008) indicated a general inadequate supply of education support services in South Africa, particularly in the historically disadvantaged rural areas.

Following reports that the provincial departments of education are neglecting schools, especially in the far-flung rural areas of the country, Mashau *et al.* conducted a survey with school managers and educators across the Limpopo province to explore their perceptions of the availability of education support services. The disturbing conclusion

was that a relatively large percentage of the respondents perceived education support services to be either non-existent or completely unavailable (Mashau, 2008).

Back in 1999 Ndou (the primary health-care coordinator in Limpopo province) in his personal communications with Mashau *et al.* (2008) had already observed, that due to a lack of resources, professional services which included education support services had been curtailed or even terminated in urban South African areas while in the rural areas they had never even existed. Alpha Secondary School in Limpopo province is one such example.

*Inside the yard, stray donkeys roam between the two classroom blocks. Windows are broken and the stench emanating from the pit latrines hangs thick in the air. There is little shade or air conditioning to offer respite from the brutal heat. Academically things don't get much better. At the end of the 2012 school year not one of the 20 pupils sitting their final high school exams passed.*

(Sapa, 2013: 3-6)

Like many rural schools across South Africa, the description of the situation depicted above, magnifies many of the shortcomings of the country's education system. Apartheid policies have left South Africa wracked with a legacy of severe inequalities. Many South Africans struggle to meet their most basic, daily needs. Like all spheres of South African society, these disparities are also reflected in education and in the availability and access to education support services (Engelbrecht, 2001; Mashau *et al.*, 2008).

Within the educational context many socio-economic related factors underlie the impossibly high teacher-learner ratios, the consistent shortages of learning and teaching materials, and the limited, sporadic access to education support services. As a result many South African learners are faced daily with extreme, relentless personal and environmental stressors which put them at great risk of emotional, behavioural and/or learning difficulties (Engelbrecht, 2001; Van Zyl & Van Zyl, 2011).

The South African education system is ranked as one of the worst (Holborn, 2013). Indeed there is every suggestion that education in South Africa remains one of the

most inefficient and ineffective in the world, despite the disproportionate per-capita amounts spent on South African learners (Spaull, 2012; Blom 2013; De Waal 2013). Twenty percent of the total government expenditure is spent on education which accounts for approximately R207 billion of the national budget (Blom, 2013). Despite this, Angie Motshekga, the current Minister of Basic Education, emphatically denies that there is a crisis in education. Shortly before the release of the 2012 Matric results, Motshekga declared: "Our national strategy for improving literacy and numeracy has assisted in improving education quality" (De Waal, 2013). Improvement in the 2012 Matric results was used to promote Motshekga's claim that the department's national strategy was achieving results.

Equal Education (2014) states that measuring education quality is difficult because it is multi-faceted and there is no one single measure that captures the essence of education quality. Moreover, using Matric results as a yardstick against which to measure improvement is tricky because it only tracks those learners who actually wrote the exams, and not those who dropped out. "More and more commentators and critics are beginning to understand why the pass rate seen in isolation is problematic and in many instances misleading" (Spaull, 2015). The education system is still failing, and claims to the contrary, based on the Matric results, are unsubstantiated (De Waal, 2013).

In 2001 1.2 million South African learners enrolled in grade 1. Only 44% of this cohort remained in the system to sit for their National Senior Certificate in 2012 (Holborn, 2012). Essentially what this means is that approximately 672 000 learners were 'lost' to the system. Like the learners depicted at Alpha Secondary School, these children have nowhere else to go, falling by the wayside only to perpetuate the cycle of exclusion.

Already in 1997 the Education Department stated its ambivalence about whether mainstream education had the capacity to sustain such a policy (equal education and access to education support services for all) in a way that would serve the best interests of all South African learners (Department of Education, 1997). Despite the enabling education policies and the subsequent guidelines which have steadily been put in place since 1994, South African education remains unequal, inefficient and underperforming (Spaull *et al.*, 2012). Simultaneously, education support services are

largely inadequate. Mashau *et al.* (2008) argues that this is particularly the case in historically disadvantaged areas where the perception of education support services is that they are either non-existent or simply unavailable.

Furthermore, my experience<sup>4</sup> as a member of a rural Inclusive Education Outreach Team, serving twelve full-service schools, is that the need for support by these schools far outweighs the capacity to provide support. Learner to specialised staff ratios are extremely high, making it virtually impossible to address every learner's needs individually. Moreover, there has generally been no significant shift in thinking around disability as moulded by the medical model that traditionally informed education support practice in schools, towards an understanding of disability supported by the rights model embodied by inclusive education policy. Additionally, my experience of education support service providers, is that they tend to work strictly within their own silos of expertise, offering largely reactive as opposed to proactive services to school communities.

The above confirms that a pervasive problem in South African education is the dislocation between the rhetoric of official policy and practical implementation (Xaba, 2006). This highlights the need for a more pragmatic approach towards policy application, which underscores the central research question this study seeks to address: *What are the perspectives on the roles and responsibilities of an Inclusive Education Outreach Team in one rural education district of the Western Cape?*

Furthermore without either any formal policy pertaining to or finalised job descriptions for the Inclusive Education Outreach Teams in the Western Cape, this study by its very nature will explore the impact this lack of policy and clear job descriptions has on the rural team under study. Both policy and well written job descriptions provide clarity and enhance communication between roleplayers. Specifically, policy serves as an overall guide for best practices, contributing to the general working culture amongst employees by encouraging the development of desired norms and values. Complimentary to policy, job descriptions provide clarity on roles and responsibilities

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<sup>4</sup> It should be noted that I was not a member of the team involved in this research and was on unpaid study leave at the time this research was conducted.

thereby removing any potential ambiguity and subsequent anxiety that employees may feel.

## 1.5. Research objectives

The need to answer the above research question arises from a context in which the establishment of Inclusive Education Outreach Teams (based at Special School Resource Centres) is an anomaly in the Western Cape. According to D. Stegmann, from the Directorate: Inclusive Education and Specialised Support, Western Cape Education Department, there is currently no official policy pertaining specifically to the functioning of these teams, only inferences that can be made from Education White Paper 6 (personal communication, February 25, 2014). Under 'Strengthening education support services', it is stated in White Paper 6 that "Special schools and settings will be converted to resource centres and integrated into district support teams so that they can provide specialised professional support in curriculum, assessment and instruction to neighbourhood schools, especially 'full-service' schools" (Department of Education, 2001, 29).

In order to answer the research question, this study will explore:

- the perspectives of one key informant on the roles and responsibilities of Inclusive Education Outreach Teams;
- how one rural Inclusive Education Outreach Team understands and translates their understanding of inclusive education into practice;
- what one rural Inclusive Education Outreach Team experiences as challenging in the implementation of inclusive education;
- what capacity building exists and is required by one rural Inclusive Education Outreach Team in order to align their practice with current policy;
- what recommendations can be made for the future improvement of the support services delivered by one rural Inclusive Education Outreach Team.

## 1.6. Perspective and the theoretical framework

Education does not exist in a vacuum. Every change experienced in education reflects and interacts with changes in the wider social, political and/or economic context. As such I have applied a community psychology approach to understand one rural

Inclusive Education Outreach Team's perspectives of its role and responsibilities in terms of the educational support services they deliver. I have suggested a practice that shifts the emphasis from individual learners and their abilities to the wider context of their lives. A community psychology approach creates awareness of the importance of the interaction between individuals and their environment, thereby making communities and not just individuals the focus of potential intervention (Ahmed & Pretorius-Heuchert, 2011).

In order to adequately explain this interaction between individuals and their environment I have selected Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory as the theoretical framework for this study (see Chapter 2, Section 2.3). A theoretical framework is essentially 'the structure, the scaffolding, the frame' (Merriam, 2001, 45) that serves to explain why the research problem under study, exists. As such, ecological systems theory means taking the 'person-in-context' as the unit of analysis and change. This surpasses a mere analysis of the immediate environment. Instead, context needs to be understood as multi-levelled, and multi-dimensional (Kagan & Burton, 1995). Such thinking fits well with a community psychology approach.

Furthermore ecological systems theory describes complex 'layers' of context (environment), each with the potential to influence an individual's development. Changes or conflict in any one layer will reverberate throughout other layers. Therefore, just as importantly, individuals' perceptions of their contexts are crucial to understanding how to engage with them as they are the active participants in their own development. The context (environment) does not merely influence an individual, the influence between the context and the individual is bi-directional. To fully appreciate an individual requires exploration of the individual and his/her immediate context and also examination of the interaction and influence of the broader context. So in line with Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory, community psychology advocates for context (systems) analyses, both as a means of facilitating understanding, but also to give direction to the most appropriate action and intervention.

## 1.7. Research design and methodology

Development of a research design, requires that the researcher makes a sequence of decisions along four dimensions, namely the purpose of the research, the theoretical paradigm informing the research, the context in which the research is to be carried out

and the techniques used to collect and analyse the research data (Terre Blanche, Durrheim & Painter, 2006). These decisions need to be intertwined in such a way so as to ensure design cohesion. Basically this means that the research purpose and techniques used must be logically arranged within the research framework provided by the chosen paradigm.

This study will make use of a qualitative research design. As a qualitative researcher I am interested in “how people make sense of their world and the experiences they have in the world” (Merriam, 2009, 13). Therefore, in light of the chosen research design, I plan to view my research through the lens of an interpretive paradigm. An interpretive paradigm takes into account the participants’ subjective experiences as the crux of what is important (Terre Blanche *et al.*, 2006). Thus I believe, reality consists of individuals’ subjective experiences of their external world and, therefore, I argue that multiple, socially construed realities exist. My research can thus be neither value-free nor completely objective.

Very closely related to my choice of paradigm is the purpose of my intended study. Essentially this study focuses on how individual and groups of research participants make meaning of inclusive education policy and how this understanding translates into the delivery of educational support services by one rural Inclusive Education Outreach Team.

The research participants were selected using convenience and purposive sampling. In other words they were chosen based on their availability and their willingness to participate, and because each of the participants is typical of the target population. The research participants include one rural Inclusive Education Outreach Team. This team comprises of three members; namely a ‘school psychologist’<sup>5</sup>, a learning support educator and an occupational therapist.

One key informant at Provincial level was also included in the study. The use of this particular key informant provided greater depth in the exploration of the research question. Education policy and any subsequent policy guidelines pertaining to inclusive education are also contained within the scope of this study.

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<sup>5</sup> The controversy with regards to this particular category of education support provider has already been addressed.

To gain the best possible understanding of the participants' experience, data was initially collect by conducting one-on-one in depth interviews with each research participant. Follow up interviews were conducted where necessary. Interviewing as a more natural way of interacting with people fits well with an interpretative paradigm (Terre Blanche *et al.*, 1999). This study made use of semi-structured interviews for which interview schedules have been developed.

Creating effective research questions for the interview process is one of the most crucial components to interview design. The questions should allow the researcher to dig deeply into the experiences and/or knowledge of participants in order to gain maximum data from the interviews (Turner, 2010).

A focus group interview was also to be conducted with the team once the individual interviews had been concluded. This interview typically includes a small group of participants who characteristically share a similar type of experience. What sets the focus group interview apart from other types of group activities is “the explicit use of the group interaction to produce data and insights that would be less accessible without the interaction found in a group” (Morgan, 1988, 12). The strength of focus groups lies in the richness of the information that participants provide. However, there are limits to the method's applications which will be considered when the research methodology is discussed in greater detail in chapter 3.

In qualitative research there is often no clear-cut point when data collection ends and analysis starts. Nevertheless, the data collected during the course of this research study was analysed using thematic content analysis. Thematic content analysis is essentially a descriptive presentation of qualitative data (Anderson, 2007) and the outcome of any qualitative research, therefore, needs to be a convincing account of the phenomenon being studied.

## **1.8. Ethical considerations**

Conducting ethical research is an ongoing process and, therefore, in an effort to be a responsible researcher every endeavour was made to respect the dignity, moral and legal rights of all research participants. The above also includes consideration of participants' right to confidentiality.

As the primary tool for both the collection and analysis of the research data, the researcher is required to enter the research setting with great care; engaging openly and empathetically with the research participants. In light of this, each participant was required to give informed, written consent, acknowledging that their participation was voluntary and that they were free to withdraw from the study at any time they chose without fear of repercussion.

Lastly, an opportunity to debrief was extended to participants at the conclusion of the study, had they felt the need to address issues that were raised and not sufficiently dealt with during the interview(s).

## 1.9. Structure and presentation

This thesis is structured and presented as follows:

**Chapter 1** provides a background to the study and briefly introduces and describes the research problem, states the research question, aim, purpose and significance of the research, considers the main ethical issues and outlines the organisation of the chapters that follow.

**Chapter 2** gives an overview of the theoretical framework and the key literature in the field of inclusive education policy and education support services, with a particular focus on Inclusive Education Outreach Teams.

**Chapter 3** discusses the research paradigm, research design and research methodology, outlining the selection of participants, data generation methods, mode of analysis, and ethical considerations.

**Chapter 4** presents the research findings. The data generated from the research participants, by means of interviews and the subsequent focus group interview is presented.

**Chapter 5** provides a discussion of the collected and analysed data; an interpretation of the findings. The various themes that emerge from the generated data will be discussed.

**Chapter 6** draws conclusions from the study conducted and extends recommendations on a way forward for the translation of Inclusive Education Policy

into practice by one rural Inclusive Education Outreach Team. Finally, this chapter concludes with recommendations for further research, highlighting the study's strengths and limitations, and provides a summary of the researcher's reflections.

## **1.10. Conclusion**

This chapter described the context and rationale for the study and addressed the key issues to be critically explored throughout this thesis. The background and research problem was concisely articulated. The research design, methodology, research methods and data analysis technique were briefly introduced. The main ethical issues were also briefly alluded to. The chapter concluded with a brief outline of the structure and presentation of the thesis from chapter 2 to chapter 6.

The next chapter, chapter 2, provides a thorough review of pertinent literature as well as inclusive education policy and guidelines, relevant to the research question, before a comprehensive presentation of the research methodology is discussed in Chapter 3.

# Chapter 2

## Literature Review

*'A story is not like a road to follow ... it's more like a house. You go inside and stay there for a while, wandering back and forth and settling where you like and discovering how the room and corridors relate to each other, how the world outside is altered by being viewed from these windows. And you, the visitor, the reader, are altered as well by being in this enclosed space, whether it is ample and easy or full of crooked turns, or sparsely or opulently furnished. You can go back again and again, and the house, the story, always contains more than you saw the last time. It also has a sturdy sense of itself of being built out of its own necessity, not just to shelter or beguile you.'*

Munro, 1997

### 2.1. Introduction

South Africa's struggle for democracy miraculously escaped the ordeal of civil war and since 1994, has made significant strides towards normalising its racially divided society and redressing the inequalities enforced by Apartheid (Taylor, van der Berg & Mabogoane, 2011). Today some 12 428 069 South African children and youth are enrolled in educational institutions<sup>6</sup> (Department of Basic Education, 2011) compared to the 6 267 524 learners enrolled under Apartheid, of which, proportionally, the greatest number were from the 'White' minority (Boddy-Evans, n.d.).

Other significant accomplishments of post-apartheid South Africa include:

- the creation of a single national education department through the amalgamation of the once 19 racially, ethnically and regionally divided departments of education (Jansen & Taylor, 2003);

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<sup>6</sup>The terms schools, institutions and centres of learning are essentially synonymous. Different reports and policy make use of the different terms in order to be inclusive of all learning institutions. In this research for the most part the term schools is used, although the terms can be used interchangeably.

- the legislation of the South African Schools Act 84 (1996) which laid the foundation for a non-racial education system for all;
- the gradual equalisation of expenditure across the racial divides and in relation to provincial inequalities (Jansen & Taylor, 2003);
- the host of policy papers, reports, legislation, implementation directives and institutional development across all spheres of education (Bloch, 2011).

However, approximately 40% of the population live in poverty, with the poorest 10%, roughly 23 million South Africans in a desperate daily struggle to survive (Statistics South Africa, 2014, 12). South Africa is regarded as one of the most unequal countries in the world (Nxumalo, 2012). This means that millions of South Africans have yet to experience the benefits of the country's newly found freedom. For many South African children and youth the dismal conditions of their daily lives, mean they arrive at school ill-equipped to learn (Bloch, 2011). Undeniably, the past influences the present. Whole communities have been and still are devastated by the impact of the country's past and by the legacy of poverty left in its wake.

There is no lack of evidence to show how poorly the South African education system is performing (Albertyn, 2014; Langhan, Karriem & Velensky, 2012; Spaul, 2013; Van der Berg, Taylor, Gustafsson, Spaul & Armstrong, 2011) and there is grave concern that things in our schools are seriously flailing. "The stark reality is that some 60 – 80% of schools today might be called dysfunctional" (Bloch, 2011). "Even the education department and education authorities have reiterated again and again that things are not what they should be" (Bloch, 2011, 20). "Most schools [simply] do not have [the necessary] conditions required for effective attainment of learning outcomes" (Department of Basic Education, 2011, 18).

However, the failure of education is not only due to poor socio-economic conditions and the legacy of apartheid. Jansen & Taylor. (2003) argue that failure to reach the stated goals of equity, efficiency, quality and democracy of educational reform have been impeded by a lack of systemic thinking and implementation capacity. Jansen goes further (2010) to state that "it is time to concede an unpleasant fact: our government does not have the capacity or the courage to change our schools in vast parts of this country".

In response, it can be argued that the Department of Basic Education's inclusive education policies are intended to address these challenges. This view is supported by UNESCO (1994, 3) which states that inclusively orientated schools could provide an effective education for the majority of children in South Africa and also improve the efficiency and cost-effectiveness of the entire education system. Moreover the Salamanca Statement, a significant international document within the field of special needs education (Ainscow, 2005) suggests that inclusive schools are "the most effective means of combating discriminatory attitudes, building an inclusive society and achieving education for all" (United Nations, 1994, 7). In other words, "inclusive, good quality education is a foundation for dynamic and equitable societies" (Tutu & Van Roekel, 2010). Such sentiments highlight the fundamental intention of inclusive education in a still developing South Africa – to expand social transformation and to realise a participatory democracy.

## 2.2. Defining inclusive education

Inclusion is a complex concept, which is difficult to define (Ainscow, 1999; Ballard, 1999; Florian, 1998; Loreman, 2007; Slee, 2000). While there appears to be no single, universally accepted definition, I agree with Booth (1995) who argues that inclusion can only be fully understood within the context of a particular national system and culture. Each country is inclined to have its own distinctive brand of inclusion, based on its envisaged policy and practice; hence Dyson's (2001) idea of 'varieties of inclusion' i.e. inclusion-as-placement, inclusion-as-education-for-all, inclusion-as-participation as well as social inclusion.

Inclusive education is still very often a central focus of debate when discussing education policy development and practice (Farrell & Ainscow, 2002). The education of children and youth experiencing barriers to learning is now an established key policy objective in many countries (Lindsay, 2007). In addition the inclusion agenda has also fuelled many discussions around the role and responsibilities of education support services within the field of Special Needs Education and education in general, and the purpose of these education support services within education systems (Farrell & Ainscow, 2002).

However, it should not be surmised that there is complete acceptance of the wisdom of inclusion. There is substantial dispute about whether it is even genuinely achievable (Winter & O'Raw, 2010). Debate also reigns regarding the extent to which this involves the deconstruction of Special Needs Education and the construction of a system that will meet the needs of all learners (Norwich, 2002). Nevertheless, the underlying premise of inclusion, i.e. the movement towards creating an egalitarian society based on individual human rights and social justice, remains uncontested. It is the way in which this is to be achieved, that remains the hotly disputed terrain.

Therefore, as Slee (2011) argues, inclusion needs to be viewed as more than the mere addition of learners with disability into mainstream settings. Instead, inclusion is based on the complex calculus of equity, giving learners what they need as opposed to giving every learner more of the same. Yet in addition to this, any comprehensive definition of inclusion needs to extend beyond the confines of education and be appreciated as “a moral issue, a goal, indeed a value we decide to pursue or reject on the basis of what we want our society to look like” (Bilken, 1985, 3).

Furthermore, inclusion supports the values and principles as put forward by the Salamanca Statement, which reaffirms the right, enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1949) of every individual to education. Adoption of the Salamanca Statement, by many countries, including South Africa in 1994, was a renewal of the above pledge (UNESCO, 1994, 6).

However, it is important to remember that the idea of inclusive education grew out of special education and subsequently, early understandings of inclusive education for many educators were moulded by the ‘disabilities’ discourse, embedded within international literature of ‘first-world’ contexts (Volmink, 2014). Therefore, to fully understand and appreciate the concept of inclusion it is necessary to trace the origins of several related terms. These include normalisation, mainstreaming and integration. These terms are often regarded as synonymous and it is their interchangeability that largely accounts for much of the confusion around what is meant by inclusion. There are, however, subtle differences.

In the late sixties the idea of normalisation in education came to the fore in countries, like Denmark and Sweden (Lemay 1995, 515). First articulated by Nirje, normalisation

was a response to rising concerns about segregated education as an oppressive social system through which people with disabilities were excluded from participating in mainstream society (Nirje, 1969).

The values underlying the normalisation principle gradually gave rise to the idea of mainstreaming and later integration. Mainstreaming, most commonly implemented in the United States, still implied a degree of exclusion. The responsibility is on learners to show that they are ready to 'fit into' the mainstream classroom and in this way the medical-deficit discourse of disability is maintained. Classrooms remain largely unchanged, not providing the support learners require to profit from the mainstream experience.

In contrast, the idea of integration relies on a social and political discourse of disability. A carry-over from the mounting concerns around humanitarian issues and the rise of the civil rights movement, integration aims to maximise the social interaction between all people (disabled and non-disabled) in schools and society. While it is still up to the learner with disability to 'fit in', a limited provision of support does accompany these learners into the mainstream classrooms.

It is now possible to see how the movement from normalisation towards mainstreaming and later integration concluded with inclusion. This movement was in contrast to the policy and realities in most South African schools prior to 1994 (Kallaway, 2002). Furthermore, the rise of the eugenics movement<sup>7</sup> and psychometrics<sup>8</sup> in the 20<sup>th</sup> century provided a powerful rationale and even a logical foundation for segregated education in South Africa (Volmink, 2014). Yet it is the work of academics like Holt (1983) and Vygotsky (1997) which highlight that success or failure at school is essentially a social construction; challenging the belief of the primacy of ability. Children fail at school for many reasons, most of which have very

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<sup>7</sup> The supporters of this social movement believed that the genetic features of human populations could be enhanced through selective breeding and sterilization and in this way the human species could control its own evolution. This movement played a central role in the history and culture of the United States prior to its involvement in the brutalities of World War II.

<sup>8</sup> In South Africa, testing was for a long time viewed as biased and unfair. Driven by the political beliefs of the time the earliest measures of intelligence were not only standardized for the small white minority to be used by the education department for placement in special schools, but were used to draw differences between race groups in an attempt to show superiority of one race over another (Foxcroft & Roodt, 2008, 15).

little to do with individual dysfunctions, but more to do with poverty and differences in life and school experiences.

Therefore, despite the varieties of inclusion, inclusive education the world over considers both the rights of learners, as well as how education systems can be transformed, in order to respond to the diversity such learners represent. Inclusion highlights the need to create equal opportunities for the participation of all learners within education (UNESCO, 2005), including those with disabilities and/or experiencing barriers to learning and development. Therefore, regardless of context and the nature of implementation, inclusion is fundamentally about the transformation of a society and its institutions such as education (Barton, 1999, 58).

Nonetheless, education reform is contentious in settings where there is little common understanding of what inclusion means and what it should look like (Fullan, 1991). To foster a common understanding, Ainscow (2005) identifies four features that can guide inclusive education policy development:

1. the adoption of the perspective that inclusion is a process rather than an event;
2. the identification and removal of barriers to learning and development;
3. the presence, participation and achievement of all learners in the education system;
4. a particular emphasis on the vulnerable and potentially at risk learners (Ainscow, 2005, 119).

Yet there are proponents who proposed a more 'cautious' or 'responsible' form of inclusion (Vaughn & Schumm, 1995). Supporters of this line of thinking argue that every individual learner has a right to appropriate education, and that in every learner population there is a minority of learners with severe and very complex needs. These learners require high levels of support; support which is not easily attainable in many of the resource-limited settings of mainstream schools.

In rural South Africa, there are hundreds of children with physical and intellectual disabilities, all of whom require high levels of support (John, 2014). They remain at home because there are not enough special schools. These homes are often in remote areas and the roads are bad. Walking to the nearest special school would take

hours. Travelling by taxi is unaffordable. Often the special schools will not enrol these children because it is believed that they have reached their educational capacity. Apart from this, most special schools have long waiting lists while many of the local ordinary schools are already overcrowded, 'so mothers give up and their children stay at home' (Masinga, 2014).

Policy makers in many countries agree that it is very difficult to include learners with high levels of support needs in mainstream classrooms (Pijl & Meijer, 1991), even in the most resourced settings. Hence, the decision amongst policy makers in South Africa to maintain Special Schools and the establishment of Unit Classes<sup>9</sup> in the Full Service/Inclusive Schools. Yet by definition, Special Schools and Unit Classes are not inclusive. Maintaining Special Schools and Unit Classes perpetuates separation. The question South Africa has to grapple with is whether Special Schools and Unit Classes have a place in an inclusive education system (Volmink, 2014).

### 2.3. Inclusive Education through the lens of Bronfenbrenner's model

As a conceptual tool, Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems model is a commonly used theory in inclusive education (Donald, Lazarus & Moolla, 2014; Mahlo, 2013; Swart & Pettipher, 2011). This theory explains the complexity of inclusion, as well as the multidimensional nature of the change required by schools to embrace and practice inclusion (Swart & Pettipher, 2011). Swart and Pettipher also point out that this theory is a useful explanatory framework for understanding the continuum of barriers to learning and development as they manifest within the South African context.

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<sup>9</sup> ELSEN units were established within government schools in order to offer learners with impaired cognitive ability the opportunity to be part of their peer community whilst following a curriculum adapted to meet with their unique educational needs (<http://www.knysnapletthermal.com/news/News/General/91668/Education-minister-visits-Formosa#>).

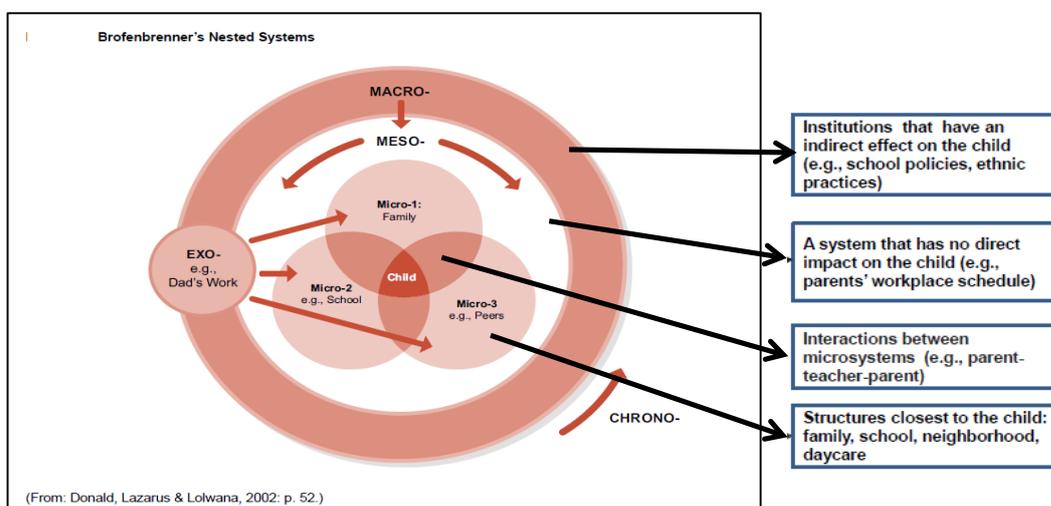
Most schools still believe the misconception that an ELSEN Unit is a place of separation, where the child with learning disabilities gets treated "differently" and "separately" (<http://www.elsensa.co.za/#position>)

Due to the influence of this framework, educational thinking is slowly moving away from a pathological, deficit approach, towards one that appreciates the nature of learning difficulties (Mahlo, 2013). Ecological systems theory underscores the primacy of the complexity of the influences, interactions and interrelationships between the individual learner and the multiple other systems connected to the learner. It also serves as a useful tool to place the challenges facing our education system neatly into context (Swart & Pettipher, 2011; Mahlo, 2013).

To appreciate how Bronfenbrenner's theory can be used, it is necessary to unpack his theory of ecological systems. Bronfenbrenner puts forward five levels of environment (contexts or systems) that influence an individual's development; 'a set of nested structures, each contained inside the next like a set of Russian Dolls' (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). These levels of environment include the microsystem, the mesosystem, the exosystem and the macrosystem. The above systems all interact with a fifth system, the chronosystem, which captures how time relates to the interaction between systems, and the influence each has individually and together on an individual's development.

Figure 2.1 shows the microsystem as the system in closest proximity to an individual. Within the microsystem are all the structures with which an individual has direct contact. These structures include family, friends, school and the local community; all those relationships and interactions an individual has with his/her immediate environment (Berk, 2000).

**Figure 2.1** Bronfenbrenner's nested system



Surrounding the microsystem is the mesosystem. The mesosystem connects the structures of an individual's microsystem with one another (Berk, 2000) e.g. a learner's parents and his/her teachers; and an individual with his/her peers. Next, the mesosystem is nested within the exosystem. The exosystem refers to the larger social context in which an individual does not directly function. Nevertheless, the structures in this system impact on an individual's development by interacting with the structures in his/her microsystem (Berk, 2000) e.g. a learner's parent's workplace schedule which keeps a single mother at work, long after extramural activities at school have finished. Either negative and/or positive influences arise out of this interaction, e.g. the above learner, unsupervised, does not do his homework and instead, wanders the streets and later becomes affiliated with a notorious neighbourhood gang.

All three of the above systems are encased within the macrosystem, which is regarded as the outermost system of an individual's context and encompasses structures like cultural values, customs, and laws (Berk, 2000). The pervasive effects that the ideologies of the macrosystem structures have, influence interactions at every level of an individual's context e.g. inclusive education policy, which allows a learner to straddle<sup>10</sup> grades. Implementation of such policy will require the provision of education support services to schools. Hence the Western Cape Education Department's establishment of Inclusive Education Outreach Teams. This in turn affects the structures in which the learner functions, increasing the learner's capacity to experience success within the context of his/her microsystem.

