

# **Collaboration in full-service schools: Learning support teachers' roles and practices**

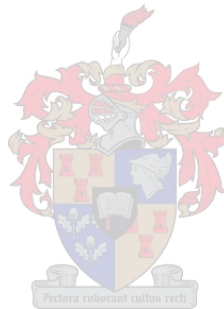
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## **THESIS**

Presented in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree

Masters in Educational Psychology at

Stellenbosch University



Supervisor: Prof. E. Swart

December 2020

## DECLARATION

I declare that this is my original research for the purpose of the thesis “Collaboration in full-service schools: Learning support teachers’ roles and practices” and that all sources I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by means of complete references.

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Charine de Ridder

December 2020

Date

## **DEDICATION**

I dedicate this thesis to my German family, Christel and Klaus Reusch. You have unconditionally validated my worth from day one, guiding me to set firm boundaries while teaching me about the many seasons of life. I am indebted to you for many wise life lessons.

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENT**

To all those who have carried me through this journey with your kind words, time, guidance and patience.

My children and husband, for never asking me when I would be done and gently accepting and allowing me the time and space I needed. I would not have made it without your love and support. You fill my cup.

My parents, for accepting my children into your home and caring for them like your own. It does take a village.

The learning support teachers who took part in my study. You were so candid, willing and vulnerable in your personal narratives. Thank you for trusting me to tell your story.

Prof. Estelle Swart, for your encouragement, guidance and enthusiasm. Thank you for many hours of discussion and your willingness to guide and mentor. The ease with which you facilitate and guide is inspiring.



## ABSTRACT

In South Africa, one of the key strategies for the implementation of inclusive education was adding an additional category of school, known as full-service schools. These schools are mainstream schools that function in such a way that they are responsive to the full range of learning needs of all learners. The purpose of full-service schools is not only to provide access to learners who are deemed as having moderate or even high levels of support needs, but also to ensure that the school they have access to can provide them with the needed support, through collaboration with government and community services. Full-service schools were afforded learning support teachers along with the expectation that they would participate in intersectoral networks and collaborations while brokering partnerships through which various role players would have the opportunity to co-construct knowledge.

The theoretical framework for the study was cultural-historical activity theory (CHAT). In this study, the object in terms of this theory was access and quality education for all learners through responsive pedagogies. The interpretation of such an object can vary extensively depending on the subjects' interpretations, past and present relational power struggles within the particular system and the context. CHAT as an exploratory lens allows one to explore these relational struggles that underpin the goal-directed action. The learning support teacher as a member of the full-service school and the district can assume a crucial role as possible boundary broker, who can develop responsive practices to mediate between systems in order to negotiate new ways to ensure that objects reach education's outcome of inclusion and education for all. This is known as boundary-crossing competence.

This study aimed to develop narratives of learning support teachers' trajectories of collaboration and relational agency and their role in developing inclusive pedagogies in full-service schools. An interpretive case study design was used to provide in-depth descriptions and analysis of a bounded system comprised of four learning support teachers employed by the Western Cape Education Department and stationed at full-service schools. Participants were selected through non-probability sampling and data were collected through four individual semi-structured interviews, document analysis and field notes from observations.

The data revealed that if learning support teachers are to be agents of change, who broker policy based on the specific context of the school in which they are placed, they need to have the voice, skills and membership to do so. Their success depends on their ability to broker partnerships, though relational agency, within a particular context. An individual,

however, whether afforded membership or not, cannot bring about the level of change needed to make full-service schools functional. For deep-seated institutional change, school management and their values and attitudes towards the implementation of inclusive education need to be addressed.

*Keywords: inclusion, full-service schools, learning support teacher, collaboration, relational agency, inclusive pedagogies, cultural-historical activity theory, boundary-crossing competence*

## OPSOMMING

Een van die belangrikste strategieë in Suid-Afrika vir die implementering van inklusiewe onderwys was die byvoeging van 'n bykomende skoolkategorie, bekend as voldiensskole. Hierdie skole is hoofstroomskole wat op so 'n manier funksioneer dat hulle reageer op die volle omvang van leerbehoeftes van alle leerders. Die doel van voldiensskole is nie net om toegang te bied aan leerders met matige of selfs hoë vlakke steunbehoeftes nie, maar ook om te verseker dat die skool waartoe hulle toegang het deur samewerking met die regering en gemeenskapsdienste die nodige ondersteuning aan hulle kan bied. Leerondersteuningonderwysers is aan voldiensskole toegewys met die verwagting dat hulle aan intersektorale netwerke en samewerkings sal deelneem onderwyl hulle vennootskappe bemiddel waardeur verskeie rolspelers die geleentheid sal kry om gesamentlik kennis te ontwikkel.

Die teoretiese raamwerk vir hierdie studie was die kultuur-historiese aktiwiteitsteorie (CHAT). In hierdie studie was die objek ingevolge die teorie toegang en gehalte-onderdig vir alle leerders deur responsiewe pedagogieë. Die interpretasie van so 'n objek kan uiteenlopend wees na gelang van subjekte se interpretasies, vorige en huidige verhoudingsmagstryde in die spesifieke stelsel en die konteks. CHAT as 'n ondersoeklens maak voorsiening vir die verkenning van verhoudingstryde wat die doelgerigte aksie ondersteun. Die leerondersteuningonderwyser as 'n lid van die voldiensskool en die distrik kan 'n noodsaaklike rol as moontlike grensbemiddelaar vervul, wat responsiewe praktyke kan ontwikkel om tussen stelsels te bemiddel te einde nuwe maniere te onderhandel om te verseker dat objekte die onderwysuitkoms van insluiting en onderwys vir almal bereik. Dit staan as grensoorbruggingsvaardigheid bekend.

Die studie was daarop gemik om narratiewe van leerondersteuningonderwysers se weë van samewerking en verhoudingsagentskap en hul rol in die ontwikkeling van inklusiewe pedagogieë in voldiensskole te ontwikkel. 'n Interpretatiewe gevallestudie-ontwerp is gebruik om diepgaande beskrywings en ontledings van 'n gebonde stelsel, bestaande uit vier leerondersteuningonderwysers in diens van die Wes-Kaapse Onderwysdepartement en by voldiensskole geplaas, te verskaf. Deelnemers is deur niewaarskynlikheidsteekproefneming gekies en data is ingesamel deur vier individuele semigestruktureerde onderhoude, dokumentontleding en veldnotas op grond van waarneming.

Die data het getoon dat leerondersteuningonderwysers die nodige stem, vaardighede en lidmaatskap moet hê ten einde veranderingsagente te wees wat beleid bemiddel op grond van die spesiale konteks van die skool waarin hulle geplaas is. Hul sukses is afhanklik van hul vermoë om vennootskappe deur verhoudingsagentskap in 'n spesifieke konteks te bemiddel. 'n Individu, met of sonder lidmaatskap, kan egter nie die nodige vlak van verandering teweegbring wat nodig is om voldiensskole funksioneel te maak nie. Die skoolbestuur en hul waardes en houdings teenoor die implementering van inklusiewe onderwys moet aan bod kom ten einde grondliggende institusionele verandering teweeg te bring.

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## LIST OF ACRONYMS

ASA	Activity systems analysis
CHAT	Cultural-historical activity theory
DBST	District-based Support Team
DoE	Department of Education
ISP	Individual support plan
NCESS	National Committee on Education Support Services
NCSNET	National Commission on Special Needs in Education and Training
SBST	School-based Support Team
SIAS	Screening, identification, assessment and support
SNA	Support needs assessment
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
WCED	Western Cape Education Department

# CHAPTER 1

## CONTEXTUALISATION OF THE PROBLEM

### 1.1 INTRODUCTION

Inclusive education is regarded as a global agenda (Ainscow, 2007; UNESCO, 2020) and has been a highly debated and fundamental movement for more than two decades, but what has it amounted to in South Africa as it stands in 2020? Grounded in a rights movement, inclusive education advocates for equality, demanding that the diverse learning needs of all children be addressed in the mainstream classroom (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization [UNESCO], 1994). Due to the complex and multidimensional nature of the concept (Artiles & Kozleski, 2007; Haug, 2017), various countries have implemented it based on their particular context and need. At its core, however, are a set of values that transcend any geographical, social, cultural or contextual border. These include being committed to building a more democratic society and a more equitable education system and the requirement that mainstream classrooms not only accommodate, but also be responsive to the diverse needs of all learners (Ainscow, 2009; Engelbrecht, 2018; UNESCO, 2020).

According to UNESCO's (2020) Global Education Monitoring Report, its 2030 agenda focuses on equity and inclusion in an attempt to highlight and address the persistent "unequal distribution of resources and opportunities" (p. 6). The Covid-19 pandemic has brought to light how far we are from providing equitable education. Globally, organisations and institutions are still found to favour certain groups based on culturally specific norms, standards and beliefs, while excluding those who are vulnerable (UNESCO, 2020).

In South Africa, one of the key strategies for the implementation of inclusive education since 2001 was adding an additional category of school, known as full-service schools. These schools are mainstream schools that function in such a way that they are responsive to the full range of learning needs of all learners (Department of Basic Education [DoBE], 2010; Themane & Thobejane, 2018; Walton, Nel, Muller, & Lebeloane, 2014). These full-service schools are required to accept applications of learners with low to high levels of needs<sup>1</sup> and subsequently accommodate these learners in an equitable manner. The criteria for a school

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<sup>1</sup> According to the Guidelines for full-service/inclusive schools (DoBE, 2010) placement is organised based on the level of support needed. Mainstream schools can support learners with low to moderate support needs, while full-service schools support learners with low, moderate and high support needs.

to be selected as a full-service school were initially compiled in the Guidelines for full-service/inclusive schools (DoBE, 2010) and noted various characteristics and principles that would be desirable. The Western Cape Education Department (WCED), in their annual report of 2016–2017, indicated that their strategy was to initially convert schools that previously had ‘unit’, adaptation or resource classrooms<sup>2</sup> into full-service schools first (WCED, 2017). This might imply that these classes were selected as frontrunners due to the additional resources they possessed. These resources included a remedial teacher, today mostly referred to as a learning support teacher.<sup>3</sup>

## 1.2 BACKGROUND, MOTIVATION AND RESEARCH PROBLEM

Historically, learning support teachers operated within an individualised medical deficit paradigm that perceived disability as innate and in need of remediation (Makhalemele & Payne-Van Staden, 2018). Support was therefore problem-focused and did not take into account the cultural, historical and contextual barriers that might be at play to either precipitate or perpetuate the problem. Learners were removed from the classroom and received individualised or small-group support in a separate setting (Dreyer, 2013). Within an inclusive education system, the focus of support should take on a more systemic approach. Barriers were no longer confined to problems within the child, but a more holistic approach was adopted to identify any and all barriers that might exclude children from access to quality education.

Within the inclusive education framework, the successful transformation of the learning support teacher’s envisaged role in full-service schools is based on their ability to view learners’ barriers holistically and to have sufficient agency and influence at school and district level to engage all staff in similar practices. Their role, within the South African context and abroad, has therefore become increasingly consultative and collaborative (Dreyer, 2013; Gavish, 2017; Spratt & Florian, 2015). Very often being the single resource, along with funds for one class assistant, the learning support teacher is what most teachers and principals will refer to in defining the school as a full-service school (Jansen, in progress).<sup>4</sup> This in itself is problematic, as it almost exempts the school management from

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<sup>2</sup> The ‘unit’ or ‘special’ class, later referred to as a ‘resource class’, refers to a separate classroom in the school used to cater for learners with mild to moderate intellectual disability or severe barriers to learning.

<sup>3</sup> According to the South African Oxford dictionary of school terminology, teacher refers to a title and rank assigned to an educator employed at a public school in the service of the state and is responsible for engaging in class teaching. Educators refer to those who teach, educate and train others or provide professional services (Roos & Wilter, 2018). In this study I refer to those individuals who render specialised support as ‘learning support teachers’ and not ‘learning support educators’.

<sup>4</sup> Zenda Jansen’s study (Samewerking in ‘n Voldiensskool: ‘n Gevallestudie), which is being examined, found this to be the case. She formed part of the research group studying collaboration in inclusive education.

buying into their full-service status and places the responsibility for responsive accommodation of all learners squarely on the shoulders of the learning support teacher. As previously mentioned, learning support teachers' job expectations historically perpetuated exclusion through removing learners from mainstream education classrooms to support them individually or in small core groups. This context has in the past segregated them from the rest of the staff, and in a sense they were often viewed as an additional set of hands (Van de Putte, Schauwer, Howe, & Davies, 2018). This notion of being extra, of being added on, seems to have persisted. In the Western Cape, learning support teachers work for one of eight education districts. They are placed at schools based on how their learning support advisors, at their particular district, see fit. They therefore run the risk of not ever being afforded full membership in either the school or the particular district, as they are but partially part of both.

Literature confirms that with the inclusive education movement there has been a shift in the role and responsibilities of the learning support teacher (Dreyer, 2013; Gavish, 2017; Spratt & Florian, 2015). Prior to 2018, the formal job description pertaining to learning support teachers in the Western Cape was less set in stone, seen differently by various stakeholders or not yet formalised. Learning support teachers were functioning based on what they had been doing for years, mainly removing learners for small-group support, their work largely depending on the expectations of their advisors. The question is, without a national directive that prioritises certain skills needed to provide support to all learners in full-service schools, what are the necessary skills needed by hired learning support teachers, taking into account the many unit class educators who merely transitioned to learning support teachers?

The 2018 WCED job description (see Appendix A) for learning support teachers refers to their post as falling under the category of 'learner support'. The wording implies them working primarily with learners, as opposed to the term 'learning support', which refers to learners, adults and the school as a whole. Different districts seem to function and interpret the document differently, referring to it as merely a guideline. Many of the key performance areas are, however, based on the assumption that the learning support teacher has the necessary knowledge, skills, experience and status to provide 'learning support' as stipulated in the job description. This document expects them to perform in the following key areas:

- Implementation of learning support capacity-building programmes for early identification of and interventions related to barriers to learning

- Provision of specialised learning support to strengthen the School-based Support Teams (SBSTs)
- Participation in inter- and intrasectoral networks and collaborations.

In addition, mounting pressure to prepare schools for the implementation of the Policy on Screening, Identification, Assessment and Support (henceforth the ‘SIAS policy’)<sup>5</sup> (DoBE, 2014) saw learning support teachers being trained first, implying that this training prepared them to broker policy at school level. This expectation in itself causes a range of problems, as the District-based Support Team (DBST) seems to be turning to post level 1<sup>6</sup> workers to do their bidding in schools that have provisional learning support teachers, while not taking into account whether these individuals have the proper training, knowledge, influence and agency to successfully contribute to implementation. In full-service schools there is even more pressure to contribute to the school functioning as a beacon of good practice and resource centre for mainstream schools in the area (DoBE, 2010).

Research highlights that in order for inclusive education to be successful, there needs to be adequate support for learners who experience barriers to learning (Dreyer, 2017). In full-service schools, this responsibility seems to be shifted to learning support teachers by the school, and even the district, who expect of them to broker policy and departmental training courses (see Appendix A). We know from previous research what the learning support teacher’s changing role entails, but we do not know with what agency they approach the many challenges they face (Dreyer, 2013, 2017; Gavish, 2017; Harker, 2010) – agency being construed as acting by means of a particular environment rather than simply in the environment influenced by particular cultural, systemic and contextual aspects (Themane & Thobejane, 2018).

Successful access and equitable education mandate collaborative practices by all stakeholders. While learning support teachers are still being expected to focus individually and through withdrawal of learners, there is a supposition that inclusion requires individuals who work together, as peers rather than experts, in an attempt to solve problems and learn from one another. The Global Education Monitoring Report (UNESCO, 2020) stipulates that

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<sup>5</sup> The policy is a tool to assess and provide support collaboratively and systematically, emphasising new roles and responsibilities for education support staff. The policy provides a framework to standardise how learners are identified, assessed and supported to enhance participation and inclusion in schools (DoBE, 2014). Assessment and support are not based on categories of disability, but on the level and nature of their learning needs (UNESCO, 2020).

<sup>6</sup> According to the Personnel Administrative Measure (PAM) there are 6 post levels ranging from teachers, senior teachers and master teachers at post level 1 to head of department and educational specialist at post level 2. Deputy principals and senior education specialists are at post level 3 and principals fall under post level 4 (DoBE, 2016).