In order to appreciate this bi-directional interaction and influence, across the multiple levels of context, it is necessary to look at each system in isolation, but in reality, these systems are not discrete entities that can be neatly separated. Moreover, it should be noted that every system within an individual's context is influenced by the dimension of time, what Bronfenbrenner refers to as the chronosystem. The chronosystem offers ways to understand differences across time as experienced by individuals. Elements within the chronosystem can either be external e.g. the timing of the death of a loved one or internal, e.g. the maturational changes that occur as an individual grows and

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<sup>10</sup> Learners who experience significant barriers to learning must also have the possibility of straddling grades, which allows them to take certain subjects at grade level and others at a different level (Department of Basic Education, 2011, 29).

develops. As individuals mature, they may not only respond differently to contextual changes, but may be more able to decide how that change will influence them.

In this way these overlapping systems contribute to forming the 'whole' i.e. a comprehensive picture of the individual in context and subsequently helps to explain an individual's experiences, which can be perceived as either positive or negative (Haihambo, 2010), enabling or disabling, as facilitating or disempowering and alienating.

Bronfenbrenner's theory, therefore, clearly places the individual within a very complex ecological context and as such, it is imperative that cognisance is taken of this in answering the research question: What are the perspectives on the role and responsibilities of an Inclusive Education Outreach Team in one rural education district of the Western Cape?

To refer back to the five levels of context (environments or systems) as hypothesised by Bronfenbrenner, bi-directional influences are strongest at the microsystem level where they have the greatest impact on the individual. Moreover, the interaction of structures within an individual's context as a whole, and interaction of these structures between the various systems are the key to understanding Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory.

Thus, any constructive, sustainable efforts at supporting inclusive education should be directed at 'synergising the system as a whole' (Swart & Pettipher, 2011, 18). The goal of inclusive education is the transformation of the education system so that it can function effectively and equitably for all learners (Christenson & Sheridan, 2001, 41). Moreover, Miles and Singal believe that if policy makers and practitioners were to reflect on the concept of 'all' it would make it possible to explore existing opportunities within context, rather than search for solutions elsewhere (2010, p. 15). Developing and promoting local understandings of the notions of 'education, 'all' and 'inclusion', are fundamental to the development and implementation of appropriate, sustainable policies for teaching and learning as well as for education support services.

## 2.4. Community psychology: education support services in action

There is no single definition of community psychology that can accurately describe the complexities and subtleties characteristic of its theory and praxis. Moreover, there are many different approaches to community psychology, but for the purpose of this study, an ecological approach was chosen, namely that of Bronfenbrenner's. Adopting such an approach views social phenomena as the dynamic interaction between people and their environments.

Community psychology originates from psychology and specifically favours interdisciplinary approaches. Its boundaries are permeable, *“owing as much to sociology, community development, education and the policy sciences, as it does to the ‘parent’ discipline of psychology. Community psychology favours critical perspectives on knowledge creation and truth claims, recognising that what is regarded as legitimate knowledge is often context specific and inevitably coloured by the social and cultural position of the knower”*.

(<http://www.waikato.ac.nz/fass/about/psychology/research/community-psychology>).

Therefore, community psychology highlights “the importance of developing theory, research, and intervention that locates individuals, social settings, and communities in sociocultural context” (Trickett, 1996, 209), thereby making communities, and not just individuals the focus of potential intervention (Ahmed & Pretorius-Heuchert, 2011). Moving towards a psychology of the individual within community context, Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems model provides the most meaningful underlying perspective to community psychology. (Trickett, 2009). Using a community psychology approach in this way provides the study with the necessary direction and organisation for the reader to appreciate the levels of analysis of local ecology on individual as well as collective behaviour.

In light of the above, Nel *et al.* (2010) argue that South African inclusive education policy and the practice thereof, is an example of community psychology in action. Furthermore the values and assumptions embodied by a community approach; empowerment, prevention, health promotion, inter-sectorial collaboration, and cultural relativity and diversity, should direct the way in which psychosocial problems are understood and responded to (Nel *et al.*, 2010).

Therefore, comprehensive conceptualisation of the psychosocial problems facing South African learners requires a community psychology approach, acknowledgment of local knowledge and existing social dynamics, as well as rethinking education support service delivery. This reconceptualization should include systemic interventions and preventative, health-promoting strategies as well as the redefinition of the role and responsibilities of education support service providers.

Such redefinition of the role and responsibilities of support service providers ideally should comprise advocacy, lobbying, consultation, community mobilisation and networking, as well as appropriate policy development.

## 2.5. Inclusive education: Policy development

Policy development reflects and encompasses the “underlying ideologies and assumptions of a society” (Armstrong, Armstrong & Barton, 2000, 7). Inclusive education policy development “is [therefore] constituted within an interactive network of reciprocal and adversarial relations” (Liasidou, 2012, 73). It is within this context, that inclusive education policies can be regarded as “instruments of power relations” through which the identities and experiences of children with special educational needs are constructed (Slee, 2001, 389).

Therefore, it is not inconceivable to view the processes and outcomes of inclusive education policy development as political in nature. In light of this, Mahlo (2013) contends that a social justice discourse<sup>11</sup> needs to permeate inclusive education policy and practice, which not only demands changing systems that perpetuate power and exclusion, but that consciously and constructively moves away from the language of educational deficiency. Only then will it become possible to appreciate the complex and contested landscape of inclusive education policy development (Armstrong, Armstrong & Spandagou, 2011).

In addition, Prilleltensky (2014) argues that any education policy development needs to be transformative; transforming lives and enabling individuals to thrive, fostering relationships and communities by promoting wellness and fairness. To do this

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<sup>11</sup> A way of thinking based upon the belief that each individual and group within a society have a right to civil liberties, equal opportunity, fairness, and participation in the educational, economic, institutional, social and moral freedoms and responsibilities valued by the community (Deegan & Disman, 2004).

successfully, he argues for the pursuit of competence and engagement of both individuals and systems. By *competence* he refers to a sense of self-efficacy, mastery and control while engagement is about active participation, ownership, relevance and meaning-making within the policy development process (Prilleltensky, 2014, 17).

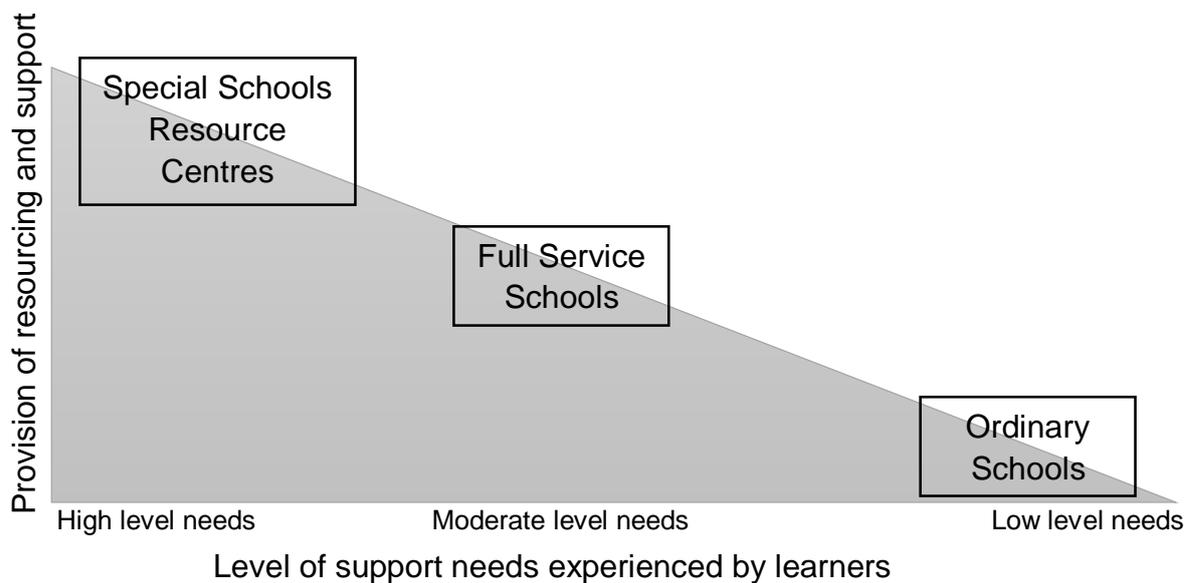
For South Africa, with a past focused on individual deficiencies and the exclusion of the majority of its citizens, “turning a blind eye to injustices, and using schools to produce [a workforce of] docile labourers”, Prilleltensky’s (2014, 33) argument holds much substance. Prilleltensky contends that education policy can be scrutinised according to whether it focuses on strengths or deficits, empowers or alienates, is reactive or proactive and intervenes at either an individual or a systemic level (Prilleltensky, 2014, 18). Therefore, against the backdrop of emerging political demands and socio-historical conjectures, the educational policy landscape in South Africa has been shaped and reshaped (Liasidou, 2012, 75).

Shortly after the advent of democracy, the South African government began the process of education transformation. Planning for an inclusive education and training system began in earnest in 1996. Also around this time a National Commission on Special Needs Education (NCSNET) and Training, and the National Committee for Education Support Services (NCESS) were tasked to put together proposals for the development of a unified education system geared towards the optimal participation of all learners in education. The response was a comprehensive set of recommendations published in Education White Paper 6 in 2001.

Hailed as a post-Apartheid landmark policy, Education White Paper 6 was written in the hope that inclusive education would become the “cornerstone of an integrated and caring society” (2001, p. 10). In light of this policy development, inclusive education represents a shift from a continuum of educational placement to that of an infusion of educational support services throughout the education system (Wade, 2000). In line with this thinking, White Paper 6 proposed the restructuring of schools into three types of schools; namely Ordinary Schools, Full-Service/Inclusive Schools and Special School Resource Centres. Figure 2.2 below illustrates how support is infused across these three types of schools. Education White Paper 6 is, therefore, fundamentally about the support of all learners, teachers and the education system in its entirety, in

this way ensuring that the full range of learning needs can be optimally met (Mahlo, 2013).

**Figure 2.2** The levels of support infused throughout the education system



In essence, White Paper 6 is the conceptual framework for the transformation of the entire education system. The emphasis of this transformation is on “the full range of education and training services - national and provincial departments of education, schools (both special and ordinary), education support services, educators, parents and communities” (Department of Education, 2001, 26). Pivotal to the policy framework provided by White Paper 6 is the idea of decentralisation<sup>12</sup>. Within the South African context, this decentralisation is one of social inclusion, which aims to address the disempowering and discriminatory effects of Apartheid (Sayed & Soudien, 2005). However, Sayed and Soudien (2005) contest that it is this very decentralisation that has given rise to the expression of contradictory and often exclusionary practices in many South African schools.

Furthermore, and in spite of the above policy intentions, Van Rooyen, Le Grange and Newmark (2002) have concluded that the authors of White Paper 6 have not successfully positioned themselves outside of functionalist discourses such as that of

<sup>12</sup> A process of transferring decision-making powers from the national Department of Education to provincial departments of education, education districts, communities, and schools

the medical/special need discourse. Careful reading of White Paper 6 highlights the notion that there can be no inclusion without exclusion – efforts to include invariably excludes (Van Rooyen, Le Grange & Newmark, 2002, 10). Furthermore, it has been contended that White Paper 6 overemphasises the barriers to learning experienced by learners (Swart *et al.*, 2011, 20); which has been the primary focus of teachers and education support professionals in the past.

Therefore the subsequent tension that has arisen between policy and practice manifests in the ways schools govern and manage their activities; by who obtains access to particular schools, including the admission policies implemented, and finally the means by which schools and their teachers mediate the national curriculum to promote the inclusion of all learners.

## 2.6. Inclusive education: Policy implementation

Kader Asmal acknowledged that “building an inclusive education system will not be easy. What will be required of us all is persistence, commitment, coordination, support, monitoring, evaluation, follow-up and leadership” (Department of Education, 2001, 4).

The Education Department’s effort to establish an inclusive education system encompasses 6 broad, key strategies:

- the improvement of existing special schools and the conversion of some to resource centres;
- the mobilisation of the 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;
- 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 (Department of Education, 2001, 20-23).

The strategy most pertinent to this study is the establishment of District-based Support Teams. In line with this particular strategy, White Paper 6 identifies the formation of other support structures to further enable the infusion of the varying levels of support across the 3 types of schools as depicted in Figure 2.2 above. These other structures include School-based Support Teams, Special School Resource Centres and Full-Service/Inclusive Schools (Department of Basic Education, 2010, 41-42).

The composition and functioning of each of the above four key support structures are regulated by the Policy on Screening, Identification, Assessment and Support (SIAS) (Department of Basic Education, 2014, 2):

- *District-based Support Teams* (DBSTs) serve to build the capacity of schools to recognise and address barriers to learning and to accommodate a range of learning needs.
- *School-based Support Teams*<sup>13</sup> operate at the level of the school, to coordinate learner and educator support services. Whenever appropriate, these teams are strengthened by expertise from the local community, DBSTs and higher education institutions.
- *Special School Resource Centres* have two primary responsibilities. Firstly, they provide an educational service to their targeted learner populations (i.e. learners who require high levels support). Secondly, the skill set available within these schools is integrated into the District-based Support Teams. In this way, Special Schools can provide specialised professional support in curriculum, assessment and instruction to neighbouring mainstream and Full Service Schools. (Department of Basic Education & MIET Africa, 2010, 42).

“A realistic timeframe of 20 years” was anticipated for the implementation of the above support structures to provide the necessary support framework for the success of the envisioned inclusive education and training system in South Africa (Department of Education, 2001, 42). Within this timeframe it was hoped that by now, 14 years on, the final “long-term steps (2009 - 2021)” would be well under way. This would have involved “expanding provision [of inclusive education] to reach the target of 380 special

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<sup>13</sup> These teams are the same as what has previously been referred to as an Institution-level Support Teams.

schools/resource centres, 500 full-service schools and colleges and district support teams and the [approximately] 280,000 out-of-school children and youth” (Department of Education, 2001, 43).

Unfortunately, as anticipated by Kader Asmal (Department of Education, 2001, 4) implementation has not been easy, and has not progressed past the initial stages of the first phase of implementation. This means that the focus is still on the “immediate to short-term steps (2001-2003)”, which include: implementation of advocacy and education programmes on inclusion, the conversion of special schools to resource centres and ordinary schools to full service schools, as well as the establishment of systems and procedures for the early identification of barriers to learning (Department of Education, 2001, 43).

Although the benefits of inclusive education have been widely researched and documented (Loreman, 2007), opinions differ on how best to transform schools into inclusive orientated sites of learning (Mahlo, 2013), and in South Africa, there is growing consensus amongst policy analysts of a policy-practice ‘gap’ within education (Hartshorne 1999; Jansen & Christie 1999; Kallaway, Kruss, Fataar & Donn, 1998; Manganyi 2001; Mahlo, 2013).

However, the exact reasons for this underperformance of education policy are hotly contested. The dominant view attributes it to a combination of the following:

- the weak capacity of government to implement gazetted policy;
- a lack of material resources for teaching and learning; the restrictive nature of national examinations;
- the weak academic and professional knowledge base of practicing teachers, and
- the underdeveloped infrastructure for modern schooling, especially in rural areas (Kahn 1996; Samoff 1996; Sayed & Jansen, 2001).

Another contrasting, yet minority view, for this observed distance between policy and practice is attributed to ‘the politics of transition’ (Jansen & Taylor, 2003, 19) or what Weiler refers to as ‘the putative political costs of reform’ (2001, 7). This refers to the

conscious decision to scale back on radical reform interventions given the political resistance and conflict that might flow from such dramatic action.

Mahlo presents yet another possible explanation for this apparent divide. He argues that it is the consequence of learners' environmental factors, which continue to perpetuate the social and educational injustices of South African society. Added to this, he contends that these environmental factors lack the substance of "intersectionality"; i.e. the conceptualisation of the notion of disability in combination with issues of race and socioeconomic background (2013, 164).

Donohue and Bornman (2014) present an additional potential account of the divide between policy and practice. They contend that it is partly due to the combination of the lack of clarity in current inclusive education policy, the uncertainty of the goals of inclusion and the means through which these goals can be practically achieved. They further argue that, while White Paper 6 states that the responsibility of establishing an inclusive education system rests with every South African (Department of Education, 2001, 1), successful implementation is further compounded by "various" other issues. These include a "general lack of support and resources, as well as prevailing negative attitudes [of teachers and professionals] towards disability" (Donohue & Bornman, 2014, 1). Wildeman and Nomdo (2007) add that without the appropriate support, funding and directives, the challenges associated with the implementation of inclusion, often overwhelm schools and support service providers, who then all too quickly regress to the default medical/deficit model of service delivery. Bornman and Rose agree that all these factors contribute "to the general bewilderment in South African schools towards inclusion" (2010, p. 7).

Given the above, Donohue and Bornman argue that "currently, the implementation of inclusive education policy is at an apparent standstill" (2014, p. 10). Forlin (2006) has added that the discourse on inclusive education needs to shift from why the approach is one to be embraced, to how it can be successfully implemented. Thus, for inclusive education to move beyond pure symbolism, the Department of Education needs to take real initiative and deliberate action (Donohue & Bornman, 2014).

## 2.7. Education support services

Key to the implementation of inclusive education policy is the availability of appropriate support services and systems to school communities. Education White Paper 6 (Department of Education, 2001) has as a central focus, the need to address the non-responsiveness of the education system to the learning needs of all learners, especially those with disabilities, which resulted in the exclusion and learning break down of many (Nel *et al.*, 2010, 20).

Historically there has been a severe lack of adequate and appropriate support services for learners, teachers and schools. Support is a vital part of any inclusive education endeavour, as the needs of many learners are beyond what is available in ordinary classrooms, as well as teacher attitudes towards inclusion might become more positive, if along with training, they receive appropriate support (Donahue & Bornman, 2014, 5).

Traditionally the education sector in South Africa has not seen the importance or the relevance of adopting a health perspective towards their work, except when obvious health issues arose or when actual learning was disturbed (Lazarus, 1995). Pre-1994, education support services had been an area of great neglect and viewed as an 'auxiliary adjunct' to education rather than a significant part of its core business.

Although education support services had a combined preventative/curative approach to support delivery, the preventative aspect was largely undeveloped. An individualistic, clinical approach predominated with deficits being located within the learner rather than part of the wider education system (NECC, 1992). This was very much in line with the medical model paradigm and discourse of the time. Education support services were therefore not only marginalised, but also fragmented to such an extent that unnecessary duplication and overlap of work between and within the different services often occurred (NECC, 1992).

Under the umbrella of what was referred to as 'psychological' or 'auxiliary' services was guidance and counselling, special education and social welfare educational services. A division existed between education support services and 'special needs education' as well as between these areas of education provision and mainstream

education. Consequently, learners experiencing barriers to learning and development were often isolated, with the different services organised into separate and largely rigid bureaucracies. This not only made intersectorial collaboration between the different services difficult, but also the accessibility of said services (Department of Education, 1997). 'Special needs' and support services tended to focus on the delivery of highly specialised interventions directed at a limited number of learners in mainly urban areas; a traditional model of support based on the child deficit model (Swart *et al.*, 2011). Problems within the education system itself were rarely acknowledged and seldom addressed.

Education support services lacked the necessary clarity in terms of their function beyond providing a mere Band-Aid for damage already done. This was the case at all levels of the South African education system. This lack of clarity was further exacerbated by differing opinions in terms of the degree to which schools should be concerned with the well-being of learners. Views ranged from schools as strictly sites of learning to schools as mental health clinics and food dispersal locations (NECC, 1992). However, in an effort to provide some clarification, the National Education Policy Investigation's (NEPI) Report on Support Services (NECC, 1992) stated that schools are well placed to address the development and socialisation of learners by the very nature of the access they have to learners during their formative years. In addition, schools are culturally endorsed with the right to intervene in learners' lives.

Subsequent to the above-mentioned report, the question that confronted South African education policy developers was not whether there was a need to redress the inequalities of the past, but rather how this should be done (NECC, 1992). So at the time of the combined NCSNET/NECESS report (Department of Education, 1997), the concept of support shifted to include social, psychological, medical, learning and organisational forms of support in schools (Nel *et al.*, 2010). These forms of support were recognised as directly linked to and needing to be integrated within a holistic framework (NECC, 1992).

This particular way of thinking is supported by Donald, Lazarus & Lolwana. (2010) who envisaged a broader role for education support services. This required a shift from the problem within the learner focus towards a 'systems change' approach. It was further proposed that the reconstructed education support services should focus on a

comprehensive health promoting, development and preventative service, directed at individual learners, as well as schools and whole communities. This would not only require a different perception of the roles and responsibilities of education support services, but also implies a broadening of the function of education support services as well as the extension of support beyond schools and centres of learning. For the above to be effectively translated into practice, places emphasis on the integration and the infusion of education and support services in schools (Lazarus & Donald, 1994).

In terms of White Paper 6 and based on the recommendations of the combined NCSNET/NCESS report, education support services have now been reconceptualised to “include all human and other resources that provide support to individual learners and to all aspects of the [education] system. While these services attempt to minimise and remove barriers to learning and development, they also focus on the prevention of these barriers, and on the development of supportive learning environments for all learners” (Department of Education, 1997, 2). This support includes teaching and learning support, provision of assistive devices, general and career guidance and counselling, therapeutic support and interventions, nutritional programmes, parental support and guidance, teacher training and support, whole school development and curriculum development and support. In addition, support which traditionally was provided by specialist education support personnel, can also be provided by members of the learning community (i.e. learners, parents and educators) and other community resources (e.g. peer-counsellors, community workers and traditional healers) (Department of Education, 1997, 2).

As already noted, White Paper 6 proposed the strengthening and restructuring of existing education support services and has clearly identified the support structures needed to do this. These support structures have already been discussed in section 2.8 above. Based on this and in line with national inclusive education policy, the Western Cape Education Department (2012) outlined various means through which it plans to strengthen education support services within the province. This includes the following strategies:

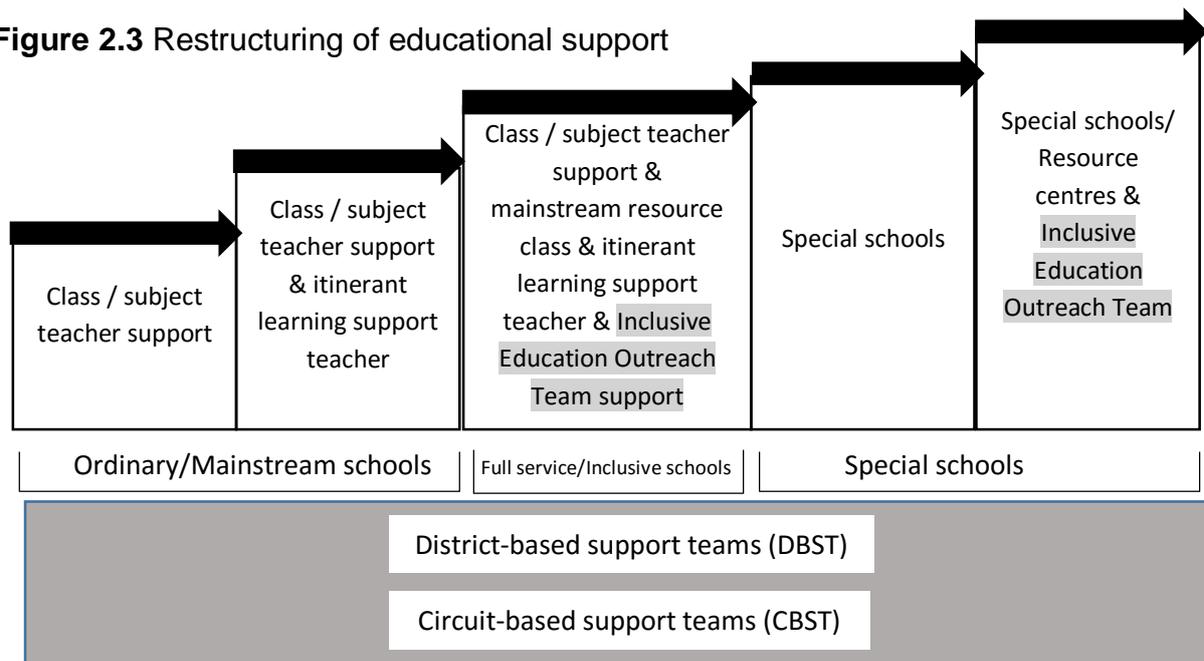
- strengthening of special schools by the additional training of staff, provision of necessary resources, regular quality assurance and exposure to best practice models;
- the incremental transformation of special schools into resource centres to provide support to full service /inclusive schools and mainstream schools;
- targeting the provision of additional places in special schools and providing support for learners identified with high support needs as well as developing appropriate programmes for out of school learners requiring support;
- strengthening the capacity of mainstream schools to identify and address barriers to learning and to support vulnerable learners;
- the incremental transformation of mainstream schools into full service/inclusive schools, which are strengthened and supported to cater for learners requiring low to moderate levels of support;
- identification and sharing of local examples of good practice and resources;
- enhancement of specialised education support by ensuring all specialised staff provide high quality service which focuses on preventive and capacity building interventions;
- developing capacity in all sectors of the education department in order to understand and provide appropriate responses to learners experiencing barriers to learning and development;
- fostering inter-sectorial partnerships for the early identification and intervention for the prevention of barriers to learning and for continued support where necessary; and
- harnessing the contributions of parents and civil society to include and support learners who are differently abled or experience barriers to learning to help to build an inclusive South African society.

(Pamphlet: Western Cape Education Department, 2012.)

Figure 3.2 below highlights the Education Department's proposal to strengthen education support services. To adequately do this, requires significant restructuring of existing services within the province and the country. Such restructuring implies reconceptualisation of the roles and responsibilities of education support personnel.

In line with the above, the short- and medium term goals set and documented in White Paper 6 involve addressing the identified weaknesses of the education system. This includes increasing access to and provision of education to all South Africans as well as building the capacity and competence of support service providers while regularly monitoring and assessing the process.

**Figure 2.3** Restructuring of educational support



(Western Cape Education Department, 2012)

Therefore, in order to field test the plausibility of White Paper 6, thirty districts, most in need of redress as well as part of the national District Development Programme, were selected for implementation of the new policy (Daniels, 2010). Within the Western Cape seven districts were chosen as part of this national District Development programme and of these seven districts, Metro South was selected as the model urban district by the National Education Department in 2005 (Daniels, 2010).

As a selected model district, there are lessons that other education districts can learn from Metro South:

- During this time support personnel in Metro South had already begun to move away from a predominantly 'deficit model of assessment of individual learners

for diagnosis and placement in special classes and special schools' towards 'incorporating more asset-based, preventative, developmental approaches in their work and to identifying the nature and intensity of the barrier and the kind of support needed rather than the category of disability' (Daniels, 2010, 636-637).

- In addition, with the amalgamation of the three racially segregated school clinics within the district (Metro South), support services were being extended to the previously disadvantaged sectors of the district. Working in teams provided opportunities for support personnel to share skills; increasing their openness to move outside traditional professional boundaries and learn from their colleagues practicing in other disciplines.
- "Learner to specialized staff ratios were very high and so there was little possibility of addressing learners' needs individually. The model of service delivery had to change' (Daniels, 2010, 638). Support service delivery included building the capacity of school staff through the presentation of workshops as well as the capacity of the ILSTs [SBSTs] in terms of the identification and addressing of barriers to learning. Metro South had essentially set in motion the process of constructively translating the intentions of White Paper 6 into practice.

### 2.7.1. Inclusive Education Outreach Teams

By 2011 it was envisaged that each circuit of schools within the Metro South education district would have "at least one full-service/inclusive school and an Inclusive Education Support Team (now referred to as Inclusive Education Outreach Teams) working from each of the designated special school/resource centres" (Daniels, 2010, 641). In terms of this research, it is important to remind the reader that the focus of the researcher is on one rural Inclusive Education Outreach Team's perception of their role and responsibilities.

According to the Directorate: Specialised Education Support, (personal communication, July 15, 2014) at the time when this research was conducted no official policy existed that pertained to Inclusive Education Outreach Teams. Potentially though, the following excerpts, taken from the Guidelines to ensure quality education and support in Special Schools and Special School Resource Centres

(2007) can help to support an understanding of how Inclusive Education Outreach Teams serving full-service/inclusive schools while based at special school resource centres, came to be established.

The introduction to the above guidelines clearly states; “the support [that] the special school resource centres offer to mainstream and full service schools is a most important lever in establishing an inclusive education system” (Department of Education, 2007, 1). Furthermore “this strengthened education support service will have, at its centre, new district-based support teams that will comprise staff from provincial, district, regional and head offices and from special schools [resource centres]” (Department of Education, 2001, 28-29). In addition it is also noted that “health professionals may be appointed at district offices and stationed at special school resource centres to ensure [the] mobility of scarce staff” (Department of Education, 2007, 21).

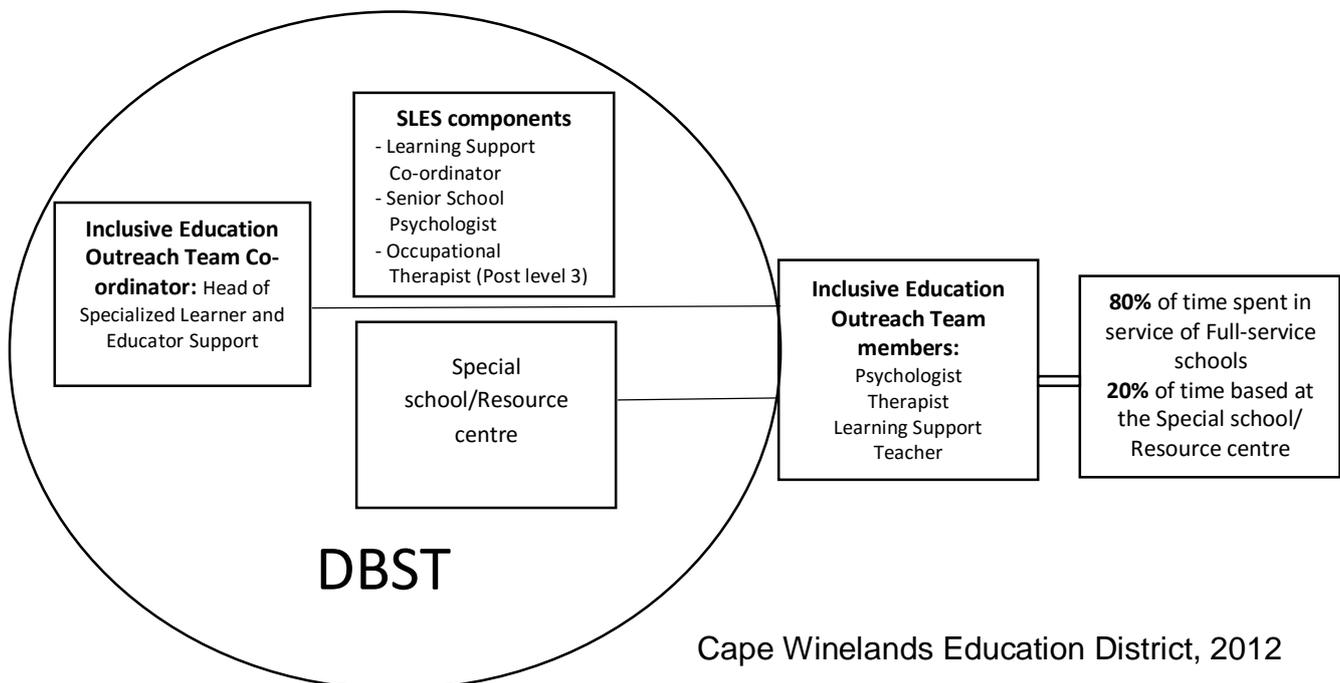
It is further elucidated that “special school resource centres will operate under the auspices of the District-based Support Team as far as provision of support to other schools and learners is concerned. This liaison should be managed via a District-based Support Team management committee. Principals of all special school resource centres in the district must be represented on this committee” (Department of Education, 2007, 6).