“weak collaboration, cooperation and coordination of stakeholders can impede implementation of ambitious laws and policies” (p. 90). Access and equitable education have internationally been proven to be ambitious, and this is without the specific social and economic contexts that plague South Africa. Collaboration can therefore not be an optional component in full-service schools, but should be viewed as the fundamental necessity. If we have learnt anything from the past 20 years of policy and guidelines it is that nothing is obsolete, but always contextually situated and open to individual interpretation. The concept of collaboration is no different, as illustrated by the continuum along which these practices fall (see Section 2.4).

Gavish (2017) found that there was a process that involved stages of evolution when it came to the interpretation and implementation of inclusion, accompanied by a continuous struggle as the process continues. At the time of this study (2020) the Western Cape Education Department (WCED) have come to a point where there are around 323 full-service schools in the Western Cape (DoBE, 2015; WCED, 2019) providing access to learners with low, moderate and high levels of needs. The assumption might therefore be that in these full-service schools, learning support teachers are functioning within their new collaborative role. This research aimed to develop narratives of learning support teachers’ trajectories of collaboration and relational agency and their role in developing inclusive pedagogies in full-service schools.

In the light of this background, the central research question was formulated as: What are the roles and collaborative practices of the learning support teachers in four full-service schools in the Western Cape?

The sub-questions were formulated as follows:

- What are the learning support teachers’ perceptions of their role in full-service schools?
- What are learning support teachers’ perceptions and understandings of collaboration?
- What are the mediating phenomena that enable or obstruct learning support teachers’ relational agency and collaborative practices in these school communities (affordances and constraints)?



### **1.3 RESEARCH OBJECTIVES**

Research has indicated that by embracing their changing role, learning support teachers can ensure collaborative support in classrooms and schools (Dreyer, 2013). This type of relational agency needed to coordinate schools' learning support demands of them to have a certain measure of authority and to advocate for their role in mobilising shared responsibility and problem solving. Although the demands on learning support teachers have increased with the movement towards inclusive education, they are still at post level 1 and expected to promote systemic change towards inclusion, as well as broker policy for the DBST, without necessarily having the authority or voice to do so. My aim was therefore to determine how they navigated their role in the particular full-service schools as well as to what extent the particular school context in which they functioned afforded them the opportunities to do so.

The learning support teachers in the study all worked for full-service schools within the catchment area of a particular district in the Western Cape. These schools all represent unique contexts situated within very specific cultural and historical backgrounds. In order for me to give a voice to the unique narratives of the participants, taking into account their peculiar placement as working for the particular district and functioning in a specific school, the framework employed in this study was the cultural-historical activity theory (CHAT).

### **1.4 CULTURAL-HISTORICAL ACTIVITY THEORY AS FRAMEWORK FOR THE STUDY**

Using CHAT as an explanatory framework does not restrict analyses of action to individuals. On the contrary, it sees action as being individual and collective, object-orientated and purposeful (Edwards, 2006). I therefore examined learning support teachers' position in, and experience of, working within a particular community and context, taking into account the historical and socio-cultural traditions that are ever-present within that particular context (Gretschel, Ramugondo, & Galvaan, 2015). I aimed to investigate how learning support teachers perceive their role in full-service schools and how they use or develop relational agency as a means of collaborating towards more inclusive pedagogies.

Pioneered from the original ideas of Lev Vygotsky and various other Soviet psychologists, CHAT provides a framework to understand and explain links between individual processes of learning and development as well as the learning and development that take place socially and culturally (Hancock & Miller 2017; Kelly, Woolfson, & Boyle, 2008; Oswald, 2019). CHAT views activity within an activity system as a group's purposeful, object-orientated, collective and mediated action, influenced by culture, history and structural aspects (Gretschel et al., 2015). On an individual level, it looks at how participants think about the real world, rather than how the world operates from a physical or biological perspective (Williams & Hummelbrunner, 2011). From a systems perspective, this implies

that if one wants to gain new insights and meanings within a particular context, one needs to look at how these meanings and insight are developed. The construct of activity is centred around creating a particular object, which may be defined and interpreted in an array of ways depending on the motives or meaning making of the individuals involved. Action, therefore, refers to the individual or collective action towards that particular object.

Mediation played an important part in Vygotsky's work. He stated that human behaviour and interactions are always mediated in some way by some form of mediational means (Daniels, 2015). According to Edwards (2006), mediational means can be viewed as any and all resources or artefacts that enhance performance and that individuals learn to use with the help of others. Through the use of these artefacts, the subjects can mediate what is culturally significant. In learning support teachers' full-service schools there are many tools they use to move towards their goal of providing access and quality education to all learners. The question is therefore whether the tools available, or created, are suited to address the needs of the activity system and its participants, in what ways these tools either constrain or influence the way work is done and whether stakeholders have the necessary skills to successfully use the available tools (Williams & Hubbelbrunner, 2011).

This basic mediational triangle of Vygotsky, as shown in Figure 1.1, is referred to as the first-generation activity theory. According to Engeström (1987, 2001, 2016), the limitation of this representation was the focus on the individual as the unit of analysis. He believes individuals can no longer be understood separate of their culture and society without the "agency of individuals who use and produce artefacts" (p. 5), leading to the second-generation activity system represented in Figure 1.2.

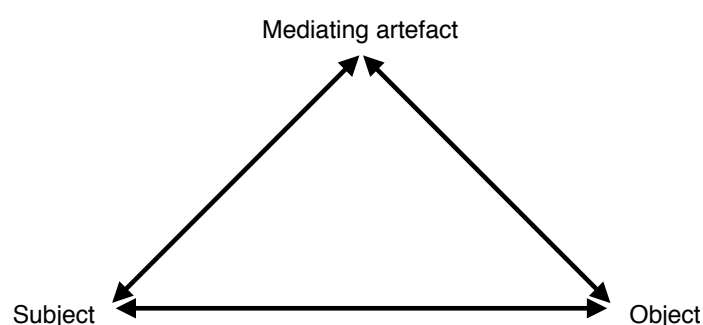


Figure 1.1: Vygotsky's basic mediational triangle (Vygotsky, 1978, p. 40)

### 1.4.1 The subject and object

The subjects of an activity system refer to those who are directly participating in the system. In this study, these refer to the school staff, including the learning support teacher, stationed at a particular full-service school. The object of these systems refers to the problem or goal to which the subjects' action is directed (Gretschel et al., 2015). It is a moving target, forever adapting and therefore challenging the adaptation of the subjects' action (Engeström, 2001). This object arises from a particular need within the system and reflects the true motive of the collective activity, thereby providing identity and direction (Engeström & Sanniño, 2018).

In this study, the object was access and quality education for all learners through responsive pedagogies; however, this will differ from one context to another. The interpretation of such an object can vary extensively depending on the subjects' interpretations, past and present relational power struggles within the particular system and the context. CHAT as an exploratory lens allows one to explore these relational struggles that underpin the goal-directed action and analyse the object as that which distinguishes activity systems from one another. Exploring these perceptions and intentions regarding the object can give one a good indication of the type of relational agency that is 'allowed' or encouraged within a particular system. It may also indicate how fluid these hierarchical structures are to possible contradictions that may arise in the activity system.

### 1.4.2 Mediating tools

The relationship between subject and object within any given activity system is mediated by the third component, namely tools or artefacts. The subjects are drawn to using these tools to accomplish the desired objectives (Gretschel et al., 2015; Hancock & Miller, 2017). These tools or artefacts are not confined to physical objects, such as an individual support plan (ISP), but may include concepts and elements, such as agency and collaboration, that shape daily action (Waitoller & Kozleski, 2013). Within this joint action that takes place towards a particular object, one finds subjective opinions, interpretations and understanding from different participants regarding the presenting problem. It is here that subjectivities can work towards expanding the interpretation of the problem through new and enriched understandings that may ultimately lead to new objectives.

Collaboration within the activity system entails being responsive to others, including professionals and learners, through a whole-system approach. This is a far cry from working strictly according to their own professional standards and goals. The object of an activity system, as previously mentioned, depends largely on the interpretation of the subjects and refers to that which directs the action. Professionals will therefore interpret a child's

trajectory based on their particular profession and associated activities (Edwards, 2009). According to Edwards (2009), it is through the recognition of the object motives of others that one can work towards a more holistic and beneficial response.