Moreover, it would seem that the establishment of Inclusive Education Outreach Teams as a particular interpretation of White Paper 6, is endemic to the Western Cape (<http://www.elsensa.co.za/>). These teams have been referred to as the proponents and agents of inclusive education within the Western Cape (Naicker, 2014). In support of this, Donahue and Bornman discuss the need for teachers to receive comprehensive training in areas where they lack skill and, where necessary, they propose that “these training programmes can be supplemented with specialised support teams that have the capacity to enter classrooms and provide teachers with hands-on training and practical skills that they need to address learners’ barriers to learning” (2014, 10).

In the Western Cape, every education district has at least one, sometimes two Inclusive Education Outreach Teams. Each team comprises an occupational therapist

or speech therapist, a psychologist and a learning support teacher. In the rural districts in particular, these teams have many towns and hundreds of schools to serve e.g. Formosa Primary School in Plettenberg Bay which falls under the Eden Education District in George. ‘Although we have a really good relation with them [the Inclusive Education Outreach Team], they usually manage to visit our ELSEN Unit once or twice a year’ (<http://www.elsensa.co.za/#formanchor>).

**Figure 2.4** One district’s conceptualisation of its Inclusive Education Outreach Team as part of the district support services



To date the Western Cape boasts 17 Inclusive Education Outreach Teams each of which is currently based at a special school resource centre (Daniels, 2014). All the teams operate within the district in which they are based, apart from the Autism Spectrum Disorder Multi-disciplinary Team, which is based at the Vera School for Autism Spectrum Disorders in the Metro Central Education District. This is a specialist Inclusive Education Outreach Team, which works across the entire province.

## 2.8. Responding to the challenges facing inclusive education

The challenges facing inclusive education have been discussed in detail in Chapter 1 and in previous sections in this Chapter.

To successfully address these challenges, requires effective implementation of inclusive education policy as outlined in White Paper 6 (2001). In the long term when the proposed model of inclusion is fully operational, effective implementation translates into the cost-effective use of scarce resources and the more effective use of current skills in the special needs sector (Department of Education, 2001, 37).

Recognising the economic and human resource constraints of the education system, White Paper 6 (2001) further proposes a mix of specialised professionals working in integrated, multi-disciplinary teams. Adopting a consultative service delivery model enables these teams to provide support to many more learners and teachers, thereby offering a more cost effective and contextually relevant solution to many challenges confronting the education support services and schools (Department of Education, 2001). Given that South African schools are characterised by diverse learner populations, Mahlo (2013) argues that effective support strategies represent the foundations of any attempt at successful implementation of inclusive education.

Education is a systemic enterprise that can only be improved in any real way by efforts that target strategic points at various levels within the education system. In terms of education support, this means aligning the many mechanisms of the education system so as to impact maximally on every learner's opportunity to achieve (Taylor, Muller, & Vinjevold, 2003).

White Paper 6 and many of the subsequent guidelines endorse this sentiment. A critical first step to establishing an inclusive education system includes human resource development at schools and district level (Department of Education, 2001, 18). Human resource development at district level involves all support service providers. Their role is to provide a holistic and comprehensive support service, which includes the ability to work together in coordinated and collaborative ways (Department of Education, 2005, 17). The principal demand of an inclusive system necessitates a major focus, at least initially, on the training, re-training and re-orientation of all personnel (Department of Education, 2001, 6).

A critical element of such training relates to the relationship between education and society i.e. the training needs to be cognisant of the educational, social skills and knowledge that are required by teachers and professional support personnel to enable learners to participate meaningfully within mainstream economic and social life (Department of Education, 2003, 6).

In addition, for special school resource centres to take their place within an inclusive education system, White Paper 6 “explains that, to assist special schools in functioning as resource centres and as part of the district support system, there will be a qualitative upgrading of their services. The focus will be on training of their staff for their new roles” (Department of Education, 2001, 21).

However, there are some educators and support service providers who intuitively seem to know how to nurture inclusiveness. Yet, despite this, ongoing professional development is essential for all stakeholders involved in building an inclusive education system (Department of Education, 2010, 19). Numerous indicators for professional development have been proposed. “These include, but are not limited to: ‘understanding and respecting all forms of diversity [which] are central tenets of professional development; [as well as] conflict management skills [which] are seen as a key component of the capacity building of district education officials and principals” (Department of Education, 2010, 19-20). Another key focus of continued professional development programmes needs to include the “orientation, as well as in-depth understanding of the requirements for effectively implementing the Screening, Identification, Assessment and Support policy” (Department of Basic Education, 2014, 19).

Therefore, in the face of so many challenges to the implementation of inclusive education, South African educators and support personnel need to be imaginative and creative in how they translate theory into practice and there is a need to commission further research, which looks specifically at the various operational issues related to the curriculum (Department of Education 2003, 4). To be effective and efficient require a capacity to ‘think globally, but act locally’; a ‘bird’s-eye-view’ of what the needs are, and what resources are available to address these needs. However, when it comes to responding, a very practical, collaborative approach is required which focuses on identifying and drawing in the resources that are available to address the particular issues and tasks. (Department of Education, 2003, 37).

## 2.9. Conclusion

Policy, by its very nature, is not value free. Instead, Ball contends that it is “a matter of authoritative allocation of values” (1990, 2). Therefore, how the outcome of policy implementation is evaluated is essentially a subjective endeavour and depends largely on whose values the policy authenticates (Stofile, 2008). Furthermore, the description of policy implementation, failure or success, depends on the intentions, expectations and values of all those involved in its implementation. Theoretically, the implementation of inclusive education policy appears relatively straight forward, but practically it presents huge challenges to those tasked with its implementation (Stofile, 2008).

Apart from the few pockets of excellence, the implementation of inclusive education policy in many South African schools remains a challenge and this appears particularly to be the case for schools located within disadvantaged, rural communities (Mahlo, 2013). Mahlo argues further that in many instances inclusive education is still regarded as an ‘add-on’ to the curriculum and as such does not receive sufficient attention necessary for its successful implementation making it difficult for any form of inclusive education policy to achieve its intended purpose.

There is currently an absence of specific operational guidelines and directives in any of the existing education policies, which address the roles and responsibilities of members of Inclusive Education Outreach Teams as part of the Western Cape Education Department’s initiative to promote successful inclusive education. Furthermore, it is the contention of this research that education support services in the Western Cape remain fragmented, uncoordinated and unsustainable with very little evidence of clarity on the practices of Inclusive Education Outreach Teams and no uniformity across the province on how these teams should function.

What follows is intended to reignite the discussion around what conditions are necessary for successful inclusion, particularly the roles and responsibilities of Inclusive Education Outreach Teams in support of the implementation of Inclusive Education in the Western Cape. It is not possible to present an exact blueprint for inclusive education implementation, but it is hoped that the perspectives of one rural Inclusive Education Outreach Team can begin to build the bridge between the rhetoric

of education policy intention and the more pragmatic education support practices and strategies necessary for its successful implementation.

# Chapter 3

## Research Methodology

*'Have you ever been at sea in a dense fog, when it seemed as if a tangible white darkness shut you in and the great ship, tense and anxious, groped her way toward the shore with plummet and sounding-line, and you waited with beating heart for something to happen? I was like that ship before my education began, only I was without compass or sounding line, and no way of knowing how near the harbour was. "Light! Give me light!" was the wordless cry of my soul, and the light of love shone on me in that very hour.'*

**Keller, 2005, 14**

### 3.1. Introduction

Against the backdrop of the widespread failure to implement inclusive education meaningfully in South Africa, this study seeks to explore the perspectives that one Inclusive Education Outreach Team has of its role and responsibilities within the support structures of a rural education district in the Western Cape.

### 3.2. Research Design

Embarking on a scientific enquiry requires careful planning and consideration by the researcher. Babbie and Mouton describe research design as "the planning of scientific enquiry – designing a strategy for finding out something" (2004, p. 72). It is the necessary scaffolding used to guide research from the research question through to its implementation.

It has been decided that a qualitative research design will most appropriately suit the orientation of this enquiry. "Qualitative research is an umbrella concept covering several forms of enquiry that helps us understand and explain the meaning of social phenomena with as little disruption of the natural setting as possible" (Merriam, 1998, 5).

Qualitative research suggests "a direct concern with experience as it is lived or felt or undergone" (Sherman & Webb, 1998, 7). Therefore, the researcher is interested in

“understanding the meaning people have constructed; how people make sense of their world and the experiences they have in the world” (Merriam, 2009, 13). To do this effectively, requires being responsive to the context, adaptable in the role as the primary instrument of data collection and its subsequent analysis.

However, it is also important to remember that researchers are human and as such are potentially fallible; errors can be made and opportunities overlooked. Qualitative researchers need to be sufficiently intuitive to accurately ‘read’ the context under study. This includes an awareness of any personal biases, which possibly could negatively impact the research. Qualitative researchers, therefore, need to have the propensity to endure the ambiguities they may encounter during the research process.

Placed ‘in a largely uncharted ocean’ (Merriam, 2009, 21) there are no set procedures or protocols for the researcher to follow in any step wise fashion. The best way to proceed is often not always initially obvious. To begin with, qualitative research generally involves some kind of fieldwork. The researcher is required to engage with participants in order to gather the necessary data. This type of research is based on inductive reasoning, which begins with making specific observations, from which various patterns and regularities emerge. In this way tentative hypotheses are formulated in order to reach some general conclusion/s about the phenomenon under study.

In addition to the above, common to all types of qualitative research, is: (Merriam, 2009)

- The degree to which the study is emergent and flexible. In reality however, ethical research clearance committees require that the research methodology be comprehensively stated in advance of the fieldwork. Hence this chapter on research methodology.
- The degree to which sample selection is random. In qualitative research, sample selection tends to be non-random, purposeful and small.
- The degree of time the researcher spends in the field. Qualitative researchers spend significant amounts of time gathering data, often in very close, intense contact with participants.

The outcome of any qualitative research is then a rich description of the phenomenon studied. Words and/or pictures are used to share what the researcher has learnt. Participants' own words are often included in the final report, in this way lending validity to the research findings.

Having decided to work within a qualitative research framework requires a further series of choices. These include: 1) the purpose of the research; 2) the theoretical paradigm informing the research; 3) the context in which the research is to be carried out and 4) the techniques used to collect and analyse the data (Terre Blanche *et al.*, 2006). It is important that the decisions along these four dimensions are intertwined in such a way to ensure design cohesion i.e. they must fit together in order to bring an internal logic to the research project.

### 3.2.1. Research Paradigm

To ensure design cohesion, an interpretive paradigm has been selected for this research project. A paradigm is an explanatory framework of beliefs and feelings about how the world should be understood and studied (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). An interpretive paradigm takes into account the participants' subjective experiences as the crux of what is important (Terre Blanche *et al.*, 2006). From this vantage point, reality is a compilation of the subjective experiences of an individual's external world.

It can, therefore, be argued that multiple, socially constructed realities exist. Interpretivists acknowledge the interaction that occurs between the researcher and participants and how this bidirectional influence impacts individual understandings of the phenomena being studied. Denzin and Lincoln (2005) suggest four underlying epistemological assumptions that guide qualitative research, namely, positivist and post-positivist, constructivist-interpretive, critical, and feminist post-structural. There is substantial disparity as to whether these underlying assumptions are necessarily conflicting or can be accommodated within a single study.

The epistemology most congruent with my basic beliefs and assumptions of the world is the constructivist-interpretive paradigm. This study fits within this paradigm in its attempt to understand the perceptions, perspectives and understandings one

particular Inclusive Education Outreach Team has of its role and responsibilities (Leedy & Ormrod, 2005; Mertens, 2005).

In order to be able to answer any research question from within a constructivist-interpretative paradigm requires an appreciation of the subjective knowers i.e. the self as the researcher and the individual research participants, as the only source of reality. The 'knower' and 'known' are inseparable and interactive (Guba & Lincoln, 1985, 37); an intersubjective relationship exists between the researcher and what can be known.

In light of all of this, the final report of any research is then just another interpretation of reality, but this time an interpretation of the research participants' perspectives filtered through those of the researcher (Leedy & Ormrod, 2005). Such an epistemological stance requires the use of methodologies like interviewing and/or participant observation.

Methodologies like interviewing require qualitative researchers to be sensitive observers and analysts, as well as good communicators, capable of empathy, building rapport, asking information, generating questions and actively listening. "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, 23).

Furthermore, interviews afford participants the opportunity to express to the researcher a situation from their own perspective and in their own words (Kvale, 2009). What a participant experiences cannot be directly observed. An effective qualitative researcher "looks and listens everywhere. It is only by listening to many individuals, and many points of view, that value-resonant social contexts can be fully, equitably, and honourably represented" (Guba & Lincoln, 1981, 142).

Therefore, qualitative research viewed from an interpretive paradigm can be neither value-free nor completely objective. The issue of bias in qualitative research is hotly contested and there is still no consensus on how much researcher influence is regarded as acceptable (Ortlipp, 2008, 695). Many qualitative researchers acknowledge the need to make their experiences, opinions, thoughts, and feelings visible as part of the research process (Mruck & Breuer, 2003, 3).

### 3.2.2 Purpose of the Study

Closely related to the choice of paradigm is the purpose of the intended study, more specifically who or what the researcher wants to draw conclusions about. The purpose of this study is to provide some insight into answering the following question:

*What are the perspectives on the role and responsibilities of an Inclusive Education Outreach Team in one rural education district of the Western Cape?*

This is therefore an exploratory study and “because exploratory studies usually lead to insight and comprehension rather than the collection of detailed, accurate, and replicable data, they frequently involve the use of in-depth interviews, the analysis of case studies, and the use of (key) informants” (Babbie & Mouton, 2004, 80).

In order to begin to answer the above research question, this study will explore:

- the perspectives of one key informant on the role and responsibilities of Inclusive Education Outreach Teams;
- how one rural Inclusive Education Outreach Team understands and translates their understanding of inclusive education into practice;
- what one rural Inclusive Education Outreach Team experiences as challenging in the implementation of inclusive education;
- what capacity building exists and is required by one rural Inclusive Education Outreach Team in order to align their practice with current policy;
- what recommendations can be made for the future improvement of the support services delivered by one rural Inclusive Education Outreach Team (see chapter 6, section 6.3).

During the course of the exploration of the above, the researcher hopes to be able to fulfil her own curiosity and interest as both a researcher and a professional in better understanding different perspectives on the role and responsibilities of Inclusive Education Outreach Teams and also the feasibility of undertaking more extensive research in this field in the future.

Exploratory studies can be very valuable, particularly in areas where very little research has been previously conducted. However, a specific limitation of exploratory

studies is that they rarely provide definitive answers to research questions (Babbie & Mouton, 2004). This is largely due to the lack of representativeness of the selection of the participant sample. A sample is said to be representative when the selected participants accurately reflect the population about which the researcher aims to draw conclusions (Terre Blanche *et al.*, 2006). In light of this, exploratory studies tend to point to a way forward, rather than actually and directly answer the given research question. In the case of this research, the researcher has purposefully selected research participants who are potentially information-rich individuals for exactly the above reason.

### 3.2.3. Context of the Study

“Qualitative research has a strong orientation to everyday events and the everyday knowledge of those under investigation. Accordingly, qualitative data collection is largely bound to the notion of ‘contextuality’” (Flick, Von Kardorff, & Steinke, 2004, 8). Likewise, a community psychology perspective, the theoretical framework for this study, is said to have an ‘affinity’ with qualitative research (Bergold, 2000). Although community psychology per se is not related to any particular methodology, there are good reasons why qualitative research methods conducted from within a community psychology perspective, works well. The characteristic features that both qualitative research and community psychology share are: 1) nearness to everyday life; 2) multi-perceptivity and 3) process orientation (Bergold, 2000). These characteristics become pertinent when complex psycho-social processes are being explored.

As a characteristic common to both qualitative research and community psychology, nearness to everyday life underscores the importance of the everyday social context in which the research participants need to be viewed. It is crucial to appreciate that individuals are part of a social system, and that they are also inseparably intertwined within that system. Hence, it stands to reason that individuals within the education system cannot be viewed in a vacuum. Every change experienced in education reflects and interacts with changes in the wider social, political and economic context. Since 1994 the restructuring of education in South Africa has been part of the larger post-apartheid process of creating a democratic society. This has included a substantial element of decentralisation at every level of South African society. South Africa now has a single national education system, which is controlled and managed

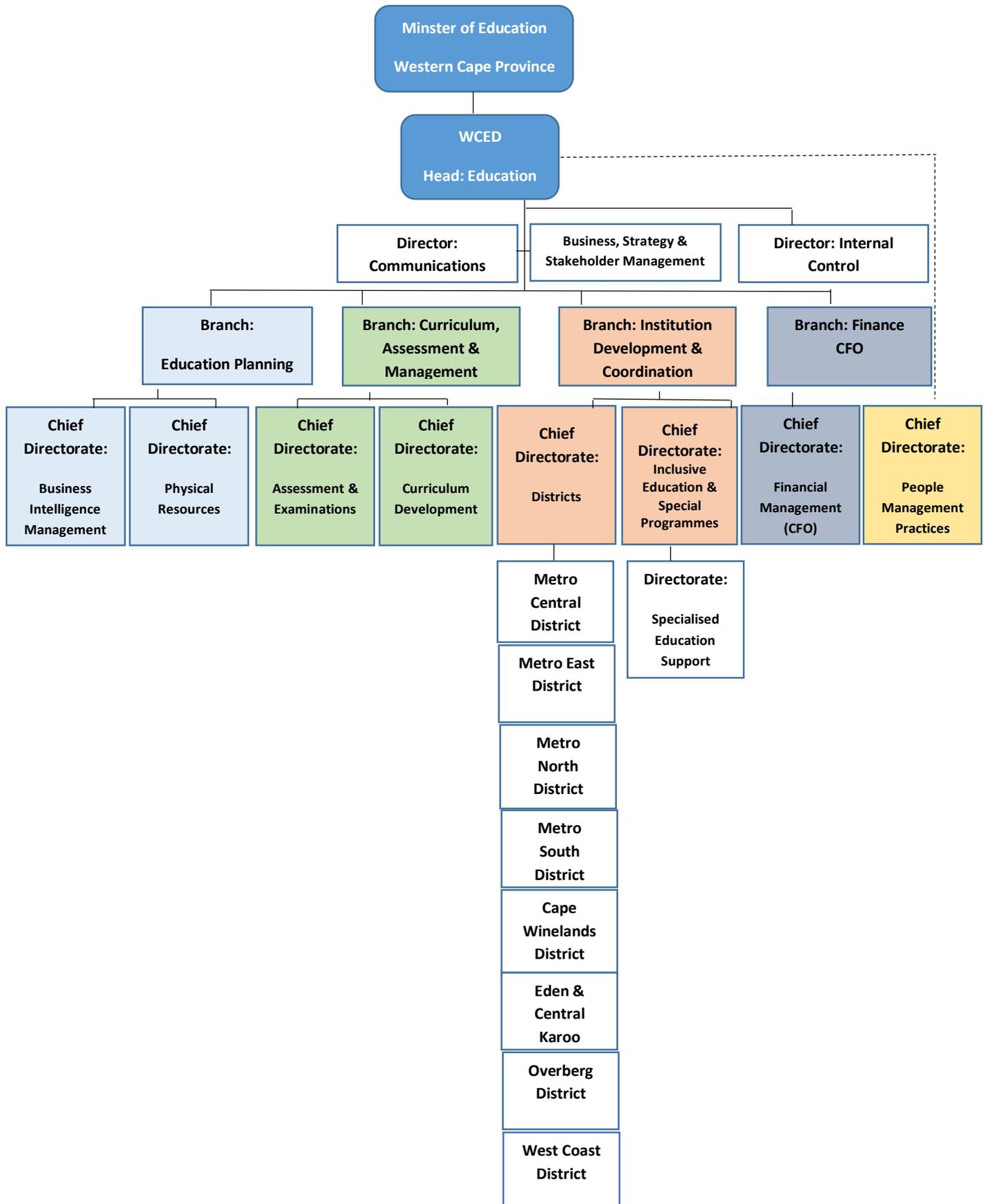
by nine provincial sub-systems. Accompanying this redistribution of powers to the provinces is the South African Schools Act of 1996. Not only has this Act seen the replacement of the many different school models of the various education departments under Apartheid, with two categories of schools, namely public schools and independent schools; it has also provided for the formation of governing bodies at all schools. This has undeniably grown the influence of each school community over their own school and increased the overall democratic involvement of all interested role players in education.

However, even with greater autonomy, schools are still required to abide by national education policy, regulated by the Minister of Basic Education (Republic of South Africa, 1996). Within the parameters of national policy, Provincial governments have the authority to make provincial policy. The provincial Departments of Education are responsible for creating, supervising and supporting schools and other educational (excluding tertiary) institutions within their provinces. Figure 3.1 below illustrates this decentralisation within the Western Cape Education Department.

Furthermore, all provincial departments of education have head offices where their leadership and senior officials are situated. Additionally, all provinces have established lower level education structures. These structures are referred to as either regions or districts and are not necessarily the same in every province; sometimes differing in size and function. Some provinces are divided up into both regions and districts, and the districts split further into circuits. The officials employed within these sub-provincial structures are directly responsible to their provincial department of education.

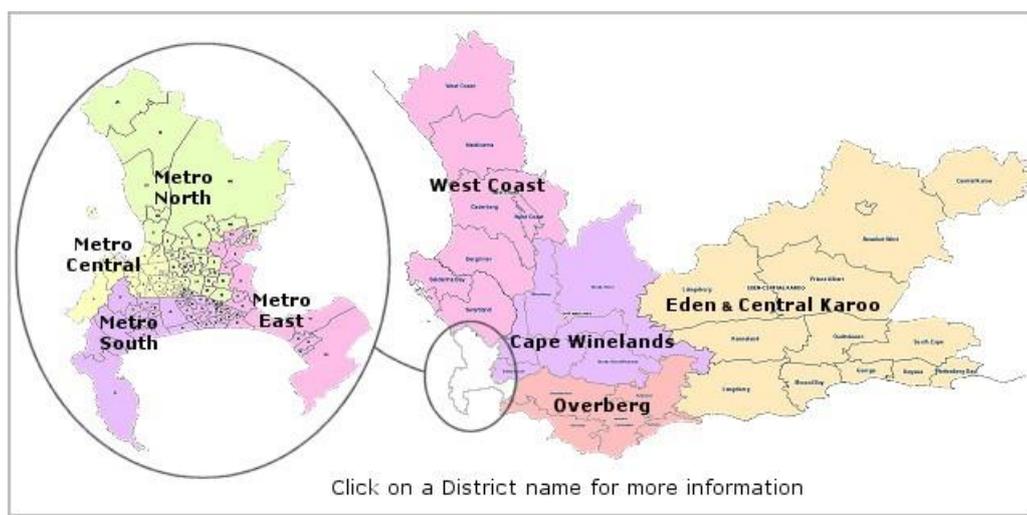
The Western Cape Education Department (WCED) currently has eight education districts (See Figure 3.2 below). Four are rural (West Coast, Cape Winelands, Eden and Karoo, and Overberg), and four are urban (Metro North, Metro South, Metro East and Metro Central). The boundaries of the urban districts are based on those of city wards while those of the rural districts tend to be based on municipal boundaries.

**Figure: 3.1** Senior Management of the Western Cape Education Department: Components of the Head Office structure



The demarcation of the education districts in this way, is to secure the equitable distribution of schools and resources across education districts and circuits. The fundamental purpose of each district is to manage the quality of education and educational institutions within their district. Each district is then divided further into circuit teams (between three and eight per district), totalling 49 circuit teams across the Western Cape Province. In turn, each circuit team is accountable for bringing professional support closer to the schools they are allocated.

**Figure 3.2:** Education Districts of the Western Cape Province



<http://wced.pgwc.gov.za/branchIDC/Districts/briefly.html>

A typical circuit team includes advisors responsible for the institutional management and governance at schools, school administration, general education and training and special needs. The special needs (referred to as specialised education support) component of each circuit team includes a school psychologist, a social worker and learning support advisor. It is this component, the specialised education support (SES), of each circuit team that the Inclusive Education Outreach Teams interact with in the field.

As already discussed, the restructuring of the national education system was also accompanied by progressive education policy transformation, namely publication of Education White Paper 6 (Department of Education, 2001). Based on the findings and recommendations of the NCSNET/NCESS, White Paper 6 highlights numerous strategic areas of change, the cornerstone of which is 'the infusion of special needs and support services throughout the (education) system' (Department of Education,

2001, 6). In the Western Cape, this particular strategy included the establishment of Inclusive Education Outreach Teams in each education district.

The education district in which this research was conducted is one of the four rural districts of the Western Cape Province. This district currently consists of eight district-based circuit teams including two Inclusive Education Outreach Teams. The Inclusive Education Outreach Teams are multi-disciplinary, consisting of three education support professionals, viz. a school psychologist, an occupational therapist and a learning support educator.

Based at a special school resource centre, the team in this study is on the special school's record statement of service. What this means is that team members are part of the special school resource centre staff, under the management and leadership of the school principal. All logistical support required by the team to fulfil their duties is supplied and coordinated by the resource centre.

The WCED allocates a certain amount of funding every year to the team. The principal, together with the team, prioritises where and how the money should be used in order to maximise the team's effectiveness as the outreach of the resource centre to the full service schools.

Additionally, the team works across five of the district's eight circuit teams, liaising predominantly with the specialised education support professionals of each of the above eight circuit teams, i.e. the five psychologists, five social workers and five learning support advisors. In addition, each member of this Inclusive Education Outreach Team is directly accountable to a district based discipline head (line manager). In other words the team school psychologist, in terms of the discipline of psychology, reports to the district senior school psychologist, the learning support educator to the district head of learning support and the occupational therapist to the district head of speech and occupational therapy. Outside of these three lines of accountability, the team members remain accountable to their respective professional bodies.

The 14 full service schools included within the above five circuits, covers a geographical area of approximately 534 km<sup>2</sup>. The team shares one car and on average drives between 58 and 200 kilometres daily. Eighty per cent of the team's working week, equivalent to three days, is spent in service to the full service schools,

10%, equivalent to 1 day a week, in service to the special school resource centre and the remaining 10% is dedicated to administration and report writing. This team tries to visit each of the 14 full service schools once within a four-week cycle. A school term is on average 12 weeks long, which translates into a minimum of two, and a maximum of three, visits per school per term.

### 3.2.4. Research Participants

The research participants are the three members of one of the Inclusive Education Outreach Teams from the rural education district described above, and a member of the senior management of the Western Cape Education Department. Essentially all the research participants can be viewed as key informants. Key informants are generally regarded as expert sources of information. They “are individuals who are articulate and knowledgeable about their community” (Fetterman, 2008, 477). Their personal skills, and/or the particular position they hold within a community 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 comparatively short period of time.

**Table 3.1:** Demographic information of research participants

Team/Component of Western Cape Education Department	Time in current position	Qualifications	Additional Professional Development/Qualifications	Experience of S.A.'s Education System
Inclusive Education Outreach Team: School Psychologist	12 months	B. Ed. PSYCH	Registered Counsellor with the HPCSA	2 years: Learning Support Educator at two farm schools 1 year: School Psychologist in another Inclusive Education Outreach Team 1 year: Learning Support Educator in current Inclusive Education Outreach Team
Inclusive Education Outreach Team:	1 year 6 months	Bachelor of Arts in Occupational Therapy	Diploma in Advanced Occupational Therapy	15 years: Private Practice on the premises of an Ordinary School

Occupational Therapist			Diploma in Remedial Teaching	
Inclusive Education Outreach Team: Learning Support Educator	9 months	B. Ed. PSYCH	Registered Counsellor with the HPCSA  Learnt to read Braille	1 year: worked at a school for the Blind  9 months: Grade 1 Educator
WCED Head Office	3 years	Registered Educational Psychologist with the HPCSA	BA BSc B.Ed. PSYCH Teaching Diploma	Worked in various Special Schools (nationally and internationally)

However, there are also potential disadvantages to using key informants. These include the unlikelihood that any key informant can be representative of, or even fully understand, the majority view of those within their community. Moreover any difference in status between an informant and the researcher can potentially lead to uncomfortable interaction. The identification of key informants can be complicated further, when individuals, who wish to improve their standing within their communities, are held up as expert sources of information, but in fact do not possess the essential skills required of a true key informant (Marshall, 1996).

### 3.2.5. Research Techniques

#### 3.2.5.1. Sampling

The research participants were selected using both convenience and purposive sampling. A convenience sample is one in which the researcher selects participants who are readily available to take part in the study (Evans, 2014). A word of caution, however; reliance on available participants does not come without risk. This type of sampling does not permit researcher regulation over the representativeness of the sample and as such, the research findings cannot be used to generalise to the wider population of rural Inclusive Education Outreach Teams.

Yet this is not to say that the findings generated from using this particular sampling method are not useful. The use of convenience sampling can be justified in situations where other sampling methods are not plausible. It was for this reason as well as the fact that the participants in this study were individuals most readily accessible to the researcher, that convenience sampling was used. In addition, findings that emerge from this research can be used to refine existing understandings of the role and responsibilities of Inclusive Education Outreach Teams and generate more questions for further investigation.