This highlights the important role of relational agency as a means of expanding and enriching interpretations (Wright, 2015). In the absence of such agency, the activity system might, regardless of contradictions, remain entrenched in old limiting views, failing to understand the totality of support needed (Edwards, 2006). Engeström (2001) accepted the importance of mediation, but emphasised that action does not take place in a vacuum. This led to the extension of the activity system to explore the relations between the individual and the cultural and historical factors, and the influence they have on the action taken, referred to as the second-generation activity theory (Batiibwe, 2019), as shown in Figure 1.2.

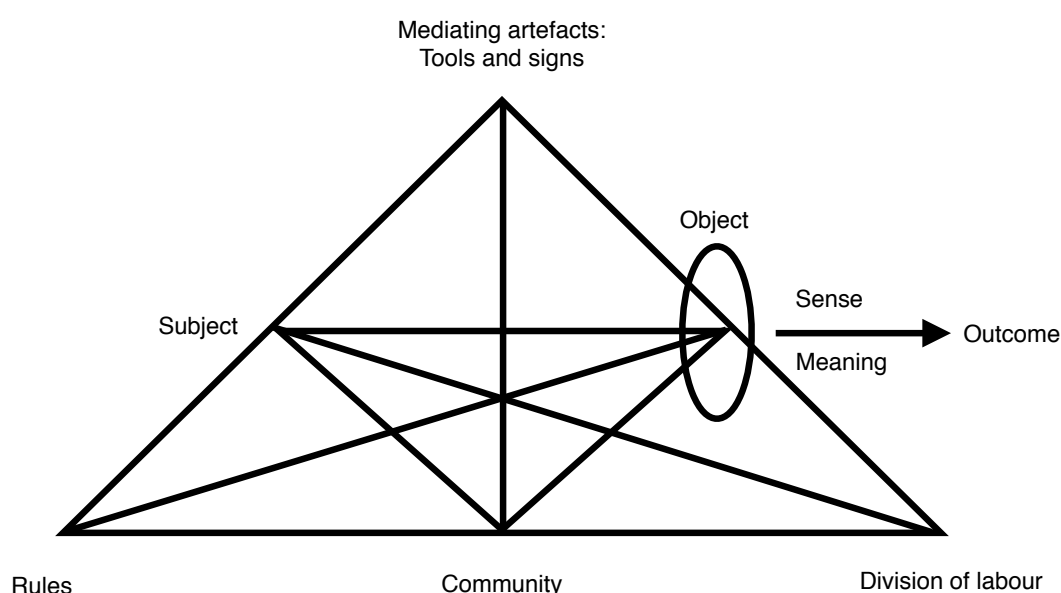


Figure 1.2: The structure of the human activity system adapted from Engeström (2016)

### 1.4.3 Community, rules and division of labour

The extended activity system included social considerations such as the community, referring to others involved, rules that influence action and division of labour, which considers how and why work is shared in a particular way (Batiibwe, 2019; Kelly et al., 2008; Trust, 2017). The community refers to those individuals who have a powerful influence on the other aspects of an activity system. In a full-service school, these may include the colleagues, parents, school governing body, peers and SBST. All of these groups have the potential to either support or hinder the objective of mediated action. Particular communities have collectively negotiated rules or socio-cultural conventions that are usually either

explicitly stated or implicitly understood guidelines for actions within the community (Trust, 2017). In full-service schools, these rules might include how learning support is viewed and rendered, or what teaching pedagogies are valued. The rules also provide an important lens with which to observe how participants are able to obtain full membership. These rules then link to what is referred to as 'division of labour', which refers to the "horizontal division of tasks and vertical division of power and status" (Engeström & Sanniño, 2018, p. 45), in which every subject has a particular task or set of tasks within the school and wider community (Gretschel et al., 2015). Underpinning these tasks are fundamental questions regarding why work is shared in a particular way and to what effect.

#### 1.4.4 Third-generation activity system

Engeström (1999) continued the development of ideas on activity theory by developing what he refers to as a "third-generation of activity theory" (p.135). This extension (Figure 1.3) views the interaction of two or more activity systems, and how their interaction may lead to the formation or negotiation towards new objects and outcomes through possible "multi-activity collaboration" (Engeström & Sanniño, 2018, p.46). The learning support teachers in the current study were employed and evaluated by superiors at the district level, but also functioned as part of the full-service school. They therefore succumbed to multiple views and perspectives while being situated on the periphery, partially outside but in contact with particular views from the district, however partially inside the full-service school. This fertile area holds space for tension and disturbance to arise as a result of contradictions between the two systems. CHAT, as a theoretical lens, provides the opportunity for individuals to understand their current structures of interaction as well as the possible gaps between these structures and their desired outcome (Waitoller & Kozleski, 2013). The tensions that arise due to contradictions can be examined and possibly give way to new ways of thinking and working. Consequently, tension and disturbances may lead to the change and development needed to reach the desired outcome.

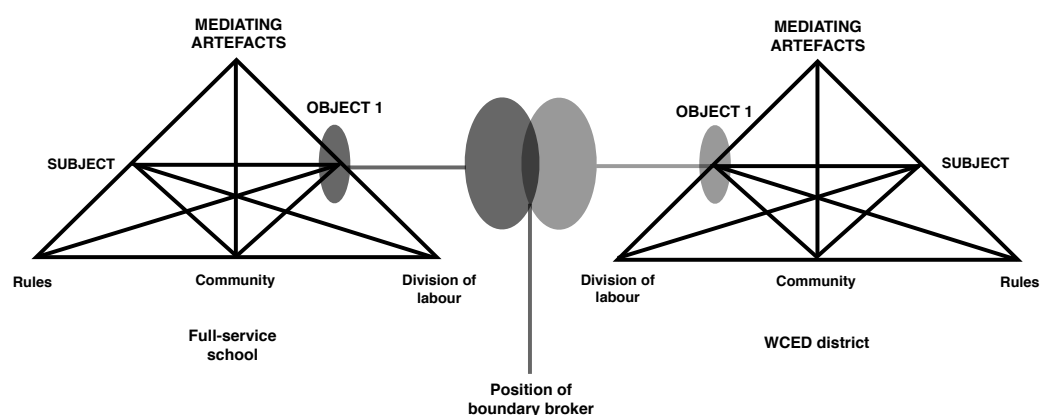


Figure 1.3: Third-generation activity system adapted from Engeström (2001, p. 136)

Learning support teachers, whether they know it or not, therefore have a very important role to play as possible boundary brokers, who can develop responsive practices to mediate between systems in order to negotiate new ways of working towards objects to reach education's outcome of inclusion and education for all. In order to ensure that the activity systems are more responsive to the diverse needs of all learners, learning support teachers can therefore develop or use relational agency to collaborate across boundaries. They have the opportunity to mediate policy, highlight ground-level grievances and even promote collaborative partnerships between the activity systems. This ability to competently function in multiple contexts is known as 'boundary-crossing competence' (Walker & Nocon, 2007). Learning support teachers are positioned to mediate various artefacts and tools through their engagement with both activity systems, taking into account the practices and context of each system as well as the individuals within. Boundary-crossing competence in CHAT requires the ability to manage and integrate the multiple, possibly divergent discourses and practices that exist across social boundaries (Walker & Nocon, 2007). Their role as possible boundary brokers might lead to questions on whether relational agency can be viewed as a predictor of successful boundary brokerage and whether the rules, community and division of labour of the particular activity systems allow the learning support teacher space and freedom to pursue this role (see Section 2.4).

With CHAT as theoretical framework, the focus now shifts to a brief outline of the design, structure and methodology of the study.

## **1.5 RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY**

When designing one's research, there are many variables that need to be considered to ensure that the way in which one plans it and conducts the necessary literature search and review is feasible (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). This part of the process allows researchers to approach their choice, considering its purpose, intended outcomes, significance, research questions and overall design (Bordons & Abbott, 2018). The research design refers to the logic that links the research purpose and questions to the process of data collection and data analysis, to draw a warranted conclusion (Ponelis, 2015; Yin, 2018). This study used a qualitative, interpretative case study. As researcher I attempted to discover, obtain insight and understand from the perspectives of the study participants. The richness and complexity of each participant's reality can provide researchers with unique, contextually framed social narratives (Chetty, 2014). In an attempt to understand their activity within a particular collective context (Engeström, 1987), I employed activity systems analysis (ASA) as a methodology. As a descriptive tool it has the ability to identify the process involved in organisational changes (Harness & Yamagata-Lynch, 2016) and to identify contradictions

and tensions within a system that pose opportunities for change and development (Razak, Jalil, Krauss, & Ahmad, 2018) (see Section 3.4).