Purposive sampling, on the other hand, also referred to as a judgmental sampling, refers to the selection of participants on the basis of a study's purpose as well as on the researcher's knowledge of the particular population under research (Crossman, 2014). The participants of this study were therefore also purposively selected because they either have intimate knowledge of Inclusive Education Outreach Teams operating in rural districts of the Western Cape Province and/or are members of an Inclusive Education Outreach Team working in a rural education district of the Western Cape. Thus, the participants of this study were selected because they meet the criteria described above.

It can also be said that each of the participants are also key informants. In terms of the notion of key informants, Tremblay, quoted by Marshall (1996, p. 92) identifies several characteristics that epitomise the ideal key informant namely: role in community, knowledge, willingness, communicability and impartiality. However, of the above criteria, it is only an informant's role in the community that can be determined with any degree of certainty. The extent to which each of the other criteria are met, helps to evaluate the overall usefulness of the information collected. This however, is only possible to ascertain once the interview has been conducted and the information rigorously analysed. In terms of this study, likely key informants were considered on the basis of their ability to satisfy the selection criteria described above.

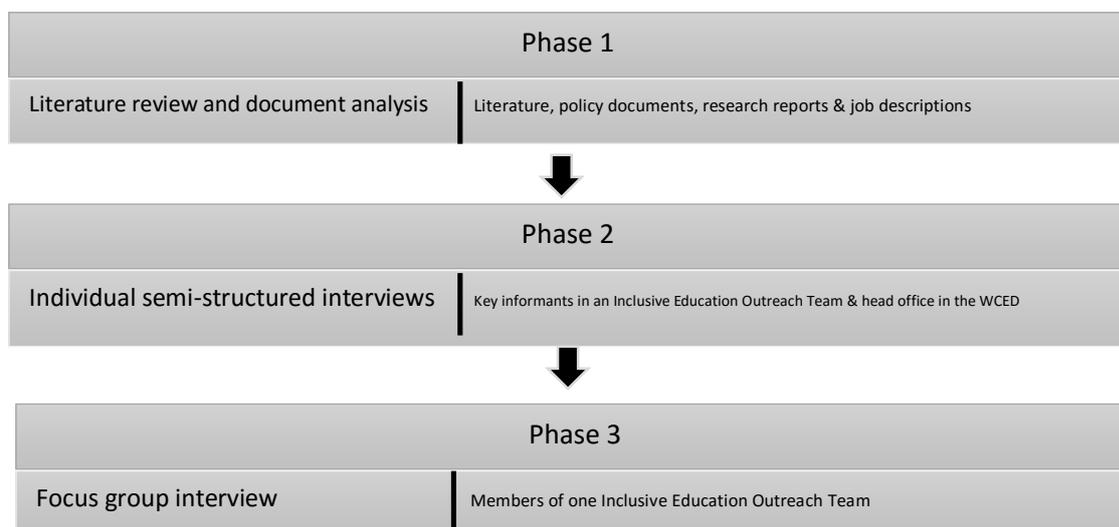
I contacted the team members interviewed in this study through the special school resource centre at which they are based. Participants were invited via e-mail to participate. On acknowledgement of the e-mail and acceptance of the invitation, telephonic arrangements were made to meet at a time and place convenient to the participants. From the outset, the study objectives were carefully explained to

participants, including all the ethical considerations discussed below. Participants were then given an opportunity to ask questions, after which they each signed the necessary informed consent form. Refer to Appendix B to view a copy of the consent form.

### 3.2.5.2. Data Collection

To answer the research question and address the aims and objectives of this study data was collected in the following ways: a literature review (including education policy and any other documentation pertaining to inclusive education); four individual, semi-structured interviews and finally one focus group interview. The data generated included three phases. Figure 3.3 below graphically depicts the chronological order of the phases and the way in which each linked with the other.

**Figure 3.3** Phases of data collection: methods and sources



All the data collected during each of the three phases provided the foundations upon which I could build my findings. Just as clues are to a detective, data is to the researcher; i.e. the 'rough materials' gathered from the world being studied (Biklen & Bogden, 2003, 109).

However in order to collect the data, various research instruments were developed within the framework of the research questions. These instruments, the interview schedules, included questions which were open-ended and exploratory; and where necessary, also confirmatory. Appendices F, G and H present the research instruments used in phase two and three of the data generation process. The

development and application of each phase of data generation is now described below.

Phase 1: the literature review is essentially “a narrative essay that integrates, synthesises and critiques the important thinking and research on a particular topic” (Merriam, 1998, 55). The purpose of any literature review should be to place research in context (Kaniki, 1999, 19); research devoid of context is essentially meaningless. Moreover, all research is essentially the combined effort of many researchers who make their findings public. In this way knowledge is accumulated and as a scientific community we learn from and build on the work of one another (Neuman, 2003, 96).

The literature review underpinning this study was an amalgamation of “self-study-, context-, historical- and integrative reviews” (Neuman, 2003, 97). For this purpose the literature was gleaned from various different sources, which included: books, academic journals, dissertations, education policy documents, legislation, media reports and the internet.

Of particular importance in the literature review was the analysis of pertinent inclusive education policy documents. Document analysis comprises the detailed scrutiny and understanding of written material that addresses information on the key issues being researched (Strydom & Delpont, 2005). The review of the education policy documents listed below contributed to the contextualisation of this research project in terms of both time and setting (Marshall & Rossman, 2006):

- Education White Paper 6: Building an inclusive education and training system (2001);
- Guidelines for Inclusive Learning Programmes (2005);
- Guidelines to ensure quality education and support in special schools as resource centres (2007);
- Guidelines for full-service/inclusive schools (2010);
- Action step: National model (2010);
- Guidelines for responding to learner diversity in the classroom through curriculum and assessment policy statements (2011);
- Policy on Screening, Identification, Assessment and Support (SIAS) (2014);
- The draft job description for each of the members of the Inclusive Education Outreach Team (Berenice Daniels, personal communication, March 1, 2014).

Phase 2: semi-structured, in-depth interviews were conducted with each of the four participants. Large amounts of pertinent information about the experiences of others can be generated by directly questioning and talking with them. The interview method therefore is essentially “a conversation with a purpose” (Berg, 2007, 89).

There are however, various categories of interviews which occur along a continuum from the structured interview on the one end to the unstructured interview on the other and somewhere in-between, the semi-structured interview. The semi-structured interview is a non-standardised interview format, very often used in qualitative research.

While an interview guide is used, the semi-structured interview format allows for additional questions to be asked, the order of which can be changed if necessary. This partial pre-planning of questions is a significant feature of the semi-structured interview. It allows the researcher opportunities “to respond to the situation at hand, to the emerging worldview of the respondent, and to new ideas on the topic” (Merriam 2009, 90). In this way it can be ensured that the necessary depth and insight can be generated in order to comprehensively address the research question.

Two separate interview guides were used for each of the two categories of participants; the first being the participant from head office and the second, the members of the Inclusive Education Outreach Team (refer to Appendices F and G). Contextually comparable questions were posed to both categories of participants. The researcher met with each participant at his/her office for a single interview of between 60 and 90 minutes.

Phase 3: a single focus group interview which included all three members of the Inclusive Education Outreach Team (refer to Appendix H). This interview lasted approximately 2 hours and was conducted at the team offices at the special school resource centre where the team is based. As social beings, people have since time immemorial, gathered together in groups to discuss important matters (Colucci, 2007, 1422). Morgan describes a focus group as “the explicit use of the group interaction to produce data and insights that would be less accessible without the interaction found in a group” (1998, 12; Barbour, 2007).

Making use of a focus group interview creates an opportunity for participants to “consider their own views in the context of the views of others” (Patton, 1998, 135;

Stewart & Shamdasani, 2015). In this way clarification can be given to any issues raised during the individual interviews while also uncovering the diversity of thought within the group; thereby offering insight into the meanings created by the group (Fontana & Frey, 2000).

However the use of a focus group interview is not always an easy option and requires a certain amount of skill to engage with participants to achieve good-quality data. A means of fulfilling this aim is to include in the focus group agenda 'questions that engage participants' (Krueger, 1998) or 'focusing activities' (Boor, Frankland, Thomas & Robson, 2001) that are both enjoyable and productive.

The use of such activities helps to keep the attention of the group on the central topic of the study and make subsequent analysis of the data more straightforward. Moreover activity oriented questions lend themselves to talking about complex issues, which often appear far less threatening when discussed by means of practical, participatory and enjoyable tasks (Colucci, 2007). Refer to Appendix H for an outline of the activity orientated questions used in the focus group interview. Appendices I and J included two of the completed activities.

### **3.2.5.3. Data Analysis**

This is the stage during which the researcher must make sense of what has been discovered and then compile the data in an ordered, structured and meaningful way. The very nature of qualitative research means that the analysis of the data can initially seem chaotic, often ambiguous and even laborious (De Vos, Strydom, Fouche & Delport, 2005). Qualitative data analysis does not progress in a linear fashion, but happens simultaneously, alongside data collection; often with no clear cut point where data collection ends and analysis begins (Merriam, 2002, 14). The two are inclined to overlap with a "gradual fading out of one and a fading in of the other" (Terre Blanche *et al.*, 2006, 321).

The eventual outcome is an account of the researcher's interpretation of the phenomenon being studied. "Interpretation is a complex and dynamic craft, with as much creative artistry as technical exactitude, and it requires an abundance of patient plodding, fortitude, and discipline. The dance of interpretation is a dance for two, but those two are often multiple and frequently changing, and there is always an audience,

even if it is not always visible. The two dancers are the interpreters and the [interview transcript] texts” (Crabtree & Miller, 1999, 138-139).

In light of the above, it is important to note that qualitative data analysis occurs along a continuum (Dawson, 2007). On the one end are the highly qualitative, reflective types of data analysis and on the other, those which analyse qualitative data in quantitative ways. The data collected during the course of this research was analysed using thematic analysis. Roulston (2001) argues that although thematic analysis is an ill-defined, seldom recognised qualitative analytic method, it is extensively used within the field of psychological research. Thematic analysis can be described as an expressive presentation of qualitative data (Anderson, 2007). An extension of this understanding includes the identification, analysis and reporting of themes or patterns within the data (Braun & Clarke, 2006, 79). “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” (Braun & Clarke, 2006, 82.) This allows researchers the opportunity to organise and describe their data in rich detail.

So in terms of the continuum discussed, thematic analysis is located on the highly qualitative end. The implication is the on-going nature of the data analysis process and as such the researcher is provided with ample occasions to reflect upon the emerging themes, making adaptations and changes to the research methods when and if required (Dawson, 2007, 119). The idea of themes ‘emerging’ from the data often belies the active role required of researchers during the data analysis process.

Although thematic analysis is not a complex method, making it very accessible to novice researchers like me, one of the biggest challenges facing the researcher is the skilful engagement with research participants for the generation of rich and complex insights (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Furthermore there is no one way to proceed with thematic data analysis. Braun and Clarke (2006, 16) have provided a useful summary broadly outlining the six phases which constitute thematic analysis. Table 3.2 below provides a summary of the guidelines on how to conduct thematic analysis. This is not a hard and fast set of rules which must be strictly adhered to (Patton, 1990).

**Table 3.2** Guidelines on how to conduct thematic analysis

Phase	Description of the process
1. Familiarisation with the data:	<p><b>Transcribing data</b> - an excellent way to start familiarising oneself with the data; the beginnings of an interpretive act through which meanings are created (Lapadat &amp; Lindsay, 1999).</p> <p><b>Reading and re-reading the data</b> i.e. immersing oneself in the data to such an extent that the 'the strange becomes familiar and the familiar strange' (Terre Blanche <i>et al.</i>, 2006, 321). This is essentially an active process.</p> <p><b>Noting down initial ideas</b> i.e. the generation of an initial list of ideas about what is in the data and what is interesting about each of them.</p>
2. Generating initial codes:	<p><b>Coding</b> interesting features of the data in a systematic fashion across the entire data set, [Codes are 'shorthand labels - usually a word, short phrase, or metaphor - often derived from the participants' accounts, which are assigned to data fragments defined as having some common meaning or relationship' (Carpenter &amp; Suto, 2008,116)]</p> <p><b>Collating</b> data relevant to each code</p>
3. Searching for themes:	<p><b>Collating</b> codes into potential themes</p> <p><b>Gathering</b> all data relevant to each potential theme</p> <p>At the end of this stage one should have a collection of themes and sub-themes.</p>
4. Reviewing themes:	<p><b>Level 1: Reviewing at the level of the coded data</b> - re-read all of the data extracts that fit into each theme to ensure that all of the data forms a coherent pattern</p> <p><b>Level 2: Reviewing at the level of the themes the entire data set</b> - consider each theme in relation to all the generated data.</p>

	Create a thematic 'map' to help visualize the relationship between themes.
5. Defining and naming themes:	Ongoing analysis to refine the essence of what each theme is about and what aspect of the data each theme captures, thereby giving voice to the overall story the analysis tells; generating clear definitions and names for each theme.
6. Producing the report:	A final opportunity for analysis. Selection of vivid, compelling extract examples Final analysis of selected extracts Relating back of the analysis to the research question and literature in order to produce a scholarly report on the research findings (Braun & Clarke, 2006, 35)

Therefore, the skilled researcher is able to apply these guidelines in a manner which is both flexible and responsive to the research question and the subsequent, generated data. Nonetheless flexibility does not imply a lack of rigour. In line with this thinking, Reicher and Taylor argue that the necessary “rigour lies in devising a systematic method whose assumptions are congruent with the way one conceptualises the subject matter” (2005, p. 549). Appendices K and L provide examples of how thematic analysis was applied to the data gathered during this research project.

Review of Appendix L highlights the importance of the active engagement of the researcher with the data. In addition, Miller and Crabtree (1999) make note of various insights and competencies which contribute to the success of the analysis process.

To generate a good thematic analysis it is important as a researcher, to:

- know who you are as well as what your biases and prejudices are;
- understand and be sure of your research question;
- be flexible and creative; open to alternative interpretations;
- attempt to account for all the data, publicly recognising that which you are not able to explain;

- celebrate anomalies; often they offer the gift of insight;
- consult with others in order to obtain critical feedback;
- be explicit; share the details and findings of your research with peers and other interested parties.

(1999, p. 142-143).

### 3.3. Validity and reliability

A central aim of all research is to generate valid and reliable knowledge and to ensure that this is undertaken in an ethical manner. The validity of any research refers to the degree to which it measures that which it purports to measure while reliability refers to the consistency of what the research measures over time. In quantitative research this is a relatively straightforward process. However in qualitative research, readers need to be provided with sufficiently detailed descriptions to illustrate that the researcher's conclusions are believable.

“Over the past three decades there has been a plethora of works attempting to articulate and list the criteria that describes the characteristics of what constitutes good qualitative research” (Loh, 2013, 4). Of particular significance is the work of Lincoln and Guba (1985), *Naturalistic Inquiry*. Lincoln and Guba use the alternative term, ‘trustworthiness,’ to replace the terms of validity, reliability and generalisability, for qualitative research located within a constructivist paradigm. According to Lincoln and Guba (1985) the trustworthiness of any qualitative research can be established by showing that it is credible, transferable, dependable and confirmable (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

Although some disagreement exists over the use of the above trustworthiness criteria, the larger qualitative research community accepts their usefulness (Loh, 2013). I have therefore decided to embrace the above criteria as the benchmark with which to assess and ensure the quality of my own research.

A brief discussion on each of the above criteria reveals that:

*Credibility* is about establishing whether the research is believable i.e. whether the findings are accurate and credible to the researcher, the research participants and anyone else who chooses to read it. Lincoln and Guba (1985) contend that ensuring credibility is one of the most essential aspects in establishing trustworthiness. So

while it is not possible to capture an objective 'truth', there are numerous provisions a researcher can make to promote confidence in the accuracy of the research findings.

The strategies employed in this study to help ensure credibility include:

- *Triangulation*: this involves using multiple data sources in order to produce a rich and comprehensive understanding in response to the research question. As noted, the data was collected from two categories of research participants via in-depth, semi-structured individual interviews as well as a focus group interview and from various documents and literature sources.
- *'Member checks'*: during an interview, a researcher will often restate or summarise information and then question a participant further in order to determine the accuracy of his/her understanding. Should participants agree that the summaries accurately reflect their views and experiences, then the research is said to be credible (Creswell, 2007). Member checking can also occur near the end of a research project when the analysed data and report are given to the participants for review. The idea is for participants to be able to check whether an authentic representation was made of what they conveyed. Participants were offered the chance to review the transcribed scripts. None of the participants made use of this opportunity.
- *Engagement in the data generation*: this means that data generation continued until saturation occurred. 'Saturation is the point in data collection when no new or relevant information emerges with respect to the newly constructed theory' (Given, 2008, 195). This means that there is no need for any further data to be collected; the research analysis appears robust, with no obvious gaps or unexplained phenomena and the findings can now be constructed in a meaningful way.

*Transferability* is the degree in which research findings can be transferred to other contexts. This is determined by the reader, who compares the specifics of the research with other research they are familiar with. In situations where the specifics are significantly comparable, the original research is considered more credible.

Therefore to contribute to the potential transferability of my research, I am aware of the need to provide rich, in-depth, 'thick' descriptions of my research findings. The use of the term, 'thick descriptions' in qualitative research refers to "the process of paying

attention to contextual detail in observing and interpreting social meaning” (Mills, Durepos & Wiebe, 2010, 942).

*Dependability* guarantees that research findings are consistent and that they can be accurately repeated over time. Lincoln and Guba (1985) suggest the implementation of an audit trail. An audit trail involves the process of documenting the course of development of the completed analysis. In this way the researcher provides an account of all research decisions and activities throughout the research project; all decisions pertaining to theoretical, methodological and analytic choices are made explicit (Carcary, 2009). To this end, I carefully documented all my research procedures in order to demonstrate that the coding schemes and categories were consistently applied.

*Confirmability* asks questions about the quality of the findings produced. These questions relate to how well the research findings are supported by the participants. Furthermore, reference to literature and findings by other authors that can confirm the researcher’s findings serve to strengthen the confirmability of the research.

### 3.4. Ethical Considerations

Ethical research is more than just the published outcome of a study. It entails every decision made throughout the entire research process. Ethical research requires of researchers the conduct becoming of a responsible researcher. Steneck describes this as “conducting research in ways that fulfil the professional responsibilities of researchers, as defined by their professional organisation, the institutions for which they work, and when relevant, the government and public” (2007, p. 55).

As an educational psychology intern, the researcher is bound by the code of professional ethics as prescribed by the Health Professions Council of South Africa (<http://www.hpcsa>). This code serves to regulate the conduct of psychologists, not only in their day-to-day practice, but also during the course of conducting research.

Therefore, to ensure my conduct remains ethical throughout this research process a number of ethical principles will need to be carefully considered:

- Respect for the dignity, moral and legal rights of participants

This principle requires an attitude that reflects genuine belief in the intrinsic value of each participant, regardless of who they are, where they come from and what they

believe. This attitude is the expression of respect for the dignity of participants, their moral as well as their legal rights. It is my responsibility to convey such respect through my every word and action.

In addition, fundamental to safeguarding the dignity of participants is the notion of privacy (Hall, 1996; Burns, 2001). This includes individual participant's physical, psychological and spiritual well-being. Privacy essentially has two dimensions: the right against intrusion and the right to confidentiality (Allan, 2011, 125). However in terms of the current research, the right to confidentiality is the more pertinent of the two principles. This right refers to the extent to which information shared by participants is kept confidential.

Confidentiality must be respected at all times. At the start of each interview it was contracted with participants that all research findings will be reported on in an ethically responsible manner in consultation with my supervisor. Part of this process involved informing participants of the relevant limits to confidentiality as well as the foreseeable uses of the information generated through my research. In addition, no information which can be used to identify participants has been included in this final research report.

Informed permission was given by participants for all the interviews to be audio recorded. Additionally, the researcher assured participants that all audio recordings together with the transcribed data will be stored on a password protected external hard drive and kept securely under lock and key for a period of five years as required by law. Only the researcher and her supervisor would ever have access to this data.

- Justice

This principle is about fairness, rightness and equity (Benn, 1967; Allan, 2011); the fair treatment of all research participants without undue discrimination or favouritism. I made every effort to portray fairness and equity in my attitude towards and my communication with participants.

- Autonomy

This principle relates to every individual's right to freely and voluntarily make informed decisions regarding their own lives. In terms of this research project, this principle refers to the decision made by participants to participate in the research. Such a

decision must be an informed one, one which is made freely and voluntarily with the understanding that a participant may withdraw from the study at any time without fear of reprisal.

In addition to signing informed consent forms (refer to Appendix B), it has been recommended that researchers should also ensure that participants fully understand the procedures, risks and benefits of the study (Mann, 2008). In line with this, the researcher arranged to meet with participants to share the objectives of her research, and hand out the informed consent forms, allowing an opportunity for questions to be asked.

- Non-maleficence

This principle refers to the duty of the researcher to behave in ways that do not cause any undue harm. Should the researcher behave in ways harmful to participants, it is the responsibility of the researcher to take reasonable steps to rectify the situation. In terms of this study it means offering participants an opportunity to debrief after the conclusion of the any of the interviews should they so wish.

In psychological research, debriefing is usually a short interview between the researcher and a research participant immediately following their participation in the research. Whenever research involves human participants, debriefing is considered a fundamental ethical precaution. However, because this research is viewed as low risk i.e. it involves no deception and minimal risk to participants, the participants did not need to take up the offer of debriefing.

- Beneficence

Beneficence is action that is taken for the benefit of others. The researcher is hopeful that a potential outcome of this research will serve to highlight some of the issues facing one rural Inclusive Education Outreach Team and that the recommendations made will be considered in terms of the other rural Inclusive Education Outreach Teams.

- Veracity

Part of being able to conduct valid research requires that researchers are truthful. Therefore, in all communication with participants the researcher made every effort to be both accurate and objective.

- Fidelity

The principle of fidelity pertains to the degree to which a researcher is trustworthy. In adherence to this principle it was important that the participants' interests were put before the researcher's, creating a safe space in which they felt they could genuinely respond to any questions.

- Responsibility

It is the responsibility of the researcher to engage in answering a socially valid research question, one which has the potential to impact on the profession of psychology and/or the individuals who make use of psychological services (Wester, 2011). This needs to be considered from the outset of a research project, whether the research being conducted has any social validity. "Social validity refers to the impact a study will have on the [psychology] profession or on society" (Wester, 2011, 5). Research that does not produce useful findings is essentially unethical (Rosenthal, 2008).

Finally, any research that involves human subjects must be reviewed and approved by an accredited institutional committee (Allen, 2011). This research was submitted and approved by the Research Ethics Committee (REC) at the University of Stellenbosch where the researcher is currently registered as an educational psychology intern (refer to Appendix E).

### 3.5. Conclusion

The hope is that the results of this research will make sense, that they can be confirmed and corroborated by others (Westler, 2011). This chapter has outlined the research paradigm, design and methodology used to answer the research question and sub-questions put forward in this thesis, highlighting the importance of design coherence and validity.

This is a qualitative study which has been informed by an interpretive paradigm. Moreover, the purpose of this research is to draw exploratory conclusions about the perceptions one rural Inclusive Education Outreach Team has of its role and responsibilities. It is then anticipated that the findings of this research will have an immediate practical application for the future functioning of other rural Inclusive Education Outreach Teams.

The methods of data collection and the subsequent analysis of the generated data were also extensively discussed. Various ethical considerations were elucidated upon, which underlined the significance of the researcher as the primary instrument of data collection. In the next chapter the research findings will be presented.

## **Chapter 4**

# Research Findings

*'In another moment Alice was through the glass, and had jumped lightly down into the Looking-glass room. The very first thing she did was to look whether there was a fire in the fireplace, and she was quite pleased to find that there was a real one, blazing away as brightly as the one she had left behind. 'So I shall be as warm here as I was in the old room,' thought Alice: 'warmer, in fact, because there'll be no one here to scold me away from the fire. Oh, what fun it'll be, when they see me through the glass in here, and can't get at me!'*

Carroll, 2010, 62

## 4.1. Introduction

The central aim of this study is to peer down into the 'Looking-glass room' and explore the perspectives on the roles and responsibilities of an Inclusive Education Outreach Team in one rural education district of the Western Cape. To do this the research explores the research participants' understandings of:

1. Inclusivity, and
2. its translation into practice;
3. the challenges impeding the implementation of inclusive education;
4. the capacity building deemed essential for effective service delivery;
5. and finally any recommendations for the future improvement of the functioning of this particular Inclusive Education Outreach Team.

The research questions designed to probe the above understandings by the participants include the following (Appendices F, G and H):

1. How does one rural Inclusive Education Outreach Team understand and translate their understanding of inclusive education into practice?
2. What does one rural Inclusive Education Outreach Team experience as challenging in the implementation of inclusive education?
3. What capacity building exists and what further capacity building does one rural Inclusive Education Outreach Team require in order to align their practice with current policy?

4. What recommendations can be made for the future improvement of the support services delivered by one rural Inclusive Education Outreach Team?

These questions serve to provide the necessary framework around which the research data in this chapter is thematically organised.

## 4.2. Research participants

The research participants included in this study are the members of one rural based Inclusive Education Outreach Team and a key informant from the Western Cape Education Department's head office. The Table 3.1 above gives an overview of the salient demographic information for each participant.

## 4.3. Individual interviews and the focus group interview

The purpose of the above 'conversations' (Berg, 2007, 89) i.e. the four semi-structured, in-depth individual interviews and the focus group interview, is to glean pertinent information on how the members of the Inclusive Education Outreach Team, included in this study, perceive their roles and responsibilities, and the translation of this understanding into practice.

The use of semi-structured interviews allowed opportunities 'to respond to the situation at hand, to the emerging worldview of the respondent[s], and to new ideas on the topic' (Merriam 2009, 90). In this way the researcher was able to generate the necessary depth and insight in order to comprehensively address the research question: What are the perspectives on the roles and responsibilities of an Inclusive Education Outreach Team in one rural education district of the Western Cape?

Two separate interview guides were used for each of the two categories of participants, the first being the key informant from head office and the second, the members of one rural Inclusive Education Outreach Team (refer to Appendices F and G). Contextually comparable questions were posed to both categories of participants.

The individual interviews were then followed by a single focus group interview which only included the members of the above Inclusive Education Outreach Team (refer to Appendix H). This group interaction allowed the production of data and insights that would not easily have been accessible without the interaction that occurred within the group (Morgan, 1998, 12).

## 4.4. Research findings

Table 4.1 below serves as an advance organiser, highlighting the findings that have emerged out of the individual and the focus group interviews. It is important to bear in mind that the research questions are used as a framework to organise the data from which a number of themes and subsequent subthemes arose. The findings presented in the sections below are supported by excerpts from the actual interview transcripts.

**Table: 4.1** Key research findings: themes and subthemes

<b>Theme 1: Inclusive education policies and associated guidelines</b>
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <i>How participants define and understand the concept of inclusive education</i></li> <li>2. <i>How participants understand the intention of the education department's inclusive education policies and associated guidelines</i></li> <li>3. <i>Policy that informs understanding and implementation of inclusive education</i></li> </ol>
<b>Theme 2: Participants' understanding of Inclusive Education Outreach Teams</b>
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <i>The contribution such teams (inclusive education outreach teams) can make towards building an inclusive education system in our country</i></li> </ol>
<b>Theme 3: Participants' perspectives on the practical implementation of inclusive education</b>
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <i>Team's description of their role and responsibilities</i></li> <li>2. <i>How the team understands their roles and responsibilities</i></li> <li>3. <i>Team members' experience of the work they do</i></li> </ol>
<b>Theme 4: Participants' perspectives on the challenges and successes they have experienced</b>
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <i>Challenges experienced by the team</i></li> <li>2. <i>Successful resolution to some of the above challenges</i></li> <li>3. <i>Examples of best practice</i></li> </ol>
<b>Theme 5: Capacity building of Inclusive Education Outreach Teams</b>
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <i>Recommendations for the future of Inclusive Education Outreach Teams</i></li> <li>2. <i>Participants' perspectives on capacity building of education support services</i></li> </ol>

#### 4.4.1. Theme 1: Inclusive education policies, associated guidelines and documentation

The following three subthemes emerged:

##### **Subtheme 1: How participants define and understand the concept of inclusive education**

Out of the above subtheme the following came to light: defining inclusive education; the reality of many schools and communities within this education district and the need for teacher support.

- Defining inclusive education

All three participants agreed that making whatever adjustments are necessary to accommodate all learners, is a central concept in inclusion:

**FG:** *Alle kinders het ondersteuning nodig . . .*

*Inclusive education moet aan al die behoeftes, emosioneel, akademies en fisies van alle kinders voldoen.*

*Dit is insluiting en akkommodasie van alle leerders, nie net kinders met gestremdhede nie, om hulle volle potensiaal te bereik.*

In an inclusive education system there is a need to promote a particular ethos in schools that not only creates openness to inclusion, but that also develops a school culture that respects diversity and embraces acceptance.

**P3:** *Die eerste stap vir skole is om 'n kultuur van aanvaarding te vestig.*

- The reality of many schools and communities within this education district

The participants indicated that the schools within this particular education district are generally very full and that the number of learners in each class can range from anywhere between 30 and 50 learners. All the participants agreed that the poor socio-economic conditions of the schools and surrounding communities had a profound impact on undermining learning and development:

**P1:** *Ons grootste probleme in ons skole is dat kinders se sosiale en ekonomiese omstandighede is so swak is dat as hulle dié dag skool toe kom,*

*het hulle geen onderbou nie. Die kurrikulum is op so 'n manier opgestel dat daar 'n sekere onderbou moet wees om te kan begin op hulle vlak, en dan val ons kinders heeltemal uit die sisteem uit.*

There is often habitual alcohol use in these learners' homes. This gives rise to many barriers to learning which essentially are invisible.

**P2:** I see the way the grade R's interact with one another. They tend to push one another rather than explain things

As a result, in a single class, teachers are often confronted by learners with a variety of abilities and levels of readiness to learn. Very few teachers have specific training to address these needs and this is further compounded by the limited available resources in schools. This makes it very difficult for teachers to accommodate all learners needs. In such instances:

**P3:** *dit is nie die leerder se skuld nie, maar meer die sisteem.*

However despite the difficult circumstances, learner resilience and some supportive teachers enable some learners to experience degrees of success.