The research design for this study was an interpretive case study. Accordingly, I provide in-depth descriptions and analysis of a bounded system comprised of four learning support teachers employed by the WCED and stationed at full-service schools. An interpretive paradigm assumes that reality is socially constructed and that there exists at any point in time multiple realities or interpretations of a single event (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). This led me to believe that every participant used their beliefs to create meaning of their external world, leading to the formation of these multiple, socially constructed realities. I was hence interested in the meanings that the participants conferred and how these interpretations could either afford or constrain relational agency and collaboration towards functioning full-service schools (see sections 3.2 and 3.3).

#### **1.5.1 Selection of participants**

The learning support teachers selected for the study all worked at schools that were classified as full-service schools by the WCED. The identity of the schools and the particular district shall be kept confidential. Participants were selected through non-probability sampling and access was granted by the learning support advisors, who acted as gatekeepers. The case study consisted of four learning support teachers. As this study was a mini-thesis, the scope was limited to an in-depth description of the experience and perceptions of four participants, taking into account available time and resources. The selection of participants is described in detail in Section 3.4.1.

#### **1.5.2 Methods of data collection**

Data collection in qualitative research aims to create conditions that ensure a holistic understanding and conveys the most contextualised picture of the participants and their context (Ravitch, Carl & Mittenfelner, 2016). The focus is therefore on meaning in context, something that is best obtained by the researcher as a primary instrument. This allows for sensitivity concerning underlying meaning during data collection and interpretation (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Data were collected through a comprehensive literature review and a review of relevant documents, semi-structured interviews and detailed field notes taken during school visits. My insider perspective, although helpful in many instances, could have proven to be problematic if I did not distance my insights, values and beliefs about the phenomenon being studied. To ensure that the data collected were credible, I immersed myself in the teachers' contexts, remaining respectful and appreciative of their accounts as



truthful reflections of their lived experiences. The methods of data collection are discussed in greater detail in Chapter 3.

### **1.5.3 Data analysis**

The process of data analysis begins with organising and categorising data as a means of constructing or identifying emerging patterns and themes. This process is central to producing credible results, and if done with care, leads to richly descriptive narratives. I used thematic analysis to identify, analyse and report possible themes within the data, as recommended by Braun and Clarke (2006). The data analysis process for this study comprised of six phases, based on Braun and Clarke's framework (2006). In order to make sense of that which emerges, it was important to ground the analysis process in the cultural and historical contexts of not only the participants' community, but also the larger education movement. Employing ASA allowed me to examine systemic influences that either afforded or constrained collaborative practices, while taking into account how activity is transformed by context and vice versa. It therefore has the potential to track organisational change through identifying contradictions and tensions within the system that might lead to change and transformation (Razak et al., 2018). The data analysis is discussed in more detail in Chapter 3.

## **1.6 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS**

This study undertook to ensure that ethical guidelines were pursued, thereby safeguarding the participants and society as a whole. Permission for the study was sought from the WCED. Participants were informed that they were under no obligation to partake in the study and that they could at any time choose to withdraw. They were informed verbally and in writing of the WCED's permission and that their participation was anonymous and their responses confidential. The ethical concerns addressed in this study are elaborated on in Chapter 3.

## **1.7 STRUCTURE OF THE PRESENTATION**

Chapter 1 of the thesis introduced CHAT as a theoretical framework as well as the particular role that the learning support teachers play within this framework. The notion of full-service schools as an essential part of the inclusive education movement was described. It presented the aim and purpose of the study and gave a brief explanation of the design and methodology.



Chapter 2 presents a comprehensive review of full-service schools in South Africa, with the local and international inclusive education movement as a backdrop. It focuses on collaboration and the continuum within which the concept falls, the role of the learning support teachers and the possibility of them acting as boundary brokers. Chapter 3 presents a detailed discussion of the research process, including the paradigm, design, methodology and the ethical considerations addressed in the study. Chapter 4 describes the data, including an interpretation of the findings as categorised according to themes. Chapter 5 contains a reflection on the process and results. The initial research questions are addressed in the conclusion section and recommendations are made based on the findings.

## **1.8 CONCLUSION**

This chapter provided an overview of the study. The research questions the study sought to address were clearly stated and the lens with which to frame it, namely CHAT, was concisely described. When posing questions and seeking answers from a CHAT perspective, one is aware that that which one discovers or co-creates is contextually relevant. I am seeking to learn from the unique experiences of individuals who function within equally unique and diverse contexts, but have in common a particular role to fulfil within a full-service school as employees of the WCED. If collaboration is viewed as a prerequisite for inclusion, it should be known how these learning support teachers collaborate and whether they are afforded the opportunity to do so, while being uniquely positioned between two activity systems, namely the school and the district by which they are employed. From a CHAT perspective I was interested in the concept of boundary brokers, due to the learning support teachers' unique positioning, as well as the tensions and contradictions that may arise due to activity towards a particular object. These contradictions and tension, however, do not amount to much without role players with agency who have the ability to use these contradictions and tension to bring about change. On the contrary, a lack of agency in the face of tensions and contradictions has the ability to simply perpetuate and reinforce old habits and practices.

The research design, methodology, data analysis techniques and ethical considerations were briefly introduced. Chapter 2 provides a comprehensive literature review relevant to the research questions.

## CHAPTER 2

### LITERATURE REVIEW

#### 2.1 INTRODUCTION

Throughout history, human development has largely been viewed in light of biological limits and the values imposed by a particular community at a specific time (Engelbrecht & Green, 2018). Historically, individuals with disabilities, for example, were viewed differently based on their particular community as well as the discourse that was prevalent at the time. Each of these discourses constructed disability differently and led to individuals being treated in such a way that reflected the underlying values and assumptions of society at the time. A discourse in itself is used to articulate the world in a particular way, thereby identifying problems and possible solutions. To accurately understand the inclusive education movement and where it stems from, we need to understand the historical societal discourses on disability. According to Fulcher (2016), disability initially moved from a lay discourse, which viewed it with prejudice and excluded it based on fear, to a charity discourse that viewed it as worthy of pity and assistance. The charity discourse was later replaced by the medical deficit approach, which was, and still is today, characterised by its focus on the diagnosis and treatment of the problem and makes healthcare professionals primarily responsible for education (UNESCO, 2020). Problems are viewed as residing solely within an individual and treatment focuses on how the individual can change to function within the 'normative system'. These discourses provide a framework for practice with regard to the way in which the social world works and ought to work. They therefore shape thoughts and conversations and are used to justify institutional practices at a particular time.

During the 1970s and 1980s there was a societal shift from the previous medical deficit approach towards a rights discourse. The medical deficit approach used a diagnosis and treatment model that equated the learner to a patient who needed a diagnosis and correct treatment to ensure optimal functioning (Hay, 2012; Nel, Engelbrecht, Nel, & Tlale, 2016). The emphasis shifted from the focus on finding the deficit within an individual to a position that valued and emphasised equality and full citizenship. At a societal level, this implied a restructuring of attitudes, values, practices, policies and institutions that excluded individuals from participation. The focus shifted to how these aspects, at societal level, could be adapted, or adapt themselves, to provide for individual needs (UNESCO, 2020). This transformation was politically positioned and aimed across all government and other agencies, at all levels of society. This new discourse took into account how individuals are

impacted not only by biological factors, but also by the dynamic interplay between biological, individual and social aspects (Swart & Pettipher, 2017). The notion of inclusive education stems from this approach and is based on the premise that in order for children to become engaged citizens of our changing society, they need to be part of an education system that values them and their unique contribution. In order for us to cultivate a participatory democracy in family and social settings, we need to address exclusion through the development of teaching and learning environments that support access and belonging as much as they support the participation and success of all learners (UNESCO, 2018).

Although the inclusive education discourse is partially rooted in the disability movement, it is intended to benefit all learners (Engelbrecht & Green, 2018; Engelbrecht & Muthukrishna, 2019; Sharma & Pace, 2019; UNESCO, 2020). UNESCO's Salamanca Statement held as its core inclusive education to be the guiding principle with which to move towards education for all (Engelbrecht, Nel, Smit, & Van Deventer, 2015). There was therefore an extension from viewing special needs as arising solely from disability to including various other sources of disadvantage and marginalisation. International legislation was subsequently developed with the impetus of quality access to mainstream education for all learners, regardless of race, gender, culture, socio-economic status, disability or language. However, laws on inclusion still tend to focus on those learners with disabilities believed to be at risk of exclusion (UNESCO, 2020). This is risky, as it may lead to excluding those who do not fall under the defined blanket of disability, but who, due to other circumstances, experience profound exclusion. In an attempt to hold governments accountable, UNESCO in 2015 adopted the Sustainable Developmental Goals. These goals provide a framework for governments to come together and commit to a shared vision towards 2030, of which one such goal (number 4) is quality education (UNESCO, 2020). Being included, rather than excluded or marginalised, has become a basic human right and governments around the world are held accountable for its implementation.

Although regarded as a global agenda, inclusive education has come to mean many things to many people, in a variety of contexts. It often seems like a free-for-all with regard to interpretation and implementation, but rightly so. If we want to advocate for inclusion should we not afford individuals the right to, within their particular context, implement it as they see fit? Using CHAT as theoretical lens highlights the importance of exploring the relations between cultural and historical factors and the influence they have on the action taken (see Section 1.4). Action taken with regard to the implementation of inclusive education is therefore subject to individual and collective motives and interpretations. Underlying these varieties, however, are commonalities of values that seem to underpin the inclusive

education movement regardless of country, educational reform, and social or cultural context (Donnelly & Watkins, 2013; Dyson, 2001; Schuelka, 2018; Sharma & Pace, 2019). These include a commitment to building a more democratic society and a more equitable education system and the responsibility of mainstream schools to accommodate and be responsive to the needs of all learners (Ainscow, 2009; Engelbrecht & Green, 2018; Walton, 2018).

## **2.2 INCLUSIVE EDUCATION IN A SOUTH AFRICAN CONTEXT**

According to Swart and Pettipher (2017), what happens in a school is a reflection of the current developments and changes present in society. Schools are therefore not only a microcosm of a future envisioned society, but also bear the brunt of past injustices. With the end of the apartheid era came a new beginning for South Africa in the form of a new Constitution aimed at upholding democratic values. These democratic values of equity, quality and access as basic human rights had a profound impact on social, economic, political and educational transformation. As with the international movement, transformation was not limited to one sector, but rather applied across all government and other agencies across society. It is within this progressive rights framework that focus was placed on children and their right to quality education regardless of their age, gender, race, ethnicity, culture, socio-economic status or abilities (Swart & Pettipher, 2017).

On both international and local front there was an increase in policies regarding the rights of children pushing for schools to be able to accommodate all learners through effective education (UNESCO, 1994, 2020). Within this human rights model there was a movement away from individualising and professionalising disability by looking at all barriers to learning from a systemic perspective. UNESCO (2020) suggests that from a systemic perspective, “barriers to participation and learning is replacing that of special needs” (p. 12). Barriers therefore hinder participation and can reside in a complex interactive way in the learner, the school, the education system and the broader socio-economic and political contexts (Darling-Hammond, Flook, Cook-Harvey, Barron, & Osher, 2020; Lomofsky & Lazarus, 2001; Smit, Preston, & Hay, 2020). The aim of the subsequent legislation and policies in South Africa was to gradually implement the process of transforming the current education system to an inclusive system that would eliminate social exclusion and therefore break down some of the last remnants of the old, oppressive apartheid regime. Initial policies and legislation that were developed to set in motion change included the White Paper on Education and Training (Department of Education [DoE], 1995), the South African Schools Act (Republic of South Africa, 1996) and the White Paper on the Integrated National Disability Strategy (Republic of South Africa, 1997).

The fact that inclusive education exists, both then and now, within a historical context leads to the consideration of how vestiges of old and new beliefs co-exist. The South African Constitution and subsequent policies and legislation provided the foundation for redress, but the extent of disparities and lack of support for previously marginalised and excluded learners was not known. The National Commission on Special Needs in Education and Training (NCSNET) and the National Committee on Education Support Services (NCESS) were mobilised and subsequently recognised the needs for all learners to gain access and belong to a single education system that was able to address their diverse needs, thereby promoting their participation in mainstream economic and social life and ensuring a positive developmental trajectory (Darling-Hammond et al., 2020). In the light of past segregation, the report from the NCSNET and NCESS declared that in order to provide integrated and holistic support, there needed to be intersectoral collaboration as well as the mobilisation of community-based support systems (Engelbrecht & Green, 2018; Makhalemele & Payne-Van Staden, 2018).

The findings and recommendations of the NCSNET and NCESS report were integrated and subsequently informed Education White Paper 6 on Special Needs Education: Building an Inclusive Education and Training System (DoE, 2001). In White Paper 6 (DoE, 2001), inclusive education is defined as supporting all learners, teachers and the education system as a whole to be responsive to the needs of everyone regardless of diversity. The paper aimed to stipulate how the system could be transformed from a dual to a single system of education (Mitchell, 2004). At the core of transformation should be the belief that all learners can learn, but that they all need to be supported and nurtured (Oswald, 2014). Integral to an inclusive education system are the tools used to facilitate learning. These include the teaching, assessment methods, learning materials and curriculum that, in order to facilitate change, need to be in line with the inclusive values.

One of the strategies for implementing inclusion was the restructuring of schools in order to equip them to respond to the needs of all learners – the focus being not merely on serving learners with disabilities in the mainstream classroom, but also on looking more broadly at eliminating social exclusion perpetuated by attitudes and responses to diversity, ethnicity, racial differences, gender, socio-economic status and ability (Ainscow, 2007; Sharma & Pace, 2019; Walton & Rusznyak, 2019). The goal of inclusion is therefore the full membership of all learners in the mainstream classroom and community with regard to physical placement, curriculum, assessment, pedagogy and support (Alvarado, Salinas, & Artiles, 2019; Mitchell, 2004).

In high-income countries of the global North, “inclusive education emerged from a highly resourced, funded and established special education system” (Engelbrecht & Muthukrishna, 2019, p. 108). This implies they have firmly planted special education roots, and implicit, certain assumptions about the nature and distribution of learner abilities (Florian, 2014). As a low-income country from the global South, South Africa runs the risk that the inclusive education agenda reproduces coloniality in our country, as it fails to take into account local philosophies, contexts and understandings, merely acknowledging that which is applied in the North (Engelbrecht & Muthukrishna, 2019). Inclusion in South Africa needs to move beyond disability, as defined in the special education systems of the Global North, to look at systemic influences that threaten to exclude learners from equitable education (UNESCO, 2020).

### **2.3 FULL-SERVICE SCHOOLS IN SOUTH AFRICA**

The recommended framework for implementation outlined in White Paper 6 (DoE, 2001) suggested an ambitious 20-year plan to transform the education system into an inclusive education system. One of the key strategies in the implementation of inclusive education in South Africa was the adding of an additional category of school, namely full-service schools. Full-service schools are “first and foremost mainstream education institutions that provide quality education to all learners by supplying the full range of learning needs in an equitable manner” (DoBE, 2010, p.7). The idea of full-service schools is not a South African initiative. Internationally countries have moved towards the notion of full-service schools as a means of drawing into question what the purpose of schooling was historically believed to be (Cummings, Dyson, & Todd, 2011). Within the South African context, these full-service schools, now also known as ‘inclusive schools’, are the antithesis of the traditional approach in that they strive to support and promote the policies, cultures and practices of inclusion. No longer can the system merely be concerned with children as learners, as they should also take into account their personal, physical and social development. This includes whether or not they thrive within their family and community contexts and how they are able to access services needed for support and development (Cummings et al., 2011; Darling-Hammond et al., 2020).

The initial process of identifying and converting schools into full-service schools was slow. The DoE’s 20-year plan included the development of 30 pilot full-service schools as one of their key strategies. In order for these mainstream primary schools to be converted into full-service schools, they had to be made accessible to all learners through the development of physical, material and human resources, sufficient teacher training and intersectoral

collaboration across government departments (Engelbrecht et al., 2015). The purpose of full-service schools is to create greater access for all learners and, through their collaboration with other special schools and support from their DBST, upskill themselves in order to support their neighbouring schools. This was and still is an unreasonable or difficult demand. It was envisioned that through the needed collaboration and support, full-service schools would become beacons of good practice, leading the way for other schools to follow (Engelbrecht et al., 2015).