**FG:** *Die resilience van die kinders; hulle vermoë om hulself te 'heal' moet nie onderskat word nie, en partykeer moet mens net erken dat hulle omstandighede nie kan verander nie, maar dat jy wel 'n skool het en mense het wat omgee en ek dink dis die standpunt wat vir my troos gee in hierdie slegte omstandighede.*

- The need for teacher support

In light of subthemes 1 and 2, the participants unanimously agreed that teachers are also in great need of support and care.

**P3:** *Daar moet baie ondersteuning aan onderwysers gegee word en geluister na hulle behoeftes.*

## **Subtheme 2: How participants understand the intention of the education department's inclusive education policies and associated guidelines**

The following three issues came to the fore. These include: the purpose of inclusive education policy; the current translation of policy into practice and barriers to policy implementation.

- The purpose of inclusive education policy

All the participants responded positively to inclusive education policy; White Paper 6 in particular. Their collective view was that the purpose of these policies is essentially to bring about the realisation of inclusive education.

**KI:** White Paper 6 is generally held to be a good document.

**P2:** The inclusive policies are trying to address something that was a problem with the legacy of our past and the system before. There are lots of children who have special needs and who were previously neglected, especially in the coloured and black communities.

- The current translation of policy into practice

In terms of the projected timeline for the implementation of inclusive education, we are now 15 years into the implementation phase of White Paper 6 with relatively little success. Initially 30 education districts across the country were selected for the field testing of White Paper 6. Of the 30 districts nationally, only 3 of the 8 districts in the Western Cape were selected to participate. This field testing which revealed a lot of confusion and uncertainty, highlighted the need for more explanation and mediation of the policy; teacher training; and support in schools.

**KI:** During the field testing, there were very few Districts that tried to fashion the Unit Classes in the model of a resource class where there is not full time placement of learners in these classes as intended. Instead, people asked for special classes and adaptation classes again, and I think that actually set us back a bit.

Ultimately, this confusion has led to the development of Unit Classes which essentially function as special classes within schools rather than as a Resource Class within schools as policy intended.

**KI:** With the right management and support the specialist unit teachers in these Unit Classes could be helping so many more learners and not just the 15 in their class for 5, 6, 7 years.

As things stand currently, the provincial education department is clear about the potential of the Unit Classes as Resource Classes. Also the resources in the Unit

Classes are intended for the use of the whole school, not just the learners in the Unit Classes.

**KI:** When the principals heard this, they were actually quite pleased because here's a resource right in their midst which is not been optimally used.

However, the Inclusive Education Outreach Team's perspective suggests that there is still a long way to go to achieve this. On a scale of 1 – 10, 10 being completely inclusive; the team rated the level of inclusivity of the South African education system between 4 and 6. Their reasons for this rating include:

**FG:** *Die beleid is daar en dit is 'n dokument wat op papier is, maar daar is baie min mense wat weet hoe dit werk en selfs die mense wat in bestuur is.*

The learners are in the schools and the documents are there, but many learners still have to adapt to the school, struggle with the curriculum and struggle with teachers who don't understand their disability.

One team member pointed out that there are significant discrepancies between what has been gazetted as policy and what is really happening on the ground.

**P2:** There's all these very nice ideas and philosophies. Policy makers are trying to improve things, but instead of streamlining and making things more effective, they are making things more cumbersome and complicated.

- Barriers to policy implementation

All the participants accepted that the implementation of effective inclusive education is a long process. It was also clear that there are many barriers to its successful implementation.

An initial stumbling block is the idealistic and sometimes ambiguous nature of the policy documents themselves.

- *Mismatch between inclusive education policies and curriculum demands at national level and Inclusive education policy makes allowances for learners to work and be assessed at the level at which they are optimally able to function regardless of their age and/or grade, while national*

curriculum guidelines and practices require all learners to be taught and assessed with a single system.

**KI:** I don't think the system is quite ready for curriculum differentiation. It has major implications. This needs to be tackled at a national level because the Annual National Assessments are written nationally. That is why we are going to be orientating the curriculum advisors and the assessment coordinators.

- *The time constraints placed on teachers by the demands of the curriculum and the pressure placed on schools to improve their academic results*

**P3:** *Onderwysers kan nie doen wat hulle voel hulle moet doen, soos om leerders te akkommodeer nie. Hulle sal baie graag wil. Almal het onderwys gaan swot om tog 'n verskil te maak, maar daardie verskil word in die agtergrond geskuif, want onderwysers word gedruk vir tyd en vir resultate.*

- *The administrative burden created by the new policies*

**P2:** Teachers would rather push a child onto the next grade. The paperwork to be completed for a child to repeat a grade is too much. Teachers feel that way because they feel overburdened.

- *Lack of systemic thinking*

The whole system needs to buy into the idea of inclusive education. It's not about a part of the system; it's about the whole system changing.

Participants agreed that there is generally limited knowledge of policy content within the district:

**P1:** *Die gebrek aan kennis op die oomblik is ook soms 'n rede hoekom mense nie ten volle inklusiwiteit kan van gebruik maak nie.*

- *Insufficient teacher training*

**FG:** *Baie onderwysers sê: 'Ons is nie soos julle opgelei om met kinders te werk wat probleme het nie. Ons het geleer hoe om skool te gee'.*

- *Teacher attitudes towards the new policy documents*

**P3:** *Die onderwysers voel oorweldig deur hierdie dokumente, want hulle sien dit as nog werk.*

Three other significant barriers noted by participants include:

- *High learner teacher ratios*

**P1:** *As 'n mens net na die getal kyk, hoe is dit vir een persoon moontlik om al daardie goeters te doen.*

- *The substantial environmental disadvantage with which many learners in rural areas start their formal schooling*

**FG:** *Dis sosiale- en ekonomiese probleme wat 'n impak maak op die kind se vordering en dan kom ons om ondersteuning te bied, maar ons raak glad nie aan enige huisomstandighede nie, ons raak net aan die skool.*

- *Difficulty accessing support and resources*

**P2:** The Education Department's professionals are very few and are not able to come to the schools very often. The schools we work with don't have the means to access other professionals that are not part of the Education Department.

### **Subtheme 3: Policy that informs understanding and implementation of inclusive education**

There were three documents that participants felt were key: White Paper 6; Responding to Learner Diversity in the Classroom through Curriculum Assessment Policy Statements; and Care and Support for Teaching and Learning. A further issue discussed included how participants use the above policies to inform their practice.

- White Paper 6

All three participants are the most familiar with White Paper 6.

**P3:** *Witskrif 6, ek ken hom die beste en ek gebruik hom maar die meeste.*

- Responding to Learner Diversity in the Classroom through CAPS

Participants are aware of the significance of the above policy and how it is intended to support learner diversity; and that curriculum advisers do not appear to be required to take it seriously.

**P3:** *As ons met die dokumente na die onderwysers toe gaan, sê die onderwysers dis wonderlik en als; maar die kurrikulum mense stem nie saam nie. Vir hulle bestaan die dokument soos half nie.*

- Care and Support for Teaching and Learning

According to the provincial department, fostering a culture that is fundamentally about care and support within schools will greatly contribute to understanding what it means to be an inclusive school.

**KI:** It is not only about academics, it is also about care and support in creating an inclusive environment. If a school is caring and supportive results should naturally improve.

- Praxis: how policy informs practice

In spite of the uneven understanding of the policies in their district, the participants view the above policies as an important reference to guide and support the work they do. White Paper 6 has helped the team develop their thinking and make the necessary paradigm shift for working in more inclusive ways.

**P3:** *Witskrif 6 gee vir my raad oor hoe mens leerders en onderwysers moet benader en watse raad jy vir onderwysers kan gee oor leerders in hul klasse.*

#### 4.4.2. Theme 2: Participants' understanding of Inclusive Education Outreach Teams

Only one subtheme emerged from the above, but in the process various issues were highlighted.

### **Subtheme 1: The contribution Inclusive Education Outreach Teams can make towards building an inclusive education system in our country**

The issues that evolved out of the above included: evolution of the Inclusive Education Outreach Teams; team members' expectations of and subsequent experience of their work and advocates for inclusion.

- Evolution of the Inclusive Education Outreach Teams

The concept of Inclusive Education Outreach Teams is a particular interpretation of White Paper 6 and the subsequent Guidelines to Special School Resource Centres, unique to the Western Cape. With the Western Cape Province pioneering the way, no guidelines currently exist which specifically outline how these teams should work. Rather, the province's strategy appears to be to allow for different interpretations of the policy, to allow for different implementation strategies, and then to draw on these to identify best practices at a later specified time.

**KI:** What we are doing is gathering information of what the different inclusive Education Teams have been doing over the last three years and we're going to put it together in a provincial document.

Furthermore the evolution of the Outreach Teams appears to have come out of the policy intention to strengthen special school resource centres.

**KI:** The Inclusive Education Outreach Team posts were created as an intent to strengthen special schools for their outreach role.

- Team members' expectations and subsequent experience of their work

Team members made it clear that on applying for their particular posts they either did not know what to expect of the job; were not briefed, inducted into, or trained in the intentions and practices of inclusive education and that the reality of the job was very different from what they anticipated.

**P1:** *Regtig niemand het vir my gesê nie; ek het maar net uitgeluister wat die ander distrik mense doen. Ek was nooit georiënteerd nie. Ek het net self aangeneem dit is wat ek moet doen. Ek was in die water gegooi en ek het geswem.*

- Advocates for inclusion

On the one hand, the province clearly sees the Inclusive Education Outreach Team's function as one of developing the capacity of schools to be inclusive:

**KI:** The Inclusive Education Outreach Teams are there to make schools inclusive. This may include giving a moderate level of support to the learners and doing some assessments if necessary, but their role is essentially one of capacity building for inclusion in schools. These teams are part of the special school resource centres, a resource which can perform the outreach role.

While, on the other hand, the Inclusive Education Outreach Team feels in the face of limited systemic support for inclusion at district level, instead of being able to practically help develop inclusive schools, the best they feel they can do within the district is to advocate for inclusion.

**P1:** *Dit is die boodskap wat ons uitstuur aan die skole waar ons werk oor inklusiewe onderwys en dat ons dit propageer orals; dat ons vir skole wys hoe inklusiewe onderwys kan werk.*

#### 4.4.3. Theme 3: Participants' perspectives on the practical implementation of inclusive education

From the above perspectives three subthemes emerged:

##### **Subtheme 1: Team's description of their role and responsibilities**

Out of the above the following two issues arose: fixing versus providing support, and the team's perception that the schools have of their (the team's) role and responsibilities

- Fixing versus providing support

**FG:** The teachers feel hopeless because we cannot fix things and we don't have the answers. So ons moet 'n ander beskrywing gee van wat ons doen. We support; uplift, collaborate . . .

- The team's perception that the schools have of their (the team's) role and responsibilities

The schools view the team as supportive and empathetic of their struggles, but it would also seem that the team feels they do not have the necessary authority to be able to conduct their work effectively.

**P3:** Being there and understanding; we are a huge support system for teachers. They don't get a lot of support.

**FG:** We don't carry enough weight and authority to make the recommendations and support we offer, work. We have to get people from OBOS [Onderwysbestuur-en-ontwikkelingsentrum] to come and endorse what we say.

## **Subtheme 2: How the team understands their role and responsibilities**

Five points for discussion emerged out of the above: a support service; Inclusive Education Outreach Teams within an inclusive education system; the team as more than a multi-disciplinary team, intersectoral collaboration and building partnerships.

- A support service

The support offered to schools is primarily needs driven.

**P2:** We get a referral and then we will go and investigate. The team will then assess and provide support depending on the need.

Wherever possible the team tries to work systemically; looking for ways to extend the necessary support beyond just the individual learner.

**FG:** We look at the learner's support system and what the school has to offer. In some cases we manage to involve the parents. They come to the schools and are involved as well.

However, the context in which many of the schools function and the communities in which many of the learners live, pose many challenges to working systemically.

**P1:** *By party skole maak hulle gebruik van dit wat rondom hulle is, die hulpbronne en die gemeenskap en so, maar ander skole maak glad nie gebruik daarvan nie en mens sien die verskil.*

**FG:** *En soms waar die grootste probleem vandaan kom het jy nie beheer oor nie as onderwyser of selfs as ons inkom.*

In light of the above, some debate arose around how this support should be provided, specifically the issue of direct versus indirect service.

**P2:** There will always be children in every population who will need direct intervention. There is always conflict between direct and indirect intervention because if you give the one you don't really have time for the other. It frustrates me a lot.

Team members also emphasised that to maximise the effectiveness of the support they offer, it is important to facilitate and model the specific support strategies for learners experiencing barriers to learning and wherever possible to integrate such support within the curriculum.

**P3:** *We had an inligtingsessie met die onderwysers en ons het vir hulle gewys hoe dit link met die kurrikulum, want dit help nie om net te praat nie. Dit moet actually sigbaar wees sodat mens dit kan sien werk.*

The type of support offered to schools includes:

- *Preventative work*

**FG:** *Partykeer is ons in 'n rol waar ons nog nie die probleem het nie, maar dit is so bietjie voorkomend.*

- *Psycho-education*

**FG:** *Sy doen dit baie waar sy vir kinders vertel van dwelms en gevare van vroeg swangerskappe en sulke goed.*

- *Providing guidance and information*

**P3:** *So dit is professionele kennis wat ons partykeer vir die mense gee sodat hulle die probleem beter kan verstaan.*

- *Designing intervention programmes*

**FG:** *Ons doen programme in die graad R klas, partykeers graad 1 ook, om die kinders te stimuleer.*

- *Creating awareness of available resources*

**FG:** *Ons gaan ook na die skole toe en maak hulle bewus van die bronne waarvan hulle gebruik kan maak.*

- *Developing knowledge of inclusive education policy*

**P1:** *Ek het beleidsdokumente met skoolpersoneel al bespreek.*

- *Encouraging community involvement*

**FG:** *Ons trek gemeenskappe om betrokke te raak by die skole.*

In this way the team believes that teachers are more likely to feel that the support offered is meaningful and helpful.

However to be able to provide this kind of support, the team were very clear about the need to build rapport.

**P2:** *I never judge teachers. If I sense a teacher is feeling threatened I just say; 'I know you have a lot of work and I'm here to help and not to make it harder; we have this plan, but we are not sure if it is going to work and we would like you to help us?'*

In this way it becomes possible to build the kind of trust and empathy the team believes is critical to be able to work effectively in schools.

**P1:** *Vertroue is die grootste ingredient en dit vat lank om te wen. Jy kan net 'n impak maak op 'n skool as jy die vertroue het, want sodra jy die vertroue het kan jy agterkom wat regtig die behoefte is.*

To establish this level of trust requires a particular set of skills and interpersonal disposition.

**P1:** *Om vertroue te bou moet jy baie goeie communication skills hê, mensevaardighede hê, jy moet vriendelik wees en jy moet mense kan verstaan.*

It is also important for the team to be reflective of their practice and to develop an action research, participatory approach to the support they offer.

**P3:** *Ek werk met die onderwyseres met die leerders wat uitvalle toon en dan gee ek vir haar raad. Later gaan ek terug om te hoor of dit gewerk het en waar ons dan weer verder kan gaan.*

- Inclusive Education Outreach Teams within an inclusive education system

In spite of not being briefed, orientated to or trained in inclusive education, team members confirmed that they had for the first time, recently received job descriptions for their individual disciplines. Also the province feels that it has indeed helped the Inclusive Education Outreach Teams.

**KI:** We got all of the Inclusive Education Outreach Teams together and explained to them what their role was in terms of White Paper 6. I don't want to generalise because as all the Inclusive Education Outreach Teams work differently, but it was for the first time that there were clear directions about what we meant by full-service/inclusive schools and then how these teams should support these schools.

However team members indicated they were under the impression that these job descriptions are working documents which to date have not been formally finalised. In addition it is only the psychologist's job description which is for an Inclusive Education Outreach Team post based at a special school resource centre. Those for the Occupational Therapist and Learning Support Educator are for Inclusive Education Outreach Team posts based at special care centres.

**FG:** When I started there were no job descriptions. The job descriptions we received, according to my knowledge are still in draft form.

The job description I was sent is for a therapist in a special care centre.

With the above in mind and the knowledge that the Inclusive Education Outreach Teams are charting relatively unpioneered territory, confusion and uncertainty abounds.

**P1:** *'n Tydtjie moet gevat word vir introduction sodat hierdie spanne meer vlot en effektief kan werk. Almal het net self besluit wat hulle dink die*

*inklusiewe onderwysspan se werke is. Dit gebeur baie as ons kom by skole en baie keer ook weet die skole nie wie ons is en wat ons daar kom doen nie.*

In an effort to ascertain how the team understands its role within the inclusive education structures of their particular district, the members were asked to graphically present (Appendix H) their understanding.

This diagram adds credibility to the above whilst also highlighting some of the dynamics at play which significantly colour the functioning of this particular Inclusive Education Outreach Team.

It was agreed that every level of the WCED influences the other and that this influence, although bi-directional, tends to be more heavily weighted from the top downwards and is generally perceived/depicted as negative.

Furthermore, the quality and level of communication experienced between team members and their direct line managers at the district office indicates that it is lacking. Team members attribute this to feeling that they do not have the support of the district office and also experience their line managers as unapproachable.

**FG:** There is a relationship, but it is not effective. They decide things that are official which do not get communicated to us. So, often when we go into schools, we do things in conflict to what has been decided.

However it also emerged that the OBOS is stressed, under-resourced and under pressure to deliver support to the schools within the district. During the Focus Group Interview the district office was likened to an octopus with many tentacles; each forming a link with every school in the district.

**FG:** *Buitekant my prentjie kyk ek na die OBOS. Kyk al die load wat die OBOS moet dra. So hulle dra ook swaar.*

In addition, these tentacles (links) represented for the team, the various components which constitute each of the five circuit teams they work across and the 'judgement' that often accompanies them [the circuit team members] into schools.

The various components of each circuit team tend to work in silos and the demands they place on the Inclusive Education Outreach Team differ from the one circuit team to the other. This has a significant impact on the Inclusive Education Outreach Team's capacity to function effectively.

**FG:** Can you see that we are pulled apart in different directions?

Added to this, the schools are often at the receiving end of mixed messages, not only in terms of policy mandates, but also in terms of the role and responsibilities of the Inclusive Education Outreach Team. The team feel the schools and the circuit teams perceive them as having no real authority to operate in anything other than a supportive role within the parameters decided upon by the circuit teams.

**FG:** Teachers don't believe us because we're only the people who provide support. We don't carry the authority for teachers to believe that what we recommend is required by policy.

However amidst all this, the team were clear in their understanding of their role as the outreach of the Special School Resource Centre;

**FG:** *Ons is die link tussen die bronskool en die voldiensskole; ons is heel deur; those are all our schools . . .*

The support the team offer focuses fundamentally on the full-service schools.

**FG:** *Wat ons oordra moet die voldiensskole oordra na die hoofstroom skole, maar dit gebeur nie.*

- More than a multi-disciplinary team: crossing the picket line

It is clear that the team operates as a multi-disciplinary team.

**P3:** *We do work together. Ons bespreek alles saam en kyk watse inset elkeen van ons kan lewer by 'n seker leerder.*

Each team member also has qualifications and/or has undergone further professional development that overlaps two or more disciplines. Refer to table 3.2 above. All three team members felt that this was a positive contribution to the functioning of the team.

**P2:** In addition to my degree, a diploma in remedial teaching has helped me understand the gap that often occurs between early development and the actual formal learning in the learners referred to me for therapy.

Furthermore, some of the ways in which the team works could also be described as inter-disciplinary and even trans-disciplinary.

**P2:** To address the vast needs of our country we can't be exclusively one thing; we have to share expertise and use what we learn from one another. Because we are in a team we can work in this way. We can consult with each other.

- Intersectoral collaboration

Collaboration, not only between team members, but also with professionals from other sectors, can help put together a more comprehensive picture of a specific learner and/or situation.

**P1:** *Ek het 'n subjektiewe prentjie vanuit my dissipline agtergrond, maar wat altyd duidelik word as ons daaroor praat, dan kom daar altyd 'n groter prentjie. Soms moet ons mense buite ons span inkry sodat ons 'n beter besluit kan neem.*

These 'people outside' of the team include social workers from the Department of Social Development and occupational therapists from the clinics in the communities surrounding the schools as well as specifically skilled community members and even learners from the Unit Classes.

**P1:** *Ek het met die onderwyser gepraat en ons het agtergekom ons kan mense van maatskappye kry wat vaardighede vir die kinders kan aanleer.*

**P3:** *Ek het probeer om die eenheidsklas leerders meer betrokke te maak deurdat die skool nie hulpbronne het nie. Hierdie leerders het hulpbronne vir die graad 1 onderwysers gemaak. Hulle het begin werk as klas assistente vir die graad 1 juffrouens wat altyd so oorweldig voel met al die leerders in hul klasse en veral met die leerders wat nie skoolgereed is nie.*

- Building partnerships

To be effective it is vital to build partnerships with the schools and communities.

**P3:** *Spanwerk is goed by enige skool. So as jy daar 'n span met die onderwysers en ouers kan vorm kan julle lekker saam werk.*

Furthermore these partnerships need to be cognisant of the fact that teachers too, bring valuable expertise that can contribute significantly towards the positive outcome of a specific difficulty or problem.

**P2:** Teachers are also important. They have the children we work with in their classes so we need their help because we are not in the classroom every day like they are.

### **Subtheme 3: Team members' experience of the work they do**

Three points came to the fore while exploring the above: the dynamic nature of the work; coming full circle and debriefing.

- Dynamic work

**FG:** *My werk bestaan uit verskillende tipe dimensies. Nie een dag is dieselfde nie, so die werk is exciting.*

**P1:** *Ek dink ek het geblossom deur die kennis wat ek opgedoen het asook die verhoudinge wat ek gebou het. Ek weet baie mense voel in hierdie werk dat hulle glad nie 'n verskil maak nie, maar as ek net daardie een onderwyser kry wat beginne glo het dat onderwys is vir haar, dan voel ek beter of ek sien daardie kind wat in die regte rigting gewys word en 'n beter lewe kan maak vir homself, daai is die tipe goeters waaraan ek uitgesien het.*

- Coming full circle

Team members also felt that support and learning is bi-directional; that the support they offer to schools and the knowledge they share often comes full circle.

**P3:** The teachers you work with and how you can support them and how they support you and how you can share your knowledge and they share yours.

- Debriefing

The team feel working within a team context is an important aspect of their work.

**P2:** The things we deal with are really overwhelming and the time we're in the car travelling we can talk about things that happened; that is a huge benefit. One shouldn't do this work on your own.

#### 4.4.4. Theme 4: Participants' perspectives on the challenges and successes they have experienced

Three subthemes came to the fore. They include:

##### **Subtheme 1: Challenges experienced by the team**

The challenges experienced include: logistical challenges; intrapersonal challenges; interpersonal challenges; systemic challenges; fragmented service delivery; psychometric assessment and tension between inclusive education policy and pressure to improve academic results.

- Logistical challenges

Various logistical challenges impact on the sustainability and continuity of the team's capacity to provide support. These include the number of schools the team has been mandated to serve as well as the long distances the team is required to travel between schools. Essentially this means that the team is not able to visit each school as regularly as they feel they should.

**P1:** *Ons span is die enigste span wat 14 skole het. Die ander spanne wat my kennis is het 4 of 5, seker 6 skole op die meeste. Hoe kan jy effektief werk as jy nie gereeld genoeg kan opvolg nie? Partykeers het ek tog al werk laat gaan omdat ek weet dit gaan nie effektief wees om aan te gaan nie.*

Other logistical challenges include the high staff turn-over since the team's inception as well as the fact that once at a school, team members often do not have a suitable venue in which to work.

**P1:** *Omdat die span so baie verander, toe ons net eenkeer na die skool weer toe gaan, toe weet die skool glad nie wie ons is nie.*

**P2:** There is often not a place to work. There is just no room; you have to be outside. Carrying all the stuff, I think my arms are going to fall off before I'm sixty.

- Intrapersonal challenges

It is clear that this type of work takes an emotional toll on team members.

**FG:** *Die werk is verskriklik emosioneel draining. Ons werk met so baie mense. Dit is harde werk; al die verhoudings 'n mens moet opbou.*

- Interpersonal challenges

Many of the challenges the team experience have very little, if anything, to do with their actual work, but instead are much more intricately entwined in the dynamics which play out between people.

**P1:** *Die probleme het soms niks te doen met die werk self nie en dit is in 'n nutshell my opinie van inklusiewe onderwys. Die probleme gaan oor die min kommunikasie, vertroue, samewerking en kollaborasie.*

The team feels that the dynamics between the various disciplines (psychology, learning support and occupational therapy) at district level are negatively influenced by high levels of professional jealousy.

**FG:** There is mistrust and under-estimating.

The team agreed that the above dynamic is directly linked to the organisational culture of the district and how this working climate filters its way down to grassroots.

**P1:** *Daar is verskriklike baie konflik tussen die distrik mense; hulle werk teen mekaar; daar is geen kollaborasie nie en as ek kyk na die inklusiewe onderwysspan nê, affekteer dit die spanlede se samewerking ook.*

However team members reported that they are able to work well together.

**P1:** *Daar is 'n redelike goeie dinamika in ons span omdat ons al drie mense is wat mekaar se kennis binne-in in spesifieke area respekteer en waardeer en ons weet dat ons van mekaar kan gebruik maak.*

- Systemic challenges

However many of the challenges the team experience are beyond their capacity to control. These challenges include:

- *The poor socio-economics of the communities and schools in which the team work*  
**P3:** *Ons probeer so hard om 'n verskil te maak en dan gaan dit net nêrens verder nie, want daar is geen geld of genoeg hulpbronne nie.*
  
- *Lack of human resources*  
**P1:** *Daar is te min teams vir te veel skole.*
  
- *Interpretation of the concept of resource centres [currently the Unit Classes] at the full-service schools*  
**P3:** *By skole is hierdie eenheidsklasse heel op sy eie afgesonder en die kinders voel nie deel van die skool nie.*
  
- *Working across a number of circuits within the district*  
**FG:** *We don't work with one psychologist [one learning support advisor etc.] we work with 5. It can be very confusing.*
  
- *Having to be accountable to a number of different role players*  
**FG:** *Everyone (each of the various components within each of the 5 circuit teams) feels that we have to report directly to them about what we do.*
  
- *The lack of a common understanding as to the role and responsibilities of the Inclusive Education Outreach Team*  
**P1:** *Almal het net besluit (hulle eie idees van) wat hulle dink die inklusiewe onderwysspan se werk is. Die heeltyd moet ons verduidelik wat ons doen. Jy kan dink aan watter tyd ons al alles gespandeer het om te verduidelik wat ons doen en wie ons is; oor en oor.*
  
- *Post level and accompanying salaries*  
Team members agree that for the same post level and associated salary they could have a less stressful job by being based in only one school.  
**FG:** *It is not even about the money; it's just about the respect and about communication. I think it will improve the collaboration between*

the teams [Inclusive Education Outreach Team and the circuit teams] if our post levels and salaries are increased. We do more work [than school-based educators]. We have knowledge of our disciplines and we also gain a lot of from working at many different schools.

- Fragmented service delivery

The team agreed that there is little communication and absolutely no collaboration between themselves and the circuit teams even though they work in the same schools. The result is fragmented, unsustainable service delivery.

*P1: Daar is geen kommunikasie tussen ons nie en dan trap ons op mekaar se tone. Jy is nie eers bewus daarvan nie en dan is daar baie keer konflik.*

- Psychometric assessment of learners

One team member in particular questioned the validity of the current IQ assessment tools used to make decisions about learners from rural, disadvantaged contexts.

*P1: Die konteks waarvan die kinders wat ek mee werk, is nie geskik vir die toets [SSAIS-R – intelligence test].*

- Tension between inclusive education policy and the pressure to improve academic results

**KI:** Even with the ANAs [Annual National Assessments] the children can't keep the pace; they are a burden to the teacher. We need to think about something (like a value-added assessment system) otherwise schools are going to be reluctant to differentiate the curriculum.

## **Subtheme 2: Successful resolution to some of the these challenges**

Various ways the team have tackled the above challenges have required: developing a particular working attitude; selecting focus schools; accessing community assets; working indirectly; working across professions; advocacy of policy; building partnerships and fostering collaboration; reflection on one's own practice and garnering support from colleagues and the Resource Centre. Moreover, the examples of best practice (in their opinion) in the next section attest to this.

- Developing a particular working attitude

**P2:** We have far too many cases and there are too many needs we can't meet, but what helps is to think innovatively.

**FG:** Every day, there are obstacles, one should be overwhelmed, but with perseverance and patience a lot is possible.

- Selecting focus schools

Certain team members decided the only way to effectively manage the sheer volume of support needed, was to select from the 14 schools allocated, those schools where they felt the need for support was greatest. The team's response to selecting these focus schools came more out of a school's willingness to engage with the team and the support they had to offer.

**P1:** *Ek het besluit dat ek na sekere skole toe baie meer gaan as ander skole. Ek het sommer self besluit waar ek dink die grootste need is. Ek het gevoel dis hoe ek my werk meer effektief kan doen.*

- Accessing community assets

**P1:** *In ons landelike gebiede het die mense nie altyd kennis van wat in hulle gemeenskap is, waarvan hulle klaar kan gebruik maak voordat hulle na ons toe kom. Om my werk ligter te maak dan sal ek sê: 'Weet jy daar by die kliniek is 'n taal- en spraakterapeut, daar is 'n OT wat sulke tipe dinge kan doen of selfs net iemand by die ACVV (Afrikaanse Christelike Vroue Vereniging), is daar, vir berading; gaan sien die kerk se beradingsdienste'.*

- Working indirectly

**P3:** *I see the teachers after school vir 'n werkwinkel of net 'n informele inligtingsessie, want ek dink meeste van die onderwysers het dieselfde uitvalle en probleme en dan kan hulle ook nog bydraes lewer.*

- Working across professions

**P2:** We are trying to extend our services. Say for instance I couldn't work with the grade 1's, and the LSE didn't work with the grade R's, we would share some of our input, so the grade R's will get a bit of learning support and the grade 1's will get a bit of occupational therapy.