A guideline document was published in 2005 and revised in 2010 to guide the transformation of these full-service schools. In this document, there are specific chapters that refer to aspects such as management, whole-school development, collaboration, support, assessment and curriculum (DoBE, 2010). By 2010 there were only eight schools country-wide who had completed the transition as intended by White Paper 6 (Engelbrecht et al., 2015). In 2020, there are more than 500 full-service schools in South Africa, but whether these schools reflect what was intended by the policy and guidelines is up for debate (Engelbrecht et al., 2015; Makhalemele & Payne-Van Staden, 2018). The purpose of full-service schools is not only to provide access to learners who are deemed as having moderate or even high levels of support needs, but also to ensure that the school to which they have access is able to provide them with the needed support, through collaboration with government and community services. Figure 2.1 indicates the three levels of support needs as stipulated by the SIAS policy and the schools allocated to accommodate these needs. Schools must therefore be able to identify any exclusionary practices within the school, while tapping into the resources needed to provide individualised support (Walton et al., 2014). This may lead to the belief that change on an individual level is relevant, but not sufficient to instigate institutional change.

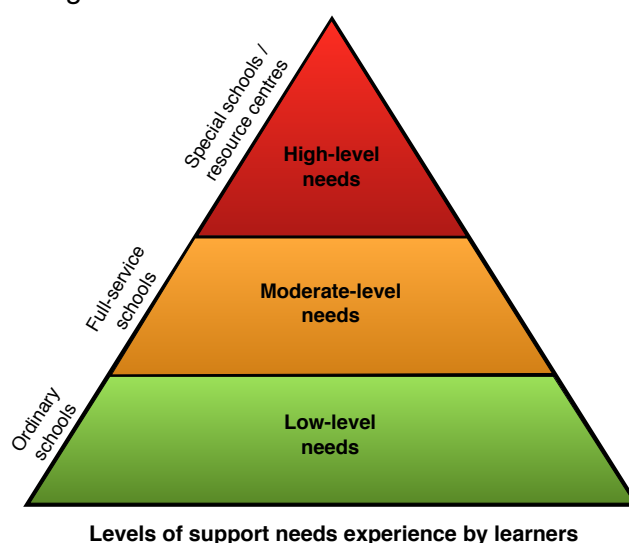


Figure 2.1: Levels of support needs experienced by learners (DoBE, 2014)



South African learners are diverse with regard to gender, race, culture, language, learning abilities and socio-economic circumstances. In order to celebrate this diversity and reduce stigmatisation, labelling and segregation, schools need to pursue the cultivation of inclusive cultures and practices that support the right to basic education for all enshrined in the Constitution. Full-service schools therefore mandate good leadership that envisions the school as a beacon of transformation through “developing cultures, policies and practices that celebrate diversity, respect difference and value innovation and problem-solving” (DoBE, 2010, p.9). In all four full-service schools where the research for this study was undertaken, the critical role of school management was highlighted as being imperative to the schools’ trajectory of transformation. Inclusive education and collaboration are intricate parts of whole-school development and therefore involve more than changing teachers’ practices, but go deeper to include the context, climate, attitudes and culture of the whole school (Walton et al., 2014).

Although full-service schools, especially in the South African context, initially focused on addressing social and educational disadvantage, one needs to be cognisant of the notion of ‘fixing’ learners. This idea implies something innately wrong with them, and would be regressing to a deficit approach to support that solely focuses on ‘disadvantage’ as a starting point for intervention. According to Cummings et al. (2011), doing this runs the risk of reinforcing asymmetrical relationships between the learners, their families, their communities and the professionals in charge of planning support. The focus should be an asset-based approach in which all learners, staff and parents experience a sense of belonging and worth within the school as a learning community. Strengths and competencies should be valued over shortcomings to ensure that all learners can participate (DoE, 2001). It has been almost 18 years since the publication of White Paper 6 and quantitatively there has been progress in addressing access, but what about the qualitative analysis (Engelbrecht et al., 2015)? Three of the four participants in the research referred to their full-service status as implying they accepted all learners, but they were sceptical with regard to whether these learners were able to participate in mainstream classes.

Full-service schools are mainstream schools, as reflected in their post provisioning (Walton et al., 2014). In order to mobilise these schools to respond to diverse learning needs, teacher training and development were prioritised by White Paper 6. In order for all learners to access the curriculum, full-service schools will need to have a flexible curriculum and teaching practices that will address learners’ diverse learning styles and levels of functioning. As full-service schools they will be expected to provide school-based support for all learners through collaboration with parents, the community and the DBST. These DBSTs



are primarily responsible for providing on-site support to teachers and school management with regard to curriculum and institutional development (Engelbrecht et al., 2015). The DBST at the district where the research was conducted consisted of an educational psychologist, a social worker, a senior therapist and a learning support advisor (see Figure 3.2). There was, however, a lack of curriculum-based support to ensure that the curriculum could be differentiated successfully and ensured participation for all learners. From the onset, the support provided by the DBST, if any, lacked a strong curriculum foundation. This begs the questions whether the current transformation of schools to full-service schools is merely succeeding in admitting learners while attitudes, policies and practices remain untransformed (Oswald, 2019; Walton et al., 2014).

With the conversion of mainstream schools to full-service schools, the WCED selected schools based on their capacity to respond to diversity and thereby diverse barriers to learning. Initially schools who had a 'special class' were selected as the frontrunners of the inclusive movement. These schools were viewed as having more resources to their disposal and staff who could transition towards what was expected to be, as stipulated in policy and guideline documents, a joint object. The notion of being made a full-service school without 'buying into' an inclusive culture and ethos makes successful transformation harder (Sharma & Pace, 2019). Research shows that teachers often see themselves as victims of the unwelcome changes in the school's orientation (Walton et al., 2014). These feelings of powerlessness that accompany curriculum demands, assessment requirements, systemic barriers and the capacity to address diverse needs hinder teachers' agency and self-efficacy for successful change and transformation (Walton et al., 2014). Teachers who feel insignificant are therefore less inclined to take responsibility for their own and others' learning, reflection and development, rather reverting to old habitual patterns of working in isolation.

What has been provided to the schools who participated in the research undertaken is a learning support teacher, a budget with which a single class assistant should be appointed and staff training in the SIAS policy (DoBE, 2014). With limited resources, these schools are audited as mainstream schools and held accountable for the results. This places the responsibility for change and transformation directly on the individuals within the particular activity system (Van de Putte et al., 2018). Such pressure is dangerous, as it could force practices that are beneficial to statistics rather than the development of inclusive

pedagogies. One such example is the systemic tests<sup>7</sup> that are written by all learners in the Western Cape. These tests do not take into account any barriers to learning or differing learning styles and are used to praise and reward certain schools that obtain good scores. No contextual factors are taken into account. Factors that might influence whether full-service schools are able to function include sufficient staff, accessible buildings, access to professional services and collaborative networks to ensure that knowledge and skills are shared.

## **2.4 COLLABORATION WITHIN INCLUSIVE EDUCATION**

The concept of collaboration within the inclusive education movement implies a restructuring of the old model where certain individuals were considered the knowledgeable professionals. In order for inclusive education to infiltrate all schools successfully, one must consider that there is a need for shared responsibility and problem solving. This shared responsibility is not confined to the school staff, or even district-based staff, but includes the school leaders, learners, parents and the community as collaborators to address specific needs (Smit et al., 2020). Schools need to ensure not only that all learners have access, but also that learners have quality learning experiences in mainstream classrooms. In order for “deep learning experiences” to happen (Fullan, Quinn, & McEachen, 2018, p.90), innovation and new practices need to be developed. Each and every role player should be valued for their specialised insights, skills and practices and encouraged to intervene to provide holistic and preventative action with regard to governance, planning, assessment and delivery (Engelbrecht & Green, 2018). Policy emphasises a need for sustainable collaborative partnerships between members of the school, the district and community as a means of developing responsive and inclusive pedagogies (DoBE, 2005, 2010; DoE 2001; Nel et al., 2014).