- Advocacy of policy  
*P3: Die leierskapseminaar waar ons skoolhoofde bymekaar kry en aan hulle die dokumente verduidelik.*
- Establishing partnerships and fostering collaboration  
*P3: Die leierskapseminaar was goed, want na die tyd kon mens by die skole sien dat skoolhoofde meer oop is vir die idee van inklusiewe onderwys.*
- Reflection on own practice

In the selection of focus schools one team member admitted to not having any real set of selection criteria:

*P2: In hindsight I should have; one of them is the bigger the school is, the more difficult it is to get to all the teachers. We also tried to do pre- and post evaluations so we could see if the programme was effective.*

- Garnering support from colleagues and the Resource Centre

The team acknowledged making some use of the special school's resources e.g. the audiologist, speech and language therapist as well as making use of one another's expertise while appreciating the support of the resource centre which provides the team with an enabling base from which to conduct their outreach work.

*P3: The special school resource centre we are at; ons skoolhoof is baie supporting and he will follow-up battles with us.*

### **Subtheme 3: Examples of best practice**

Some of the examples of best practice have already been alluded to previously. They include: production of activity boxes; development of a Grade R stimulation programme; conversion of a Unit Class into an 'entrepreneurial' type class; leadership exchange seminar; use of the special school resource centre resources and classroom intervention within the curriculum framework.

- Production of activity boxes by the Unit Class learners for Grade 1 learners struggling to work at Grade level

**P3:** *Ons het die kurrikulum ingevat en dit prakties gaan maak. Ons het inligtingsessie met die onderwysers gehad en vir hulle gewys hoe mens 6 activity boxes in jou klas kan hê en hoe jy elke dag hierdie boks kan roteer tussen die leerders en hoe hierdie leerders dan besig is en dan kan die onderwyser met die res van die klas aangaan. Van daar het ons na die eenheidsklas toe gegaan en vir kinders die materiaal gaan wys sodat hulle dit self kan maak.*

- Development of a Grade R stimulation programme
  - P2:** The focus of our programme was sensory integration, gross and fine motor coordination.
- Conversion of a Unit Class into an 'entrepreneurial' type class
  - P1:** *Een skool het twee eenheidsklasse. Net die een word deur die WKOD geborg en die ander het geensins apparaat gehad. Ek het eerste met die juffrou gepraat en en dan met my span en ons het die idee gekry dat 'n mens gemeenskappe kan betrek om vaardighede vir die leerders aan te leer en toe oor 'n typerk van 'n paar maande was die entrepreneuriesklas geskep.*
- Leadership Exchange Seminar with principals from the full-service schools
  - P1:** *Die hoofde het met mekaar gepraat oor dinge wat by hul skole werk.*
- Use of the Special School Resource Centre resources
  - P1:** *Ons het die taal- en spraakterapeut gevra om saam met ons uit te ry.*
- Classroom intervention within the curriculum framework
  - FG:** What works for teachers is if you can fit the support/intervention within the curriculum.

#### **4.4.5. Capacity building of Inclusive Education Outreach Teams**

Two themes arose. They include:

##### **Subtheme 1: Recommendations for the future of Inclusive Education Outreach Teams**

The team made a number of recommendations. These included: guidelines for Inclusive Education Outreach Teams; facilitating how Inclusive Education Outreach Teams fit within an inclusive education system; building common understandings; inclusion of additional expertise within Inclusive Education Outreach Teams; professional development in terms of the Resource Centre's category of disability; creating a work space at each school for the team; reduction in the number of schools; regular human resource development; regular feedback in terms of decisions made at district level; greater collaboration and good leadership.

- Guidelines for Inclusive Education Outreach Teams

**P1:** *Dit sal actually great wees as daar guidelines is vir die Inclusive Education Teams. In daardie guideline wil ek onderwerpe hê soos die samewerking met die bronneseentrum en die voldiensskole; die samewerking met IO spanne en die Distrik; asook die breë gemeenskap van die skole en nie-winsgewende organisasies maatskappye en dan miskien 'n onderwerp soos Inklusiewe Onderwysspanne in landelike gebiede, Inklusiewe Onderwysspanne in die stad.*

- Facilitating an understanding of how Inclusive Education Teams fit within an inclusive education system

**P1:** *As daar 'n oriëntering kon gewees het om vir mense binne die SLES kringe te sê julle gaan soms agterkom dat julle dieselfde doel het, julle moet nou met mekaar kommunikeer; kennis uitruil, bekend maak met mekaar, en saam werk.*

- Building common understandings

**P3:** *As die distrik harder baklei vir Kurrikulum om saam met ons te wees by die polities en dieselfde storie te praat, want ons ondervind so baie moeilikheid en ons kan nie eintlik ons werk verrig en die policy uitleef nie.*

- Inclusion of additional expertise within the Inclusive Education Outreach Teams

**P2:** We should think about including a speech therapist in the team. Developmentally, children have problems with their physical development and/or their mental development and sometimes they have problems with

their language development. Many of the children I see have a language delays as well.

- Professional development in terms of the Resource Centre's category of disability

**FG:** *Volgens die dokumente moet ons ook eintlik mense wees wat kenners is in die hulpbronsentrum se spesialiteit en nie een van ons is eintlik daar nie. Dit sal ons 'n beter funksionele span maak.*

- Creating a 'working space' at each school for the team

**P2:** It would have been so much nicer if we had a therapy place; it would have been lovely to have a store room and enough money to leave things at schools. These things could then be used by the teachers.

- Reduction in number of schools

**P1:** *As die plan is om Inklusiewe Onderwys uit te brei voel ek daar is te min teams vir te veel skole.*

The team conclude the benefits of reducing the number of schools include:

**P1:** *Verhoudingsbou sal dan meer effektief wees en omdat ek hulle gereeld sal sien, sal my dienste meer kontinuïteit hê.*

- Regular human resource development training

**P3:** *Daardie sessies waar mens met ander IO spanne bymekaar kom moet miskien meer gereeld wees en daar moet ook 'n meer duidelikheid eensetting wees van wat van die spanne verwag word.*

- Regular feedback in terms of decisions made at district level

**FG:** The circuit teams and SLES don't have to invite us to all their meetings. They can send us the minutes and then it is our responsibility to make sure that we know what is going on.

- Greater collaboration between the district, specifically the SLES component and the team as well as across the various disciplines

**FG:** *As ons saam sit sodat ons kan besluit, miskien deur die vorige jaar se behoefte, watter tipe goed ons kan saam doen. Ons kan almal se sterkpunte en kennisse saam vat om iets beter saam te stel.*

- Good leadership

In an activity during the focus group interview a snake was used to represent the back biting and mistrust the team members experience in relation to their communication difficulties with the district.

**FG:** Good leadership will help by setting boundaries and facilitate communication. If people know exactly what is expected of them they wouldn't cross the lines. Most of the trouble that has occurred is because we didn't know.

## **Subtheme 2: Participants' perspectives on capacity building of education support services**

The team members were unanimous in their appreciation of the human resource development training they had experienced and the need for it to be a regular occurrence.

**P1:** *The most important part was wanneer ons vir die ander spanne gevra het, wat doen julle; hoe doen julle dit, wat werk vir julle?*

Further recommendations included: collaboration with universities in terms of training potential future Inclusive Education Outreach Team members; development of an operation manual; direct support from the district; team building; future professional development needs and better understanding of the role and responsibilities of curriculum and learning support advisors.

- Collaboration with universities in terms of training potential future Inclusive Education Outreach Team members

**KI:** In the future training of all these specialists we envisage laying the groundwork for the kind of work that they will be doing. We will do in-service training once they enter our service.

- Development of an operation manual

**KI:** We are busy developing a manual that will give a framework for the operation of the teams and we've also done a survey of the teams' training needs. This will guide us in terms of in-service training for these teams.

- Direct support from the District

**FG:** I need my discipline head to give more structure as to what I am expected to do and I need, when it is decided to draw up programmes, to either be included or told what I am responsible for

- Team Building

**FG:** *There is a need for team building because people have different strengths, people have different ideas, en dit kan baie probleme veroorsaak.*

- Future professional development needs

- Training around physical disabilities;
- Knowledge of the different aids/ assistive devices available;
- Therapeutic listening;
- Workshops with other learning support educators which explores language, specifically isiXhosa, as a barrier to learning and helping these learners to be able to read and write;
- Ways to address specific maths difficulties;
- Alternative ways of assessing learner potential;

**P1:** *Ek sal meer kennis sal wil hê oor testing; more than just the SSAIS. Wat ek persoonlik voel, die SSAIS kan nie regtig die afsnypunt vir alle probleme wees nie.*

- Better understanding of the role and responsibilities of curriculum and learning support advisors

**P1:** *Dit sal my baie help en dinge makliker maak as ek meer weet van wat kurrikulum doen; wat hulle rol is en wat hulle rol saam met my is.*

#### 4.5. Summary and conclusion

In this chapter data collected via individual interviews and a single focus group interview has been presented in order to explore participants' understanding of the issues addressed by the research questions. This has been done against the backdrop of the policy analysis included in Chapter 2.

In the next chapter, participants' responses will be analysed and organised into themes and sub-themes in terms of what they reveal about their understandings of inclusive education and its implementation by Inclusive Education Outreach Teams. Recommendations intended to facilitate the interpretation and implementation of inclusive education policies and guidelines so that Inclusive Education Outreach Teams understand their role within an inclusive education system and can more efficiently carry out their responsibilities, will be proposed.

# Chapter 5

## Research Discussion

*'On the fifth day, which was a Sunday, it rained very hard. I like it when it rains hard. It sounds like white noise everywhere, which is like silence but not empty.'*

Haddon, 2004, 103

### 5.1. Introduction

Looking beyond the 'white noise' which like silence may seem empty at first, the researcher discovers a combination of all of the different frequencies of sound; the various perspectives one Inclusive Education Outreach Team in one rural education district of the Western Cape province, have in terms of their roles and responsibilities. In Chapter 4 the perspectives of the team members as well as those of a crucial key informant in inclusive education were presented using thematic analysis. This is a relatively straight forward method of data analysis, well suited to a novice researcher (Braun & Clarke, 2006). In addition, Appendices K, L and M are examples which clearly illustrate, step by step, the above process of data analysis. In this way it is hoped to ensure the integrity and soundness of this research.

In Chapter 5 the intention is to transition from each individual's perspectives towards an encapsulation of the understood role and responsibilities of this particular rural Inclusive Education Outreach Team. This discussion is presented against the backdrop of the policy that frames the thinking and intentions of inclusive education in South Africa, and viewed through the lens of Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems model. It is through the acknowledgement of the role of systems surrounding people, systems related to place, history and culture, borrowed initially from understandings of Bronfenbrenner's ecology of human development, that this research assumes a community psychology approach to recommending the implementation of education support services (including Inclusive Education Outreach Teams), policy and practice.

## 5.2. How theory and policy converge: Interpretations of inclusive education

South African education policy has developed its own distinctive brand of inclusive education born out of the country's unique past and evolving within a new national, political context. However, it is clear from chapter 2's review of current theory on inclusive education as well as careful appraisal of existing inclusive education policy and associated guidelines, that there are common threads of understanding of inclusive education. These threads are drawn together in the summary below.

Both theory and South African inclusive education policies:

1. Embrace the notion that inclusion is fundamentally about creating egalitarian societies based on the principles of human rights and social justice. Specific to the South African context, however, is the primacy of the ideas of social integration, equitable access and redress.
2. Advocate for or imply a multidimensional change process in order to enable schools to become inclusive places of learning and development. In this way the theory and policy are able to place the challenges facing education, its support services as well as inclusive education policy development and implementation, into context.
3. Propose a community psychology approach to understanding and responding to schools and the barriers to learning learners may encounter.
4. Promote and embrace the values and assumptions of empowerment, prevention, health promotion, intersectorial collaboration and, cultural reality and diversity.
5. Acknowledge that education support provision needs to be a systemic endeavour which requires a significant reconceptualisation of the role and responsibilities of education support providers. Such reconceptualisation needs to include advocacy, lobbying, consultation, community mobilisation and networking, as well as policy development.

The fact that current inclusive education policies and the various associated guidelines are based on sound theoretical understandings, bodes well for the future of inclusive education in South Africa. However there needs to be a significantly more determined

effort to shift the discourse on inclusive education from an explanation as to why this approach should be embraced, to one that focuses on how it can be successfully implemented. This is by far one of the greatest challenges facing education; particularly for a country like South Africa which needs to heal and redress the atrocities of its past. Furthermore the divide between policy and practice can largely be attributed to two significant factors:

1. A lack of clarity in policy and associated guideline documents about the goals of inclusive education and how they can be achieved;
2. The poor implementation of policies due to a lack of both systemic support and resources.

Given this situation, the question we are left wrestling with, is how do we translate the philosophy and vision of inclusive education policy into practice? For this reason, this research focuses on the challenges of the practical, day-to-day implementation of inclusive education, which includes the reconceptualisation of the role and responsibilities of education support providers such as Inclusive Education Outreach Teams. The discussion which follows will highlight this.

### **5.3. Policy expectations: Roles and responsibilities of Inclusive Education Outreach Teams**

As already stated in Chapter 2, to date no official education policy or guidelines exist for Inclusive Education Outreach Teams. It can therefore be inferred that the idea of Inclusive Education Outreach Teams was born out of the Western Cape Education Department's interpretation of the Guidelines to Ensure Quality Education and Support in Special School and Special School Resource Centres (Department of Education, 2007).

While it has been noted in Chapter 2 that the job descriptions for the individual disciplines within the Inclusive Education Outreach Team do exist, they are draft working documents which have not yet been finalised and are not officially recognized. Nevertheless, based on these drafts, the role and responsibilities of Inclusive Education Outreach Teams in districts are to:

Render both direct and indirect support (therapeutic, psychological, counselling and educational) within an inclusive education framework and in conjunction with the School-based Support Teams to:

1. the special school resource centre at which the team is based, and
2. to designated full-service schools and schools with specialised units.

Given the absence of clear guidelines, their 'unofficial' job descriptions which are not recognised by the district they work in, and the absence of an operational framework, the Inclusive Education Outreach Team in this study finds itself adrift in the uncharted waters of inclusive education implementation. The discussion that follows highlights this. It also emphasises how differing interpretations of the Inclusive Education Outreach Team's role and responsibilities by other district roleplayers, further complicates and confuses the situation, and adds to the demands on the team.

## 5.4. Discussion of the research questions

In this section the findings presented in Chapter 4 will be discussed and elucidated upon in an effort to present a comprehensive picture of how one rural Inclusive Education Outreach Team perceives its role and responsibilities. The research questions are used to structure this next section of the chapter.

### 5.4.1. Inclusive education policies and associated guidelines

#### 5.4.1.1. Participants' understanding of the concept of inclusive education (refer to 4.4.1: subtheme 1)

It is clear that the participants have an understanding of inclusion which is very much in line with existing policy. Fundamental ideas put forward by the team which illustrates this understanding, include:

- The accommodation of all learners;
- Differentiation;
- Collaboration;
- All learners require support;
- Support needs include physical, emotional and academic needs;
- The adaptation of all systems that may negatively impact on learners;
- Promotion of an inclusive school culture that accepts and respects diversity.

However, further discussion pointed to the gap that exists between the intentions of inclusive education and the realities in schools. Participants emphasised the dissonance they experience in attempting to promote inclusion, sighting

numerous systemic factors, at the micro-, meso- and exosystem levels that undermine the meaningful implementation of inclusion in schools. These factors include:

- Overcrowded schools and high teacher learner ratios;
- The pervasive poverty of the communities surrounding many of the schools;
- The social and environmental disadvantage with which many learners arrive at school;
- Failure of the education system to adequately meet learner needs;
- Learner diversity and the varying levels of readiness to learn;
- Inadequate teacher training in terms of responding to learner diversity in the classroom;
- Limited available resources and difficulties accessing said resources.

Therefore, while it is argued in theory and proposed in policy that inclusion-orientated schools could provide a solution to the above challenges (UNESCO, 1994, 3), it could also be argued that the extent of the systemic challenges in the South African context may be too severe, and that the country is not yet ready for the first world inclusive education system envisaged in existing policy.

#### **5.4.1.2. Participants' understanding of the intention of inclusive education policies and guidelines (refer to 4.4.1: subtheme 2)**

Participants displayed an understanding of the intentions of inclusive education policies and guidelines that correspond with the intentions stated in the policy documents, which are essentially:

- The realisation of inclusive education in South Africa;
- Promoting educational equity and redress.

However, further discussion highlighted numerous perceived dichotomies that participants felt have significantly contributed to the gap between gazetted policy and what is actually happening in schools. These include:

- The establishment of Unit Classes in many of the full-service/inclusive schools. These Unit Classes essentially function as 'mini-special schools' within the so called full-service/inclusive schools.
- The unique set of challenges that distinguish rural education districts from their urban counterparts e.g. many rural communities and their schools are both poor and disadvantaged, lacking basic infrastructure.
- Shallow understanding by many school principals, school management teams, teachers and education district officials, of the reforms required by inclusive education policy intentions to effect 'deep change'.
- The perceived administrative burden created by the new policies and teachers' subsequent negative attitudes towards policy implementation.
- The high and unrealistic demands of the Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statements (CAPS) (Department of Basic Education, 2011), particularly for learners in disadvantaged rural schools.
- The immense pressure placed on schools to improve academic results.
- National curriculum demands undermining the inclusive education policy concept of curriculum differentiation.
- The cumbersome processes and procedures required to access support and resources.
- The lack of capacity by the full-service/inclusive schools, envisioned as flagships of inclusion, to serve as a resource to the surrounding, ordinary schools.

It would seem that much of what this team experience can be attributed to a lack of strategic planning at national, provincial and district levels, and a lack of insight into how to realistically address the many systemic and resource challenges facing education in the country.

Thus, while a noble and desirable reconceptualised education system has been proposed as a way to redress past inequalities and build an equitable, just and moral society, much of the failure to achieve meaningful implementation is due to this lack of strategic, systemic thinking and implementation capacity. This theme is reinforced by the discussions that follow.

### **5.4.1.3. Policy that informs participants' understanding and implementation of inclusive education (refer to 4.4.1: subtheme 3)**

In spite of the absence of clear policy guidelines for Inclusive Education Outreach Teams, all the participants agreed that White Paper 6 (Department of Education, 2001) is fundamentally a good policy and that essentially it is the overarching policy which:

- Serves as a reference to guide and support their practice;
- Has been fundamental to helping them make the paradigm shift necessary to be able to work in inclusive ways.

Two other policy documents that significantly informed their praxis are:

- Responding to Learner Diversity in the Classroom through Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statements (Department of Basic Education, 2011);
  - This document acknowledges that in every classroom diversity exists and therefore real inclusion requires differentiation.
- Care and Support for Teaching and Learning South Africa: National Support Pack (Department of Basic Education & MIET Africa, 2010);
  - This pack encompasses the fundamental idea that real learning can only take place in schools where care and support is regarded a priority for all.

The above 3 policy documents are intended to inform the implementation of inclusive education as the foundation of an integrated and compassionate society. However, as will become apparent in this chapter, very few of the roleplayers within the education district in this study are familiar with them.

## **5.4.2. Inclusive Education Outreach Teams**

### **5.4.2.1. Participants' views on the contribution such teams can make towards building an inclusive education system in our country (refer to 4.4.2: subtheme 1)**

Participants felt that Inclusive Education Outreach Teams can contribute to building an inclusive education and training system in the following ways:

- Advocating for inclusion and for all learners;
- Promoting inclusion through the capacity building of staff at full-service/inclusive schools and other significant stakeholders within the broader school community;
- Strengthening special schools resource centres by assuming the outreach role as initially envisaged by White Paper 6.

While the participants in this study have a very clear sense of the contribution Inclusive Education Outreach Teams can make towards building an inclusive education and training system, it would seem that this is not a commonly accepted perspective within the district in this study. Instead of being viewed as a multi-disciplinary team whose primary function is to capacitate full-service schools to become flagships of inclusion, there is a sense that this team is merely an extension of the various circuit teams they work across.

As such there is an expectation by some of the circuit teams that the Inclusive Education Outreach Team not only falls under their authority, but is also accountable to them. According to the participants, this lack of clarity on how the Inclusive Education Outreach Team fits within the bigger picture of building an inclusive education and training system results in both professional 'turf' tensions and interpersonal conflict leading to mistrust and negative dynamics. This will again come to the fore later on in the discussion.

### **5.4.3. Practical implementation**

#### **5.4.3.1. Participants' description of their role and responsibilities (refer to 4.4.3: subtheme 1)**

In an effort to describe their role and responsibilities the team indicated that this description is largely coloured by how schools, which do not have policy to guide their expectations of the Inclusive Education Outreach Team, view and respond to them and that this impacts on the effectiveness of their work. Schools' views of the team vary from school to school:

- Many schools view the team as ‘fixers’ accompanied by the assumption that they can fix whatever is wrong;
- Generally schools view the team as both supportive and empathetic and as such positive relationships have been established;
- However some schools require endorsement from the particular circuit team before the team is able to proceed with their work.

This mixed bag of responses, sometimes within the same school, can make providing appropriate and effective support very challenging.

#### **5.4.3.2. How participants understand their roles and responsibilities (refer to 4.4.3: subtheme 2)**

Unequivocally, the participants regarded the team as a support service to schools. The team themselves, viewed this support as:

- Needs driven: that is the team responds after conducting an initial informal needs assessment;
- Systemic in nature: the inclusion of parents and local communities is one indicator of this approach;
- Encompassing both direct and indirect interventions.

The team provides the following support to schools:

- Preventative interventions;
- Psycho-education;
- Provision of guidance and information to teachers as well as parents;
- Designing intervention programmes;
- Creating awareness amongst teachers and parents of available resources;
- Development of knowledge and promotion of inclusive education policy;
- Encouraging local community involvement in schools.

However, as a support service which is not clearly defined within the existing education system, or well understood by schools, the team has had to focus on a lot of initial relationship and rapport building with schools. The team regards this as very time consuming, but imperative to gain the trust required to be an

effective support service to schools. The foundations of such support the team felt is based on:

- Empathy and non-judgement;
- Establishing mutual trust;
- Good interpersonal skills and a generally positive, optimistic disposition;
- Adopting a participatory, action research approach to the support provided.

However, the uncertainty that pervades and persists in terms of the team's role and responsibilities is reflected in the following observations:

- There is no uniformity in how Inclusive Education Outreach Teams deliver support to schools: all the Inclusive Education Teams across the Western Cape work differently and not within any set structure;
- It is challenging to work across so many different circuit teams with each circuit team placing their own set of demands and expectations on the Inclusive Education Outreach Team;
- The various components of the circuit teams tend to work in silos and as such services provided to schools are often fragmented and sometimes overlap;
- There are many demands placed on an under resourced district office and this makes it difficult for district personnel to fulfil their job mandates;
- Most full-service/inclusive schools the team serves are far from being considered flagships of inclusion with the capabilities and resources to support their surrounding ordinary schools;
- Communication between individual team members and their direct line managers at the district office tends to be top down with team members reflecting that often they do not feel they can constructively communicate their thoughts and ideas;

- The team is more than a multi-disciplinary<sup>14</sup> team and often work in inter-disciplinary<sup>15</sup> and trans-disciplinary<sup>16</sup> ways which supports the notion that with scarce resources, inclusive education can be considered a cost effective means of restructuring the South African education system;
- Intersectorial collaboration is key to delivering sustainable services, particularly in contexts where resource are scarce;
- Working in partnership with schools and the surrounding communities recognises and respects the value of local knowledges in providing support to learners.

The above observations suggest that this team's thinking is closely aligned with the intentions of inclusive education. In addition the uncertainties they have expressed reinforce the challenges of working in the uncharted terrain of inclusive education implementation in South Africa.

#### **5.4.3.3. Participants' experience of the work they do (refer to 4.4.3: subtheme 3)**

Participants generally all spoke positively about the work they do and described it as:

- Dynamic in nature i.e. every day offers new opportunities and experiences;
- Coming full circle i.e. support and learning are bi-directional.

While the above speaks to Bronfenbrenner's ecological model of human development and a community psychology approach to inclusive education, participants also indicated how overwhelming their work can be. Some of the things they are confronted by, make it possible to view this work as emotional labour. In light of this the team recognised:

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<sup>14</sup> Multi-disciplinarity, inter-disciplinarity, and trans-disciplinarity are complementary rather than mutually exclusive. However in a multi-disciplinary team, each discipline works in a self-contained manner. It involves little interaction across disciplines.

<sup>15</sup> While in an inter-disciplinary team, an issue is approached from a range of disciplinary perspectives integrated to provide a more systemic outcome. Boundaries between disciplines are not so rigid.

<sup>16</sup> In trans-disciplinary teams, the focus is on the organization of knowledge around multifaceted, varied domains rather than the disciplines and subjects into which knowledge is commonly organized and the outcome is often completely different from what is expected (Lawrence, 2010, 127).

- The need to be able to regularly debrief;
- The importance of being part of a team in which they are able to support and reflect with one another;
- The support, both logistically and in terms of leadership, they receive from the special school resource centre.

The above insights highlight the importance of self care for individuals working in the helping profession and the need to guard against professional burnout.

#### **5.4.4. Challenges and successes**

##### **5.4.4.1. Challenges experienced by the participants (refer to 4.4.4: subtheme 1)**

With the knowledge that Inclusive Education Outreach Teams are chartering unpioneered territory, it is no surprise that challenges abound. The most paralysing challenges the team face appear to be at levels of the system beyond its control. These include:

- The abject poverty of many school communities within the communities in which they work;
- The extreme lack of available resources; both human and material;
- The translation of the concept of the resource centres at full-service/inclusive schools into Unit Classes has created islands of exclusion within schools;
- Working across circuit teams with the assumption that the Inclusive Education Outreach Team is accountable to certain members of these teams;
- The general lack of a common understanding of the role and responsibilities of the Inclusive Education Outreach Team by many of the roleplayers within the education system;
- The post level structure and accompanying salary scales which has institutionalised a hierachical system of destructive power and ego dynamics;

- The lack of communication between the Inclusive Education Outreach Team and the district based circuit teams often results in fragmented service delivery;
- The limitations of psychometric assessments and particularly the validity of using the Senior South African Individual Scales–Revised (SSAIS-R) for learners in rural contexts;
- The tension between the intentions of inclusive education policy which allows for curriculum differentiation and the political pressure placed on schools to improve results.

Other challenges that impact on the sustainability and continuity of the support they provide include:

- Logistical challenges;
  - Too many schools to service over a large geographical area;
  - Too few teams for the number of schools requiring support;
  - High staff turnover within the team;
  - Transportation of the tools and equipment required by the team to conduct their work;
  - Lack of a suitable space in which to work, in many of the schools.
- Intrapersonal challenges;
  - Working daily with a variety people can be very emotionally and physically depleting.
- Interpersonal challenges;
  - Professional jealousy between and across disciplines;
  - Gaps in leadership which allow space for a working culture of mistrust and undermining to develop.

#### 5.4.4.2. Solutions to some of the above challenges (refer 4.4.4 subtheme 2)

The ideas the team shared as solutions to some of the above challenges speak to the positive dynamic that exists between team members, and highlighted their capacity to be both innovative and resourceful; a prerequisite to working

meaningfully in impoverished and under resourced contexts. These solutions included:

- Selecting focus schools which were offered more regular support while responding to the remaining schools on a needs only basis;
- Accessing and making use of community assets;
- Placing more emphasis on working indirectly with schools while acknowledging that there are sometimes situations when direct service is required;
- Working across professions by sharing professional knowledge and acknowledging that the various disciplines do overlap;
- Advocating and promoting inclusive education policy amongst school personnel and parents;
- Establishing partnerships and in so doing forstering participatory, collaborative ways of working with schools and communities;
- Regularly reflecting on their practice through conversations with each other;
- Garnering support and expertise from colleagues at the resource centre and sharing this with schools.

#### **5.4.4.2. Examples of best practice (refer to 4.4.4: subtheme 3)**

The team put forward what they considered to be examples of best practice. Some of these include:

- The production of activity boxes by the Unit Class learners for Grade 1 learners struggling to work at grade level;
- The development of a Grade R stimulation programme;
- Conversion of a Unit Class into an Entrepreneurial Class in which learners were given the opportunity to develop real life skills in preparation for the world of work;
- A Leadership Exchange Seminar for the principals and school management teams of the full-service/inclusive schools;
- Sharing of the specialized expertise available at the special school resource centre with the full-service/inclusive schools;

- Providing intervention in classrooms alongside teachers within the curriculum framework.

All of the above best practices highlight the importance of working indirectly to capacitate schools and school communities to work in inclusive ways. Essentially it is a way of working smarter within an education system that is severely constrained in terms of both material and human resources. Furthermore, it is a much more effective means of ensuring sustainability of support and the eventual, incremental expansion of inclusive education. The effectiveness should, however, be evaluated

#### 5.4.4.3. Recommendations for the future of Inclusive Education Outreach Teams (refer to 4.4.5 subtheme 1)

It is very clear that there is a dire need for policy which unequivocally outlines the role and responsibilities of the Inclusive Education Outreach Teams and that this information needs to be shared with and recognised by all the relevant roleplayers within the education system. The following are topics the team felt would be pertinent to include in such guidelines:

- Collaboration between the Resource Centre and the Full-Service/Inclusive Schools;
- Collaboration between the Inclusive Education Outreach Team and the District Office;
- Collaboration between the Inclusive Education Outreach Team and the broader school community;
- Collaboration between the Inclusive Education Outreach Team and NGOs and NPOs;
- Inclusive Education Outreach Teams in rural districts and those in urban districts.

The team believes that such guidelines would not only provide the guidance they need, but would also provide the official recognition necessary to legitimise and give them the necessary authority to do their work.

Furthermore, in order for Inclusive Education Outreach Teams to function optimally, there is also a critical need:

- For Head Office, together with the District offices to facilitate an understanding amongst all roleplayers at all levels of the education system (this includes parents and communities) of how the Inclusive Education Outreach Teams fit into the broader picture of building an inclusive education and training system;
- To consider adding additional expertise to each of the teams e.g. a speech therapist;
- To develop expertise amongst team members in terms of the Resource Centre's specific category of disability;
- For access to a suitable work space at each of the schools the team service;
- To reduce the number of schools the team serve and to revisit the distances the team is required to travel between schools;
- For regular human resource development training where all the Inclusive Education Outreach Teams across the province have the opportunity to get together;
- For regular feedback from the district office in terms of decisions made, particularly decisions that have a direct impact on the team's functioning;
- For intersectorial collaboration between the team and the Specialised Learner and Education Support (SLES) component at the district office;
- For good leadership which fosters positive, constructive, two way communication between the Inclusive Education Outreach Team and the various circuit teams they work across.

#### *5.4.5. Capacity building of education support service providers (refer to 4.4.5 subtheme 2)*

Regular and ongoing capacity building is imperative to the successful functioning of any organisation. The education department is no exception. While continual in-

service training is important, so too is the need to ensure that the pre-service training that potential support personnel receive, adequately prepares them for the work they will be required to perform. Suggestions proposed by the team are:

- Team building: learning to work collaboratively and effectively within the dynamics of a team context
- Understanding the role and responsibilities of curriculum and learning support advisors
- Further training in terms of specific interventions for learners with physical disabilities
- Knowledge of the available aids and assistive devices
- Therapeutic listening
- Workshops with other learning support educators which explore language as a barrier to learning and ways of supporting learners who experience language as a barrier to learning to be able to read and write
- Ways to address specific maths difficulties
- Alternative ways of assessing learner potential as opposed to just determining learner IQ scores

## 5.5. Summary and conclusion

Hailed as a landmark, post-apartheid policy, Education White Paper 6 was written in the hope that inclusive education would become the “cornerstone of an integrated and caring [South African] society” (Department of Education, 2001, p. 10). It has been argued that inclusion-orientated schools would not only provide the majority of South African learners with access to appropriate education, but that such schools would also greatly improve the efficiency and ultimately the cost-effectiveness of the entire South African Education system (UNESCO, 1994, p. 3). There is now no longer a need to rationalise the soundness of inclusion as an acceptable, appropriate response to the education dilemma we face in this country. It is the way this is to be achieved that remains the contested terrain.

### The intention of inclusive education

Given the above, Education White Paper 6 (Department of Education, 2001) was able to anticipate what potentially would be needed to successfully implement inclusive education in South African schools. This is clearly articulated by the proposal to not only strengthen existing support services, but also by the restructuring of schools in a way that envisioned the infusion of varying levels of support and resource provision throughout the entire education system. In addition Education White Paper 6, in line with much of the current literature, purport that any constructive, sustainable efforts at establishing and maintaining inclusive schools should be directed at “synergising the [education] system as a whole” (Swart & Pettipher, 2011, 18).

Furthermore, the establishment of Inclusive Education Outreach Teams was the Western Cape Education Department’s response to the call to strengthen existing support services of which special school resource centres are a pivotal part. As the outreach function of the special school resource centres, these teams were mandated to serve the Full-Service/Inclusive Schools, because the department believes that Inclusive Education Outreach Teams have the capacity to make a significant contribution towards building an inclusive education and training system in South Africa. The participants of this study also believe that the primary focus of any Inclusive Education Outreach Team ought to be the capacity building of all relevant stakeholders within a school community. Central to such capacity building should be the advocacy for and the promotion of inclusion at every level of a school system.

### The state of inclusive education implementation

Now well into the final stage of the implementation phase of White Paper 6, it is clear from this research on the particular rural education district under study, that the Full-Service/Inclusive Schools served by the Inclusive Education Outreach Team are not remotely ready to become flagships of inclusion and serve as a resource to their neighbouring, ordinary schools. The question that now begs to be answered, is how can this be so, 14 years after the publication of White Paper 6?

Much of this implementation failure can be attributed to a lack of strategic planning and insight into implementation challenges, systemic issues beyond the team’s control, the absence of policy coordination and integration, and poor communication at every level of the education system.

Three systemic issues emerged as critical to undermining the success of this team's work. All three issues relate to what one participant aptly referred to as the clumsiness of the structures within the education department. The first of these can be linked to the way in which Inclusive Education Outreach Teams are situated within the education system. Based at and on the staff of a special school resource centre, the team is accountable to the principal of this resource centre. As the outreach function of the resource centre, they form part of the District-based Support Team. In addition, in terms of their individual disciplines, each team member is also answerable to a direct line manager at the Education District Office. Furthermore, the team works in schools that form part of numerous different circuits. Each circuit team has its own unique set of demands and expectations of the team. As a result each member of the team has to report to two line managers and members of 5 different circuit teams. It is not surprising that the team has no clear sense of who they are accountable to, for what, and is confused about what their mandate is.

The second of these issues is connected to the general lack of clarity around the role and responsibilities of the team. This uncertainty appears to permeate the entire education district from management right down to the schools the team serve. This makes any strategic planning and working in inter- and trans-disciplinary ways very challenging.

The third of these issues relates to the dichotomy between the national curriculum policy and inclusive education policy. On the one hand, the CAPS curriculum requires schools to focus on a single standardised curriculum in order to improve academic results; and on the other, inclusive education policy advocates curriculum differentiation to cater for individual learner needs. These two core policies are not only in direct conflict with one another other, but also undermine each other, in spite of the intentions of the Responding to Learner Diversity through CAPS guidelines (Department of Basic Education, 2011). Not surprisingly, as reported by the participants, the result is that the curriculum and learning support advisors' mandate is at odds with that of the Inclusive Education Outreach Team's; teachers are caught in the crossfire between them; the mainstream CAPS curriculum dominates; and individual learner needs are neglected.

### The current position of the Inclusive Education Outreach Team

While it is clear that the research participants have a good understanding of the concept of inclusive education and the intentions of Education White Paper 6; and believe that it is a policy with a sound philosophy and vision; all of the above factors impact negatively on the context the team works in and undermines their mandate. In such a climate intersectorial collaboration is hard to achieve and working towards the greater good can seem impossible.

At the time of writing this chapter, the District was engaged in reviewing the work of the Inclusive Education Outreach Teams in the district and an announcement about restructuring is expected in due course. Given the above, the next and final chapter of this study will make recommendations based on the findings discussed as well as put forward ideas for potential future research. Included in this final chapter will also be an exploration of the various limitations of this study.

# Chapter 6

## Conclusions and Recommendations

*'Whatever course you decide upon there is always someone to tell you that you are wrong. There are always difficulties arising which tempt you to believe that your critics are right. To map out a course of action and follow it to an end requires....courage.'*

**Inspiration Peak, 2008: ¶ 1**

### 6.1. Introduction

The idea of this final chapter is an attempt to help the reader decide whether the presented findings could be used 'to map out a course of action' for the future of Inclusive Education Outreach Teams within an inclusive education system. The point of departure for the chapter is a summary of the key findings.

This is followed by a set of recommendations presented within the framework of the categories which arose out of the data analysis. These recommendations focus specifically on addressing the challenges that face one Inclusive Education Outreach Team in their efforts to make sense of their role and responsibilities as they work towards helping to build inclusive schools within their particular rural district.

The chapter concludes by examining the limitations of the study followed by suggestions for potential future research.

### 6.2. Key findings

The most significant findings to emerge from this study are:

- In spite of a number of policies about inclusive education in general, none of them provide operational guidelines pertaining to the functioning of Inclusive Education Outreach Teams.
- As a result each of the eight education districts within the Western Cape have their own particular, and often very different, understanding of inclusive

education policies and the role and responsibilities of Inclusive Education Outreach Teams.

- The Inclusive Education Outreach Team focused on in this study is excluded from district strategic planning where opportunities could be created to constructively integrate and/or align its activities with those of the districts.
- Consequently, the team operates in isolation from the district systems which emphasise the core CAPS curriculum at the expense of inclusive education policy interests.
- The team members' job descriptions are not yet official and are not generally recognised within the district or disseminated to schools. Subsequently, there is confusion about both their mandate and authority. In addition, the expectations of the team vary at every level of the district it engages with: from one school to another, from one circuit team to another, from one line manager to another and from SLES management to the principal of the special school resource centre, where the team is based.
- The research participants nevertheless have a clear sense of the Inclusive Education Outreach Team as a support service to schools. They see their key role and responsibilities as: advocacy and capacity building to establish and support inclusive practices in schools in ways that are consistent with inclusive education policy and the values and assumptions embodied by a community psychology approach.
- Many of the challenges the team experience are beyond the team's direct control. These systemic issues are at the level of the:
  - broader South African context, e.g. the high levels of poverty and unemployment that characterise many of the rural communities in which the team works;
  - national and provincial education department, e.g. the CAPS curriculum and the Annual National Assessments place the focus on learner results at the expense of inclusive education practices;
  - specific education district office under study, e.g. fragmented service delivery due to lack of intersectoral collaboration and cooperation.

### 6.3. Recommendations

The challenges that emerged out of this study provide the framework for the following recommendations:

- **Roles and Responsibilities of Inclusive Education Outreach Teams**

*Recommendation #1: Develop conceptual and operational guidelines for Inclusive Education Outreach Teams*

Such guidelines need to be written in collaboration with all the relevant stakeholders, i.e. SLES management at head office and district level, district-based circuit teams, special school resource centre principals, full-service/inclusive schools' SMTs and SBSTs and the Inclusive Education Outreach Teams, as well as in consultation with the Department of Health and the Department of Social Development.

In addition, the guidelines need to clearly conceptualise the role and responsibilities of the Inclusive Education Outreach Teams in terms of the special school resource centre and the Full-service/inclusive schools. It would also need to clarify the nature of the working relationship between the team and their individual direct line managers at the district office as well as how the circuit teams, particularly the SLES and curriculum components. The Inclusive Education Outreach Teams should work together to ensure the delivery of coordinated, sustainable support services to schools.

Once the appropriate guidelines are in place, strong, transformative and visionary leadership is needed to develop, promote, and insist on inter-sectorial collaboration and individual accountability.

- **Clarify how the Inclusive Education Outreach Team fit into the district and school systems and structures**

*Recommendation #2: Restructure how the Inclusive Education Outreach Team is 'placed' within the inclusive education system*

As already noted, the Inclusive Education Outreach Team in the rural district under study, currently serves 14 Full-service/inclusive schools across five different circuits within the district, is based at a special school resource centre

and each team member is also accountable to a direct line manager (head of their particular discipline) at the district office.

With so many individuals to whom the team is accountable as well as those who essentially have no jurisdiction over the team also demanding accountability, and with no real attempts to coordinate services, it is therefore recommended that:

- Firstly the team remains based at the special school resource centre. They do essentially serve the outreach function of the special school resource centre and are already on the statement of service of the school.
- Secondly simplify the reporting lines for the team. The team should be accountable to a single line manager. This should be the principal of the special school resource centre where they are based.
- Thirdly, this line manager, as part of the DBST should meet on a regular basis with the SLES and curriculum components of the district. Such meetings need to be about coordinating services, bearing in mind that the Inclusive Education Outreach Team's mandate should fundamentally be to advocate for and promote inclusion.

Strategic planning in terms of service delivery can then be conducted with the support of the principal of the special school resource centre with the team adopting a multi-disciplinary, holistic, systemic approach to the work they do.

- Fourthly, that the team remains accountable to their professional bodies. These are: for the psychologist and the occupational therapist, the Health Professions Council of South Africa (HPCSA) which has its own code of conduct and requirements for continued professional development; and for the learning support educator, the school principal of the special school resource centre and the South African Council of Educators.

### *Recommendation #3: Rethinking the post level structure and authority of Inclusive Education Outreach Teams*

For these reasons: 1) Increase the team member's post levels so that they have the appropriate status and authority to work effectively at all of the levels of the

system that function requires. 2) Familiarise the team's job descriptions so that their functions have legitimacy and are recognised.

Currently as the team is structured, the school psychologist post is equivalent to a level 2 post and the occupational therapist and learning support educator to that of a level 1 post.

However the nature of their work includes working with and providing support to heads of departments, SMT and SBST members several post levels above them. In addition, the qualifications required for their posts are far higher than those required for level 1 and 2 posts (according to Berenice Daniels, personal communication, March 1, 2014).

*Recommendation #4: Serve schools within a smaller geographical area and in closer proximity to the special school resource centre*

The team serves 14 schools covering a geographical area of approximately 532 km<sup>2</sup>. In order to offer support that is both meaningful and sustainable so as to develop and empower full-service schools to become sites of good inclusive practices, it is recommended that the team serve schools within a smaller geographical area and in closer proximity to the special school resource centre. In this way the hours the team spend travelling from one school to another can be utilised more constructively working in and with schools. The special school would also then be more able to fulfil its role as a resource centre by being more physically and practically accessible to the schools it serves.

*Recommendation #5: Increase the number of Inclusive Education Outreach Teams within the district to serve the high number of designated full-service schools*

With more teams, each supporting fewer schools, the quality of the support they provide will be improved. This will significantly improve the prospect of inclusive education being successfully implement in full-service schools.

*Recommendation #6: Debriefing and psychological support of team members*

The work of the Inclusive Education Outreach Team can easily be described as one of emotional labour and as such takes a physical, emotional and mental toll on team members. This team in particular has had a high turn over of staff since its inception. This potentially could have been reduced had the team had access to some form of debriefing and/or psychological support. As helping professionals, it is highly recommended that team members have access to adequate and regular psychological support by an appropriately trained professional.

*Recommendation #7: A supportive working culture of collaboration, respect and accountability*

It is important that the Inclusive Education Outreach Team together with the circuit teams, the management component of SLES at district level and the principal of the special school resource centre understand what is required of working collaboratively. Processes need to be facilitated to ensure that individual roles and responsibilities are clarified, trust is built and lines of bi-directional communication are established. It needs to be made explicit who will work together, how these individuals will work together, what their focus will be and to whom they will be accountable.

This initially needs to be part of an induction process and later as part of regular individual and group supervision processes. Such professional development opportunities also create occasions for personal development. The implication is support at both the intrapersonal and interpersonal levels, a vital aspect of staff development, essential for crafting a supportive working environment in which collaboration is valued.

*Recommendation #8: Suitable space at schools in which to work*

As noted by policy, full-service schools are schools that are required to be able ‘to provide quality education to all learners by supplying the full range of learning needs in an equitable manner’ (Department of Basic Education, 2010, p. 7). Therefore, as such full-service schools need to have a suitable space for the

team, which is conducive, to work effectively with learners, individually and in groups, as well as with teachers and parents. This space needs to be clean, provide a mat as well as tables and chairs for work with groups of learners, teachers and parents and also offer access to a blackboard or whiteboard.

- **Improving the effectiveness of the assessment of learners**

*Recommendation #9: Including a measure of learning potential into the assessment process of learners*

As already noted not all learners entering formal schooling have had equal opportunities to attain the essential knowledge and skills to perform successfully on standardized IQ tests. This is particularly the case for many learners in the schools the team, under study, serves.

In such instances it is, therefore, recommended that it would be far more valuable to ascertain learners' ability to learn rather than their IQ scores which essentially measure already acquired knowledge and skills. Dynamic assessment, grounded in the developmental theories of Vygotsky<sup>17</sup> and Feuerstein<sup>18</sup>, is a collaborative approach to psychological assessment that embraces intervention within the assessment process.

Most dynamic assessment includes a pretest which is followed by some form of intervention and finally a post-test. This makes it possible to evaluate learners' response to the intervention and hence their potential to learn the particular skill being assessed. There are a numerous dynamic assessment procedures that can be used to assess a wide assortment of knowledges and skills.

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<sup>17</sup> Vygotsky's theory states that the potential for optimal cognitive development rests upon the 'zone of proximal development' (ZPD) i.e. the difference between what a learner can do independently and what he or she can do supported by a more capable other.

<sup>18</sup> At the center of Feuerstein's theory of Structural Cognitive Modifiability is the idea that cognition is both flexible and modifiable and therefore with quality intervention and/or interaction, optimal cognitive development is possible.

Pre-service training at university level for prospective team members as well as in-service training to existing team members on how to use dynamic assessment should be offered as a job requirement. Any assessment conducted with a learner experiencing barriers to learning should then include some form of dynamic assessment.

*Recommendation #10: The introduction of 'contextual value add' into assessment process of learners*

Schools reluctant to differentiate the curriculum and struggling under the increased pressure to improve academic results are caught in an unenviable cycle in which inclusive policy is undermined by the strong emphasis on the core CAPS curriculum and improving learner results. Potentially what could circumvent this, is the introduction of a concept like 'contextual value add' (CVA) into the assessment process of learners. CVA is statistical formula which makes it possible to predict a given learner's achievement based on the achievement of other learners with similar previous achievement and from comparable circumstances (Eason, 2007). The idea of CVA is to create equity within the assessment process.

Therefore how a learner really performs in comparison to other learners of the same age, better or worse, can more accurately be attributed to what happens at school. In this way cognisance is taken of the very different contexts in which schools function and the many factors over which schools have little or no control.

Possibly then schools would be more willing to consider implementing curriculum differentiation. Initially more work, curriculum differentiation, ensures that the point of departure for any teaching and learning that takes place is the level at which learners are currently functioning. In this way opportunities are created for all learners to learn and develop optimally without the pressure/fear that teachers and schools will be penalised and/or labelled as underperforming.

- **Addressing systemic factors**

*Recommendation #11: Addressing poverty within the broader community*

If intervention and support is provided from within a community psychology framework, then the school and its available resources can be utilised to work towards alleviating poverty within the broader community. One example could be for the school to provide land and water for a community vegetable garden; the proceeds of which could feed local families and any excess could be sold to fund any additional running expenditures incurred.

Another example is for teachers at the school to provide accredited Adult Basic Education and Training programmes for those in the community wishing to complete their basic education and in this way provide these individuals with the means to potentially access further employment opportunities. A final example is for the school to facilitate parenting skills training to be provided by the Inclusive Education Outreach Team which looks specifically at psycho-education for parents on how to raise their children to become constructive, meaningful community members and South African citizens.

*Recommendation #12: Maximising use of scarce resources*

Successful implementation of inclusive education as so clearly documented in the research, would go a long way to maximise the effective and efficient use of the scarce resources that are available. A pivotal component of successful implementation is the necessary capacity building of school management and school-based support teams by the Inclusive Education Outreach Team around issues pertaining to inclusion, but also to foster understanding of what is required by policy to build an inclusive school.

Accompanying this understanding there needs to be a degree of hands on support by the Inclusive Education Outreach Team as well as by circuit team members. Such support can provide opportunities for what is understood, to be translated into practice. I believe that only in this way will we be able to effect the 'deep change' required by inclusive education policy intentions.

Furthermore, as advocated by White Paper 6 this support needs to focus initially on building the capacity of the designated Full-service/inclusive Schools, so that they can become the flagships of inclusion, able to serve as a resource to surrounding, ordinary schools. In addition, this support also needs to include helping individual teachers to competently and constructively address the diverse learning needs in their classrooms.

However to be able to provide the level of support which develops and empowers schools in this way, requires strong, visionary leadership both at district and school level, that can facilitate strategic planning and inter-sectorial collaboration at every level of the education system within the district.

#### 6.4. Limitations of the study

The scope of this study was limited to only one Inclusive Education Outreach Team in one rural education district of the Western Cape. As such, these findings cannot be generalised to the other teams operating within the same district, to teams in other rural districts, or to teams in urban districts. Although it was never intended for the findings to be generalised or transferred to the wider population of Inclusive Education Outreach Teams, the inclusion of other prominent perspectives in the voices of teachers, parents, circuit team members, SLES management and the principal of the special school resource centre could potentially have given a more rounded, balanced account. As such this study would then have been a more accurate reflection of Bronfenbrenner's ecological model; the chosen theoretical framework for my study.

#### 6.5. Suggestions for further research

The following suggestions for further research are proposed:

- *A review of Inclusive Education across the world in countries with a socio-economic context similar to that of South Africa: An exploratory study that looks at lessons learnt for the effective implementation of inclusive education within developing contexts.*

- *The praxis of Inclusive Education Outreach Teams as community psychology in action:* An exploratory study of how the work of one team meets the support needs of schools and the broader school community.
- *An Inclusive Education Outreach Team's engagement in whole school development:* A case study based on one team's engagement in a participatory, whole school development, action research project.
- *Educators' experiences of Inclusive Education Outreach Teams as a multi-disciplinary support to schools:* A qualitative study that facilitates an in-depth exploration of the experiences teachers have of the support the team provides.
- *A comparative study: A rural versus an urban Inclusive Education Outreach Team:* A case study which investigates the differences and similarities between a rural and urban Inclusive Education Outreach Team.
- *Conceptual and operational guidelines for Inclusive Education Outreach Teams:* Participatory research conducted within a community psychology paradigm to clarify the concept of Inclusive Education Outreach Teams and how they should function. The conclusion to the above research needs to lead to the publication of gazetted policy.

## 6.6. Summary and conclusion

For inclusive education to become a reality in South Africa, there needs to be a conceptual shift to align inclusion with, and integrate it into, the other existing education policies and practices. The findings in this study suggest that this has not yet happened in the 14 years since the publication of White Paper 6, in spite of the introduction of two substantial guideline documents (Responding to Learner Diversity through CAPS and SIAS) intended to facilitate implementation. Instead there is a significant disjuncture between formulated policy and practice and very little evidence of meaningful uptake of inclusive education on a significant scale.

With this national context as backdrop, this study provides insight into why Inclusive Education Outreach Teams are not yet functioning meaningfully at the level of the

district. It identifies a number of challenges that undermine the functioning of these teams. It is not surprising that many of these challenges mirror those undermining inclusive education in the education system as a whole. However, the study also identifies additional barriers to implementation at the provincial, district and school levels.

For the work of this Inclusive Education Outreach Team to be appropriate and relevant, change needs to happen both at the level of the education department as a system, and at the level of the individuals working within it. At the level of the district, structures and procedures necessary to facilitate collaboration urgently need to be established. At the level of the individuals working for the district, all role players need to work actively to promote inclusion and to significantly shift the way they think about the services they deliver, because these services are generally not readily available or always easy accessible.

Thinking differently requires an effort to coordinate the support provided to schools and the broader school community. Coordinated support will not only be more meaningful, but will also have the potential to become sustainable. Such support will also necessitate a gradual move towards a greater degree of indirect service, acceptance that knowledges between disciplines overlap and boundaries sometimes blur. Finding ways to collaborate and harness the combined professional knowledges of the various disciplines can help mitigate the scarcity of human resources that confronts the education department. Failure to do so undermines the essence of inclusive education which is to provide every child with equitable opportunity to develop optimally.

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## APPENDIX A



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### Participant Information Letter

#### STELLENBOSCH UNIVERSITY CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH

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You are asked to participate in a research study conducted by Sarah Barratt, from the Department of Educational Psychology at Stellenbosch University. This research project is conducted in partial fulfillment of the master's degree in educational psychology. You were selected as a possible participant in this study because you are either involved in the implementation of inclusive education and/or the development of inclusive education policy.

#### 1. PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

This study aims to explore perspectives on the roles and responsibilities of one rural Inclusive Education Support Team and how this understanding translates into the work they do.

#### 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. At a later stage you will also be asked to participate in a focus group interview i.e. the members of the Inclusive Education Support Team. This focus group interviews will provide an opportunity for the researcher to delve deeper into pertinent issues and clarify any misunderstandings that may have arisen during the individual interviews. The interview/s will each be approximately 60 to 90 minutes long.
3. With your consent the interview and focus group 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/s either telephonically or via e-mail should there be a need to clarify anything that was said during the interview/s.
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 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.

### **4. POTENTIAL BENEFITS TO PARTICIPANTS AND/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 the intentions of inclusive education policy can be translated into practice in a way that is accessible to educators and education support professionals.

### **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. 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 Sarah Barratt (researcher) on XXXX or Professor Estelle Swart (supervisor) XXXX.

## **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 subject, contact Ms Maléne Fouché [mfouche@sun.ac.za; 021 808 4622] at the Division for Research Development at Stellenbosch University.

## APPENDIX B



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### Participant Informed Written Consent Form

#### STELLENBOSCH UNIVERSITY PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORM

---

I have read the information pertaining to the study: 'Perspectives on the roles and responsibilities of an Inclusive Education Outreach Team in one rural education district of the Western Cape' to be conducted by Sarah Barratt from Stellenbosch University, under the supervision of Professor Estelle Swart. The information above was described to me by Sarah in English and I am in command of this language or it was satisfactorily translated to me. I was given the opportunity to ask questions and these questions were answered to my satisfaction.

I understand that I have the option to agree to have my interviews audio recorded to ensure an accurate account of my responses.

I am also aware that I may withdraw from the study at any time with no repercussions and that my participation in the study is completely voluntary. It was explained to me that excerpts from the interviews may be included in the thesis and/or for publication. I further understand that all my personal information and identifiers will be kept completely confidential and that a system of coding will replace any names, people or organizations that may relate specifically to me.

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

---

Name of Participant

---

Name of Legal Representative (if applicable)

\_\_\_\_\_

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). He/she was encouraged and given ample time to ask me any questions. This conversation was conducted in Afrikaans/English and no translator was used.

\_\_\_\_\_

Signature of Investigator

\_\_\_\_\_

Date

## APPENDIX C

### Institutional Information Letter



#### Letter to Institution for Permission to Conduct Research:

Dear .....

PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH WITH \_\_\_\_\_

I am currently undertaking a research project in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Educational Psychology at Stellenbosch University under supervision of Professor Estelle Swart.

The title of my study is: Perspectives on the roles and responsibilities of an Inclusive Education Support Team in a rural education district of the Western Cape.

This study will therefore focus on how individual research participants (the members of an Inclusive Education Outreach Team in a rural education district within the Western Cape and a key informant from the Head Office of the Western Cape Education Department), make meaning of inclusive education and how this understanding translates into the delivery of educational support services by the Inclusive Education Outreach Team.

I have permission from the Western Cape Education Department, Directorate of Research, to conduct this research from the 01 June to the 31 August 2014. I would like to request your permission to work with the individuals identified above, at a time suitable to you and the individuals concerned.

The identity of your District office and the individuals who agree to participate in this study will be kept strictly confidential. Participation in this study is voluntary. Furthermore I will need to gather information through the scheduling of individual and focus group interviews. I will request the necessary written, informed consent from the individual participants to participate in the study as well as request their consent to audio record the interviews. All the data gathered will be kept under lock and key and only myself and Professor Swart will have access to it.

Feedback will be provided to all participants at the conclusion of the research project.

Your help in this regard would be greatly appreciated.

Yours sincerely

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Sarah Barratt

Student number: 17598673

Cell Number: XXXX

E-mail: XXXX

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Professor E. Swart

Office number: XXXX

XXXX

## APPENDIX D

### Institutional Informed Written Consent Form



#### Institution Consent Form

I have read the information pertaining to the study: 'Perspectives on the roles and responsibilities of an Inclusive Education Outreach Team in one rural education district of the Western Cape' to be conducted by Sarah Barratt from Stellenbosch University, under the supervision of Professor Estelle Swart. The information above was described to me by Sarah. I was given the opportunity to ask questions and these questions were answered to my satisfaction.

I understand that all information pertaining directly to the employee participants as well as [name of institution] will be kept confidential and that codes will replace any names, people or identifiers directly related to the institution or the employees. I further understand that all personal information disclosed by the employees is strictly confidential and that the institution will not be privy to the personal disclosures made by the employees. I am also aware that the employees may withdraw from the study at any time, without implications and that their participation is completely voluntary. It was also explained to me that excerpts from employee interviews will be included in the thesis and/or for publication.

I hereby consent for the above mentioned study to take place within the context of [name of institution] and for three employees to act as participants. I have been given a copy of this form.

---

Name of Director

---

Name of Legal Representative (if applicable)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Director or Legal Representative

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

**SIGNATURE OF INVESTIGATOR**

I declare that I explained the information given in this document to [name of institution] and/or the institution's representative [name of the representative]. He / she was encouraged and given ample time to ask me any questions. This conversation was conducted in English.

## APPENDIX E

### Letter of Ethical Clearance



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jou kennisvenoot • your knowledge partner

#### Approved with Stipulations New Application

19-May-2014  
Barratt, Sarah S

**Proposal #:** DESC/Barratt/May2014/22

**Title:** Perspectives on the roles and responsibilities of an Inclusive Education Support Team in a rural education district of the Western Cape.

Dear Ms Sarah Barratt,

Your **New Application** received on **08-May-2014**, was reviewed  
Please note the following information about your approved research proposal:

Proposal Approval Period: **13-May-2014 -12-May-2015**

The following stipulations are relevant to the approval of your project and must be adhered to:  
**Please address the following issue in a note to the DESC:**

**It sounds as though the key informants will be the line managers of the participants. If this is the case, how will confidentiality be maintained in this study? And might this not influence the validity of the data gathered and the subsequent findings of the study? Will this not put the participants in a situation with potential negative consequences for them?**

Please provide a letter of response to all the points raised IN ADDITION to HIGHLIGHTING or using the TRACK CHANGES function to indicate ALL the corrections/amendments of ALL DOCUMENTS clearly in order to allow rapid scrutiny and appraisal.

Please take note of the general Investigator Responsibilities attached to this letter. You may commence with your research after complying fully with these guidelines.

Please remember to use your **proposal number** (DESC/Barratt/May2014/22) 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.

Also note that a progress report should be submitted to the Committee before the approval period has expired if a continuation is required. The Committee will then consider the continuation of the project for a further year (if necessary).

This committee abides by the ethical norms and principles for research, established by the Declaration of Helsinki and the Guidelines for Ethical Research: Principles Structures and Processes 2004 (Department of Health). Annually a number of projects may be selected randomly for an external audit.

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

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 0218089183.



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**Approval Notice**  
**Stipulated documents/requirements**

29-Jul-2014  
Barratt, Sarah S

**Proposal #:** DESC/Barratt/May2014/22

**Title:** Perspectives on the roles and responsibilities of an Inclusive Education Support Team in a rural education district of the Western Cape.

Dear Ms Sarah Barratt,

Your **Stipulated documents/requirements** received on **29-Jul-2014**, was reviewed  
Sincerely,

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

## APPENDIX F

### Interview Guide 1: Individual Interview Guide

#### INTERVIEW SCHEDULE FOR THE INDIVIDUAL MEMBERS OF THE INCLUSIVE EDUCATION SUPPORT TEAM

##### AIMS OF THE RESEARCH

Will be to explore:

- The perspectives of various key informants on the roles and responsibilities of Inclusive Education Support Teams;
- How one rural Inclusive Education Support Team understands and translates their understanding of inclusive education into practice;
- What one rural Inclusive Education Support Team experiences as challenging in the implementation of inclusive education;
- What capacity building exists and is required by one rural Inclusive Education Support Teams in order to align their practice with current policy;
- What recommendations can be made for the future improvement of the support services delivered by one rural Inclusive Education Support Team

##### A. DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION

1. What position do you hold in the Inclusive Education Team?
2. How long have you held this position in the team?
3. What are your qualifications?
4. What subsequent professional development have you had?
5. What experience do you have with the South African education system?

##### B. INCLUSIVE EDUCATION POLICIES AND THE ASSOCIATED GUIDELINES AND DOCUMENTATION

1. What is your understanding of the concept of inclusive education?
2. What then is your understanding of the intention of the education department's inclusive education policies and associated guidelines?
3. Which policies and associated guidelines have informed your understanding and implementation of inclusive education? How?

C. INCLUSIVE EDUCATION TEAMS

1. How did you come to work as a (school psychologist, Occupational Therapist, Learning Support Educator) in an Inclusive Education Team?
2. What are your thoughts with regards to the contribution such teams can make towards building an inclusive education system in our country?

D. PRACTICAL IMPLEMENTATION OF THE WORK YOU DO

1. How would you describe your role and responsibilities to others?
2. What do you view as your roles and responsibilities:
  - 1.1 As an individual professional? (Give examples)
  - 1.2 As a member of a multi-disciplinary team? (Give examples)
3. How do you experience the work you do? (Give examples)

E. CHALLENGES AND SUCCESSES WITH REGARDS TO THE WORK YOU DO

1. What has been challenging for you with regards to the work you do?
2. What have you been able to do to successfully address some of these challenges?
3. What do you regard as some of your best practices:
  - 3.1 As an individual professional? (give examples)
  - 3.2 As a member of a multi-disciplinary team? (Give examples)
4. What recommendations would you make for the future of Inclusive Education Teams in terms of:
  - a. Policy
  - b. Practice?

F. CAPACITY BUILDING OF INCLUSIVE EDUCATION TEAMS

1. Describe the capacity building/support you have received and/or are receiving with regards to the implementation of the above policies and associated guidelines?
2. What capacity support do you think should be provided?
3. What recommendations would you make in terms of the capacity development required by:
  - a. Individual team members
  - b. The team as a whole?

G. OTHER QUESTIONS OR COMMENTS

1. Do you have anything else you would like to add or perhaps a further comment you would like to make before we finish?

## APPENDIX G

### Interview Guide 2: Key Informant Interview Guide

#### INTERVIEW SCHEDULE FOR KEY INFORMANT

##### AIMS OF THE RESEARCH

Will be to explore:

- The perspectives of various key informants on the roles and responsibilities of Inclusive Education Support Teams;
- How one rural Inclusive Education Support Team understands and translates their understanding of inclusive education into practice;
- What one rural Inclusive Education Support Team experiences as challenging in the implementation of inclusive education;
- What capacity building exists and is required by one rural Inclusive Education Support Teams in order to align their practice with current policy;
- What recommendations can be made for the future improvement of the support services delivered by one rural Inclusive Education Support Team

##### A. DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION

1. What work do you currently do?
2. How long have you held this position?
3. I am interested to hear what career path you followed to get to where you are today.
4. How did you first get involved in Inclusive Education?

##### B. INCLUSIVE EDUCATION: POLICIES AND GUIDELINES

1. What has your role been in terms of Inclusive Education and Educational Support Services nationally/in the Western Cape?
2. How are you currently involved in Inclusive Education and Educational Support Services?

##### C. INCLUSIVE EDUCATION TEAMS

1. How did the idea of Inclusive Education Support Teams evolve?
2. What do you understand to be the vision for these teams?
3. How are these teams generally regarded in the context of building an inclusive education system?

4. What policy has specifically been written/includes information about the implementation/practice of Inclusive Education Teams?

#### D. PRACTICAL IMPLEMENTATION OF THE WORK OF THE INCLUSIVE EDUCATION SUPPORT TEAMS

1. What do you view as the roles and responsibilities of:
  - 1.1 Inclusive Education Support Teams?
  - 1.2 The individual professionals within the Inclusive Education Support Teams?  
(Give examples)
2. What do you regard as your role in relation to the Inclusive Education Support Teams?  
(Give examples)
3. How do you feel the current policies and associated guidelines have informed:
  - 3.1 Your own work in relation to the Inclusive Education Support Teams? (Give examples)
  - 3.2 What the Inclusive Education Support Teams do and how they should do it?
  - 3.3 Your experience of the actual work Inclusive Education Support Teams do?

#### E. CHALLENGES AND SUCCESSES WITH REGARDS TO THE WORK OF INCLUSIVE EDUCATION SUPPORT TEAMS

1. How do you view the addition of Inclusive Education Teams into the Education Department's reconceptualization of the Education Support Services?
2. What do you think has been challenging with regards to the introduction of Inclusive Education Support Teams in the Western Cape?
3. What has been challenging for you in terms of your responsibilities towards the Inclusive Education Support Teams?
4. What has been done to successfully address some of these challenges?
5. What do you regard as successful in terms of the introduction of Inclusive Education Teams in the Western Cape?
6. What recommendations would you make for the future of Inclusive Education Teams in terms of:
  - 6.1 Policy
  - 6.2 Practice?

#### F. CAPACITY BUILDING OF INCLUSIVE EDUCATION TEAMS

1. What capacity building/support do the Inclusive Education Teams receive?
2. What are your thoughts on the effectiveness of this capacity building for these teams?
3. What capacity building/support do you feel the Inclusive Education Teams should receive in order to be sufficiently empowered to work effectively in our schools?
4. How can the capacity building of the Inclusive Education Teams be improved?

#### G. OTHER QUESTIONS OR COMMENTS

1. Do you have anything else you would like to add or perhaps a further comment you would like to make before we finish?

## APPENDIX H

### Interview Guide 3: Focus Group Interview Guide

#### INTERVIEW SCHEDULE FOR THE FOCUS GROUP

##### A. INCLUSIVE EDUCATION

- *Crayon activity*

Each group member selects a crayon/s from the box of crayons, the colour/s of which best:

- Describes the work they do
- Depicts how they feel about the work they do

Share this with the group

##### **Collectively, how would the team sum up the work they do?**

- *Defining inclusive education*

The group brainstorms their collective understanding of inclusive education

This is then discussed

##### B. INCLUSIVE EDUCATION POLICY

- Group explores their understanding of the intention of Inclusive Education Policy and compares this with their experience of the reality of its implication

##### C. INCLUSIVE EDUCATION SUPPORT SERVICES

- What does the team view as their:  
Role and responsibilities in terms of the work they do?
- With the above in mind, how would the team graphically present their understanding of how they fit into an inclusive education system?
- Ask the team to describe how the various stakeholders depicted in their diagram, work in relation to one another
- What is the team's experience of collaboration across sectors e.g. education and health
- What is the team's view on such collaboration?

##### D. CHALLENGES FACING INCLUSIVE EDUCATION GENERALLY, BUT ALSO IN TERMS OF THE WORK THE TEAM DOES

The team is asked to draw a mountain on the cardboard provided.

At the top would be they are asked to provide their vision or goal relating to inclusive education. They are then asked to add the path they would need to take towards that goal, and depict the barriers or problems they would encounter, or have already encountered along the way.

They could use drawings, symbols and/or words to mark the barriers or any of the materials provided.

The team are reminded not to focus only on physical and financial barriers. They should also include in their diagram who would be affected by each barrier, and if possible, how they could potentially address these challenges.

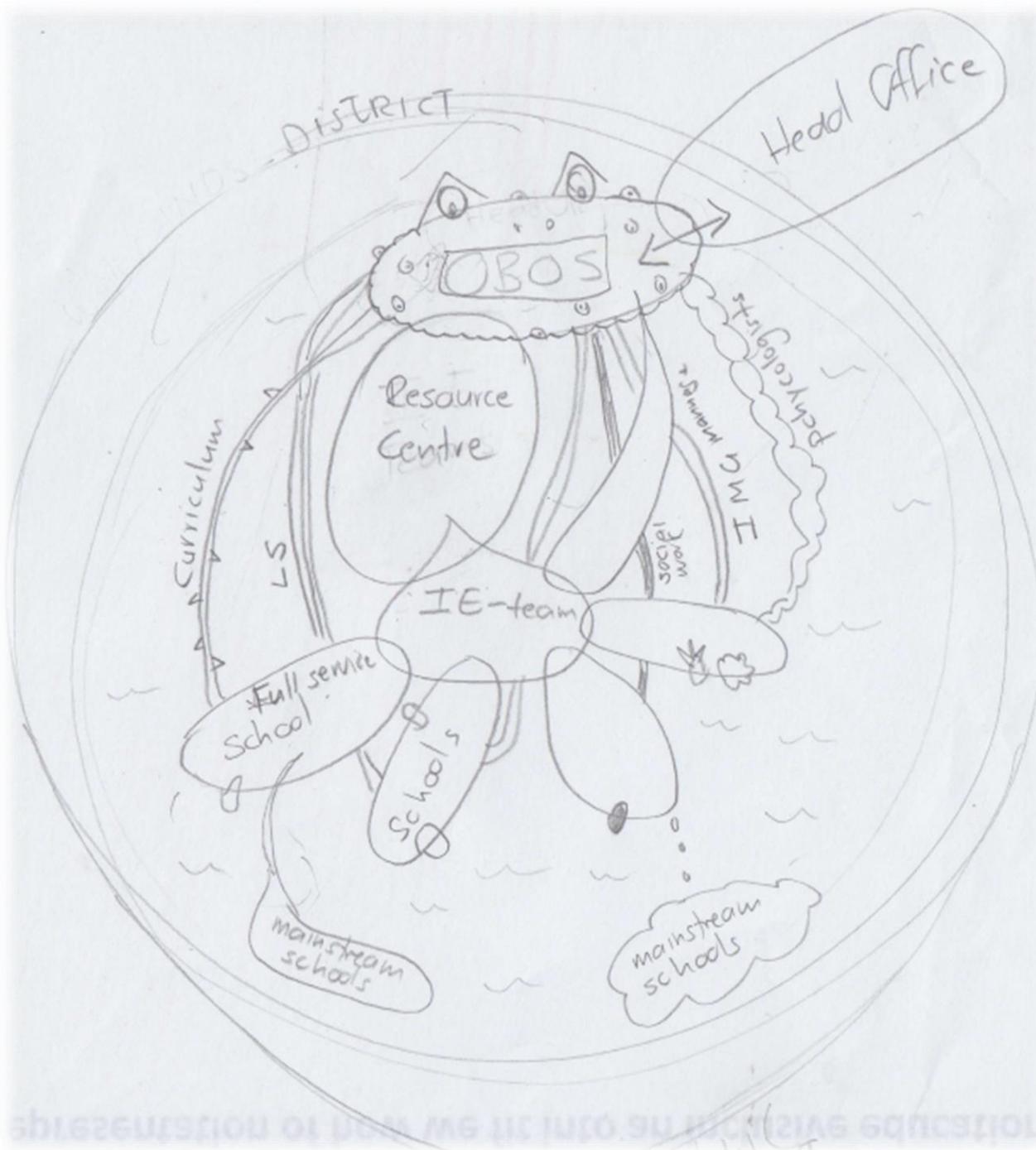
E. CAPACITY BUILDING

- Specifically, what do you feel Inclusive Education Teams need to function optimally?

F. ANY OTHER QUESTIONS OR COMMENTS

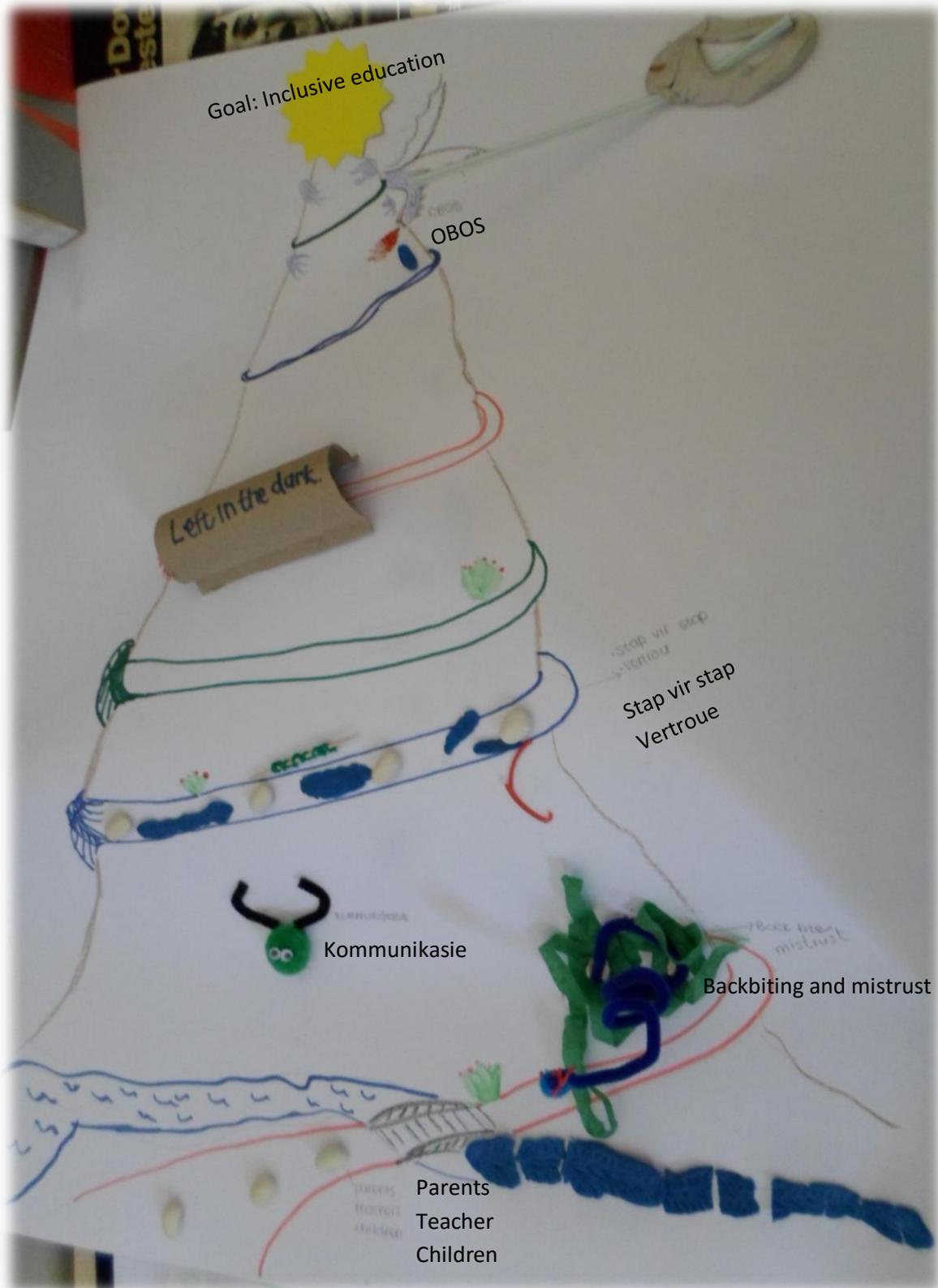
## APPENDIX I

**Focus group activity: Graphic representation of the Inclusive Education Outreach Team's understanding of how they fit within an inclusive education system**



## APPENDIX J

**Focus group activity: Graphic representation of the challenges that confront the Inclusive Education Outreach Team**



**APPENDIX K**

### Excerpt of an interview transcript

**I:** *Ok last activity, here are the instructions, basically we are going to look at the challenges that you feel obstruct the work that you do. I'm going to give you a piece of cardboard and what I want you to do is to draw a mountain which represents inclusive education. Along the contours of the mountain you are going to draw a path. The path represents your journey so far in terms of inclusive education and along this path you going to show what you believe are the barriers to effectively doing your work and also what you believe are potential solutions to overcome these barriers.*

**G:** Ons kom van die kant af; Oh gaan ons reg rondom stap? Donker wolke; Ja ek laat dit nou bietjie donker klink; Die grassies is die ligpuntjies; Moet ons tot bo gaan? Ja bo is ons goal; Watter kleur gaan ons paadtjie wees? Die sterretjie vir ons goal; Die rivier is een van die goed wat ons moet oorkom; Dragon over here; Die pad verskillende dae; Bad dae; Goeie dae; Die slang, sy tong wil nie lekker nie . . .

**P3:** Wat beteken die tonnel?

**P2:** Die tonnel is die duisternis waarin ons werk. So as ons iets wil kry weet ons nie hoe nie; niemand weet wat aangaan nie.

**P3:** We are left in the dark

**P2:** Left in the dark, trying to find your way

**P3:** En die verskillende kleure vir die paadtjie?

**P2:** Ja, sometimes it's good days other days it's . . .

**P3:** En bo is 'n draak.

**P1:** Wat verteenwoordig die draak; wie is die draak?

**P3:** Dit is die sisteem dink ek

**P2:** The dragon is the representative of whoever stops us, really doing; feeling like we are getting somewhere and then it's being stopped by red tape, hierarchy, following the right procedure, that kind of thing.

**P1:** And that blue play dough is kommunikasie wat reg deur die sisteem gebrekkig is.

**G:** And what is our goal; successful inclusive education, ok so what should we use to symbolize that, to represent that? A star . . .

**P2:** Ja, it is the warm and bright star of inclusion. Our goal is to reach the light

**P1:** Promote inclusive education, the real inclusive education

**G:** Nou goed kyk gou of al die uitdagings wat julle ervaar verteenwoordig is op die prent of daar nog iets meer wat julle wil neer sit? Is hierdie die onderwysers? Nee, daardie is ook struikelblokke; Dit kan wees elkeen wat ons nog moet wen? Ja jy wen hulle; Nou hoekom moet ons die onderwysers wen?

**P3:** To make them believe in our [inclusive education] system. We need them to make it work, otherwise it will just be a policy or a document. It is challenging because it is extra work for them.

**P1:** And a different way of thinking, changing of attitudes towards everything which they believed in. Now you are telling them to think differently and for people who are set in their ways that is quite difficult.

**P2:** Winning their trust is the only way . . .

**P3:** Not only giving advice, but maybe make it more practical like showing them.

**P2:** Ja, and also just listen to the problem; if one can help from your point of view. . .

**P3:** But it's not just helping; one has to understand their needs. So, it's not what you think the problem is. And if you address that first, you will win trust.

**P1:** But it takes a long time. As ons die onderwysers se vertroue wen dan kan ons eers effektief beginne werk, want as ons eers die vertroue wen, dit wil sê hulle glo in dit wat ons doen en daar is 'n moontlikheid dat dit kan werk, dan pas hulle dit toe.

**P1:** What works for the teachers is if you can fit in with their curriculum, but still sometimes when you tell them that it can be part of the curriculum, they are still scared of making it part of the curriculum cause they are scared they will be doing something wrong according to the people at the OBOS or whoever.

**P2:** And this here? We have to build bridges to build the communication and maybe it is right at the bottom where we need to start, it is quite important.

**P1:** And the river that you need to cross before you can do anything else, is right at the bottom.

**P2:** This creature here; it is a snake in the grass; it says backbiting and mistrust, but good leadership will help by setting boundaries and facilitating communication or this working together thing that XXX is talking about and also boundaries because if people knew what exactly is expected of them they wouldn't cross the lines.

**P1:** I think most of the trouble that has occurred is not that we want to be troublesome, it is because we didn't know.

**P2:** I was just listening to us and thinking that all the trouble we experience hasn't got anything to do with the children or the school or the reason why we're employed it's got to do with personal issues and what's the word?

**P1:** It's politics

**P2:** No, its emotional things that we encounter . . . interpersonal

**P2:** It's the dealing with the people who are supposed to support us; they are the ones who give us the most trouble and make us feel insecure and unhappy and

**P1:** I would say feel incompetent.

**P2:** Ja, that snake thing . . . if somebody makes a little mistake people will exploit it and they will take that mistake and make it into a huge big thing. It feels that the only way they know me is when I do something wrong. So they say "Oh it's that one who goes into schools and tells people things before she checks; she is a wild card, be careful of her". It's undermining.

**P3:** It defeats the purpose; that's not why we are here.

**P1:** And the time you spend to solve the politics it is so much more than the time we spend doing our work and supporting the children.

**I:** *So before you go further up the mountain have you got any potential solutions for the challenges you've already shared?*

**P2:** Well I think communication

**P1:** And collaboration as well, cause sometimes the backbiting happens not only because of no communication, but also because of not working together and then people think from outside that you trying to do their work or work against them.

**P2:** Putting them in a bad light.

**P1:** So it is not just at the bottom where the communication is broken; it goes up to the top of the mountain.

## APPENDIX L

### Example of Coding of Transcript

<u>Code</u>	
<b>Team's experience of their work</b>	<p>P3: Wat beteken die tonnel?</p> <p>P2: Die tonnel is die <b>duisternis waarin ons werk</b>. So as ons iets wil kry weet ons nie hoe nie; <b>niemand weet wat aangaan nie</b>.</p>
<b>The nature of the work</b>	<p>P3: We are left in the dark</p>
<b>Systemic issues</b>	<p>P2: Left in the dark, <b>trying to find your way</b></p> <p>P3: En die verskillende kleure vir die paadtjie?</p> <p>P2: <b>Ja, sometimes it's good days other days it's bad.</b></p>
<b>Teams' contribution to building an inclusive education system</b>	<p>P3: En bo is 'n draak.</p> <p>P1: Wat verteenwoordig die draak; wie is die draak?</p> <p>P3: Dit is <b>die sisteem</b> dink ek</p>
<b>Teams' contribution to building an inclusive education system</b>	<p>P2: The dragon is the representative of whoever stops us, really doing; <b>feeling like we are getting somewhere and then it's being stopped by red tape, hierarchy, following the right procedure</b>, that kind of thing.</p> <p>P1: And that blue play dough is <b>kommunikasie wat reg deur die sisteem gebrekkig is.</b></p>
<b>Building partnerships</b>	<p>G: And what is <b>our goal; successful inclusive education</b>, ok so what should we use to symbolize that, to represent that? A star . . .</p>
<b>Barriers to implementation: Teacher perspectives on the new policies</b>	<p>P2: Ja, it is the warm and bright star of inclusion. Our goal is to reach the light</p>
<b>Teams' perspective of their role and responsibilities</b>	<p>P1: <b>Promote inclusive education</b>, the real inclusive education</p>

<p><b>Recommendation/solution</b></p> <p><b>Collaboration</b></p> <p>Communication issues</p> <p><b>Interpersonal issues</b></p> <p><b>Recommendation/solution</b></p> <p><b>Collaboration</b></p> <p><b>Team's experience of their work</b></p> <p><b>Interpersonal issues</b></p> <p><b>Team's experience of their work</b></p> <p><b>Interpersonal issues</b></p> <p><b>Team's experience of their work</b></p>	<p><b>G:</b> Nou goed kyk gou of al die uitdagings wat julle ervaar verteenwoordig is op die prent of daar nog iets meer wat julle wil neer sit? Is hierdie die onderwysers? Nee, daardie is ook struikelblokke; Dit kan wees elkeen wat ons nog moet wen? Ja jy wen hulle; Nou hoekom moet ons die onderwysers wen?</p> <p><b>P3:</b> <b>To make them believe in our [inclusive education] system. We need them to make it work</b>, otherwise it will just be a policy or a document. It is challenging because it is <b>extra work for them</b>.</p> <p><b>P1:</b> And <b>a different way of thinking, changing of attitudes towards everything which they believed in</b>. Now you are telling them to think differently and for people who are set in their ways that is quite difficult.</p> <p><b>P2:</b> <b>Winning their trust</b> is the only way . . .</p> <p><b>P3:</b> <b>Not only giving advice, but maybe make it more practical like showing them</b>.</p> <p><b>P2:</b> <b>Ja, and also just listen to the problem</b>; if one can help from your point of view. . .</p> <p><b>P3:</b> But it's not just helping; <b>one has to understand their needs</b>. So, it's not what you think the problem is. And if you address that first, you will win trust.</p> <p><b>P1:</b> But it takes a long time. As ons die onderwysers se vertroue wen <b>dan kan ons eers effektief beginne werk</b>, want as ons eers die vertroue wen, dit wil sê hulle glo in dit wat ons doen en daar is 'n moontlikheid dat dit kan werk, dan pas hulle dit toe.</p> <p><b>P1:</b> <b>What works for the teachers is if you can fit in with their curriculum</b>, but still sometimes when you tell them that it can be part of the curriculum, they are still scared of making it part of the curriculum cause they are scared they will be doing something wrong according to the people at the OBOS or whoever.</p>
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<p><b>Recommendation/solution</b></p> <p><b>Collaboration</b></p> <p>Communication issues: fragmented service delivery</p> <p><b>Interpersonal: professional jealousy</b></p> <p>Communication issues</p>	<p><b>P2:</b> And this here? <b>We have to build bridges</b> to build the communication and maybe it is right at the bottom where we need to start, it is quite important.</p> <p><b>P1:</b> And the river that you need to cross before you can do anything else, is right at the bottom.</p> <p><b>P2:</b> This creature here; it is a snake in the grass; it says <b>backbiting and mistrust</b>, but <b>good leadership will help by setting boundaries and facilitating communication or this working together thing</b> that XXX is talking about and also boundaries because if people knew what exactly is expected of them they wouldn't cross the lines.</p> <p><b>P1:</b> I think most of <b>the trouble that has occurred is not that we want to be troublesome, it is because we didn't know.</b></p> <p><b>P2:</b> I was just listening to us and thinking that <b>all the trouble we experience hasn't got anything to do with the children or the school or the reason why we're employed it's got to do with personal issues</b> and what's the word?</p> <p><b>P1:</b> It's politics</p> <p><b>P2:</b> No, <b>its emotional things that we encounter . . . interpersonal</b></p> <p><b>P2:</b> It's the dealing with the people who are supposed to support us; they are the ones who give us the most trouble and make us <b>feel insecure and unhappy and</b></p> <p><b>P1:</b> I would say feel <b>incompetent.</b></p> <p><b>P2:</b> Ja, that snake thing . . . <b>if somebody makes a little mistake people will exploit it and they will take that mistake and make it into a huge big thing.</b> It feels that the only way they know me is when I do something wrong. So they say "Oh it's that one who goes into schools and tells people things before she checks; she is a wild card, be careful of her". <b>It's undermining.</b></p>
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	<p><b>P3:</b> It defeats the purpose; that's not why we are here.</p> <p><b>P1:</b> <b>And the time you spend to solve the politics it is so much more than the time we spend doing our work and supporting the children.</b></p> <p><b>I:</b> <i>So before you go further up the mountain have you got any <b>potential solutions for the challenges you've already shared?</b></i></p> <p><b>P2:</b> Well I think <b>communication</b></p> <p><b>P1:</b> And <b>collaboration</b> as well, cause sometimes the backbiting happens not only because of no communication, but also because of <b>not working together</b> and then people think from outside that you <b>trying to do their work or work against them.</b></p> <p><b>P2:</b> <b>Putting them in a bad light.</b></p> <p><b>P1:</b> So <b>it is not just at the bottom where the communication is broken; it goes up to the top of the mountain.</b></p>
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## APPENDIX K

### Clustering of Coding into Themes

The research questions are used as a framework to organize the data into themes and subthemes.

<b>Inclusive education policies, associated guidelines and documentation</b>	
<b>Theme:</b> How participants understand the intention of the education department's inclusive education policies and associated guidelines	
<b>Subtheme: Barriers to implementation:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The administrative burden created by the new policies</li> <li>- Teacher attitudes towards the new policy documents</li> </ul>	<b>P3: Extra work</b> for them.  <b>P1: And a different way of thinking, changing of attitudes</b> towards everything which they believed in.
<b>Participants' understanding of Inclusive education Outreach Teams</b>	
<b>Theme:</b> The contribution Inclusive Education Outreach Teams can make towards building an inclusive education system in our country	
<b>Subtheme:</b> Team members' expectations and subsequent experience of their work	<b>P2: Die tunnel is die duisternis waarin ons werk.</b> So as ons iets wil kry <b>weet ons nie hoe nie; niemand weet wat aangaan nie.</b>  <b>P2: Left in the dark, trying to find your way</b>  <b>P2: It's the dealing with the people who are supposed to support us; they are the ones who give us the most trouble and make us feel insecure and unhappy</b> and  <b>P1: I would say feel incompetent.</b>
<b>Subtheme:</b> Advocates for inclusion	<b>G: And what is our goal? Successful inclusive education . . .</b>  <b>P1: Promote inclusive education,</b> the real inclusive education

<b>Participants' perspectives on the practical implementation of inclusive education</b>	
<b>Theme:</b> The team understands their role and responsibilities	
<b>Subtheme:</b> A support service	<p><b>P2:</b> <b>Winning their trust</b> is the only way . . .</p> <p><b>P3:</b> <b>Not only giving advice, but maybe make it more practical like showing them.</b></p> <p><b>P2:</b> <b>Ja, and also just listen to the problem;</b> if one can help from your point of view. . .</p> <p><b>P3:</b> But it's not just helping; <b>one has to understand their needs.</b> So, it's not what you think the problem is. And if you address that first, you will win trust.</p> <p><b>P1:</b> But it takes a long time. As ons die onderwysers se vertroue wen <b>dan kan ons eers effektief beginne werk,</b></p>
<b>Subtheme:</b> Intersectorial Collaboration	<p><b>P2:</b> And this here? <b>We have to build bridges . . . this working together thing</b></p>
<b>Subtheme:</b> Building Partnerships	<p><b>P3:</b> To make them [teachers] believe in our [inclusive education] system. <b>We need them to make it work.</b></p>
<b>Theme:</b> Team member's experience of the work they do	
<b>Subtheme:</b> Dynamic work	<p><b>P2:</b> Ja, sometimes it's good days other days it's bad.</p>
<b>Participants' perspectives on the challenges and successes they have experienced</b>	
<b>Theme:</b> Challenges experienced by the team	
<b>Subtheme:</b> Interpersonal challenges	<p><b>P2:</b> All the trouble we experience hasn't got anything to do with the children or the school or the reason why we're employed it's got to do with <b>personal issues;</b> its <b>emotional things that we encounter . . . interpersonal . . . backbiting and mistrust</b></p>

<p><b>Subtheme:</b> Systemic issues</p>	<p><b>P3:</b> Dit is die <b>sisteem</b> dink ek</p> <p><b>P2:</b> The dragon is the representative of whoever stops us, really doing; feeling like we are getting somewhere and then it's being stopped by red tape, hierarchy, following the right procedure, that kind of thing.</p>
<p><b>Subtheme:</b> Fragmented service delivery</p>	<p><b>P2:</b> Not working together and then people think from outside that you trying to do their work or work against them.</p> <p><b>P1:</b> And that blue play dough is <b>kommunikasie</b> wat reg deur die sisteem gebrekkig is.</p>
<p><b>Capacity building of Inclusive Education Outreach Teams</b></p>	
<p><b>Theme: Recommendations for the future of Inclusive Education Outreach Teams</b></p>	
<p><b>Subtheme:</b> Good leadership</p>	<p><b>P2:</b> <b>Good leadership</b> will help by setting boundaries and facilitating communication or this working together thing that XXX is talking about and also boundaries because if people knew what exactly is expected of them they wouldn't cross the lines.</p>