The term ‘collaboration’, much like ‘inclusive education’, is vaguely defined and used interchangeably in literature to date. In a systematic review on teacher collaboration, Vangrieken, Dochy, Raes and Kyndt (2015) found it hard to draw warranted conclusions with regard to what constitutes ‘teacher collaboration’. This term was often used to describe various collaborative practices, ranging from superficial, occasional teacher interactions to deep-level collaboration marked by shared task-related focus, purpose and reflection. Collaborative practices can therefore be placed on a continuum with individualised work on the one end and full-team interdependence on the other (Vangrieken et al., 2015). Not only

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<sup>7</sup> The systemic tests were originally introduced in 2001, but were updated in 2011. The tests are only conducted in the Western Cape and are internationally benchmarked and administered, and marked and moderated externally to provide a credible and relevant benchmark for evaluation.

do collaborative practices fall on a continuum, but they are also subject to individual interpretation and may be structured differently to reflect the particular context in which they take place.

Havnes (2009) helps one to make sense of various interaction processes and where these interactions are situated on a continuum of collaboration (see Figure 2.2). On the one end, individualised work is fuelled by the preservation of the self and one's own responsibility and autonomy. This individualism gives way to coordination, where responsibilities are coordinated without any discussion regarding the teaching practices. Through the process of coordination, the social organisation of work is assured and all role players focus on successfully performing their assigned tasks. Cooperation refers to finding a mutually acceptable way to conceptualise a shared problem and subsequently solve it. Finally, there is sharing, which focuses on interdependence with regard to joint clarification of pedagogical motives. This process of sharing in turn directs how teaching and learning are to be structured. Real sharing encompasses discussion regarding didactics of teaching, observing one another and critically examining the others' teaching and functioning.

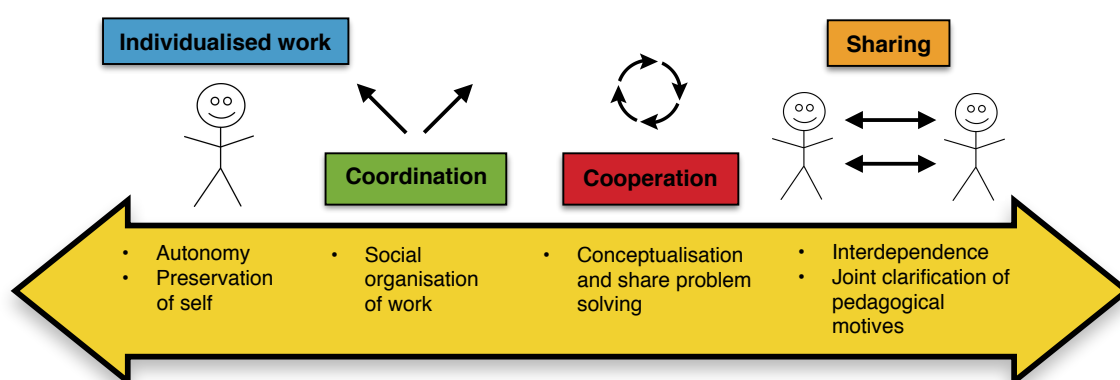


Figure 2.2: Continuum of collaboration

In order for sharing in its truest form to take place, there needs to be “reflective dialogue, de-privatization of practice, collective focus on student learning, collaboration, and shared norms and values” (Fullan, 2007, p.148). Sharing as an extreme on the collaboration continuum therefore implies both individual and institutional transformation. In order to define the collaborative practices of teachers and support staff on an individual level, one needs to look at agency as a prerequisite for collaboration. Agency refers to one's ability to identify goals, subsequently directing one's actions accordingly, and then evaluating whether these actions were successful (Edwards, 2006). Agency therefore refers to the intentional efforts to affect and bring about change, thereby providing opportunity for the transformation of

institutional practices and cultures (Hökkä, Vähäsantanen & Mahlakaarto, 2017). Becoming an active professional agent in education implies engaging in innovative learning, adapting to diversity in the working environment, negotiating with parents and colleagues and making independent choices that reflect balance between personal preference and shared collegial decision making (Toom, Pyhältö & Rust, 2015). Although agency plays an important role in the development of resourceful practitioners who can facilitate learning and continued professional development, it still in some way focuses on individual responsibility, self-evaluation and action, without taking into account the responsibility to and for others (Edwards, 2006). Agency in itself can therefore be referred to as the *amuse-bouche* of collaboration – it wets the appetite, but is not sufficient in addressing the hunger pangs.

In an attempt to facilitate collaboration from an individual level, there is a need for relational agency that aligns an individual's thoughts and actions with those of others as a means of interpreting problems and responding through action. This implies working with others as a means of expanding the object of activity, thereby becoming aware of its complexities and recognising what resources and motives they bring to the table (Edwards, 2012). This entails perceiving oneself as a pedagogical expert, intentionally interacting with others as resources and in turn supporting them (Edwards, 2006). Relational agency therefore demands agentic individuals as well as a particular social context in which relationships can be forged in order to achieve mutually aligned goals. Institutional transformation has an important role in fostering collaborative cultures, as agency seems to flourish in school contexts that provide enhanced opportunities for collaboration (Bellibas, Gümüş, & Kiliç, 2020).

In the absence of agency or relational agency within a particular activity system, policy often tries to enforce what is lacking. In the South African context, various policies advocate for the collaboration that is required at institutional level to ensure successful transformation and change (DoBE, 2005, 2010; DoE 2001). This top-down approach can lead to contrived collaboration efforts (Sergiovanni, 2004) and feelings of resentment towards the process, often leading teachers to get together only to reinforce existing practices. A collaborative culture originates as much from the individuals within the activity system, and their perception of the process as valuable, as from the structural and cultural workings of that particular activity system (Vangrieken et al., 2015). On an institutional level, collaboration is mediated by the particular context in which it occurs, namely the structural and cultural workings of a particular school. Structural aspects include enough time for meetings and discussions, good communication structures, interdependence with regard to teaching (co-teaching), teacher empowerment and school autonomy. The cultural influences include an

openness to improvement, norms and values of trust and respect, the cognitive and skill base as well as supportive leadership (Darling-Hammond, 2020; Fullan, 2007).

If full-service schools are going to live up to the expectation that they will become beacons of good practice, they will need to take responsibility to upskill themselves through collaborative partnerships. This implies working with special schools, DBSTs and community partners to develop responsive methods or practices of teaching, curriculum differentiation and assessment. Only once full-service schools have upskilled themselves can they support neighbouring schools in inclusive practices. This model of policy enforcing a concept such as collaboration is dangerous territory. Schools are evaluated or audited on statistics and teachers and support staff alike are responsible for, and measured according to, their performance. Teachers will therefore be expected to surrender their independence and control to a certain extent, as collaboration requires a more collective influence in order to facilitate change (Ainscow, Muijs, & West, 2006). Policy therefore often inhibits collaboration, promoting privatisation and individualisation of teacher and support staff, which might be experienced as the safer option compared to opening their doors to others, especially colleagues (Fullan, 2007).

## **2.5 ADDRESSING BARRIERS TO LEARNING THROUGH INCLUSIVE PEDAGOGIES**

Before the role of the learning support teacher in full-service schools can be examined, clarification of the concept of barriers to learning and the way in which inclusive pedagogies can address not only these barriers, but also the needs of all learners in mainstream classrooms, is required. Historically, the problems addressed by support staff in mainstream schools were reductionist in nature and deeply rooted in the medical deficit approach. The formerly termed 'remedial teachers' would provide intensive support on a one-on-one basis, in a separate facility, to learners who were identified as having a need for remediation. Adaptation classes were another option, which saw support staff working with a small group, on a full-time basis, who were deemed unable to integrate into the mainstream classrooms due to a diagnosed disability. The deficit was viewed as inherent to the learner and the focus was primarily on diagnosis and treatment in an attempt to remediate this identified deficit or address the specific need (Bouwer, 2016). In retrospect, this medical deficit approach is quite dangerous, as it fails to take into account how disability is defined within a particular context, by whom and with what consequences (Hay, 2012; Retief & Letšaso, 2018).

Today, instead of labelling only a chosen few as in need of additional support, there is an assumption that all role players within the school community are in need of support. There is a movement away from a problem-centred and needs-based approach as a means of

labelling, and subsequently emphasising impairment. Inclusive education has brought with it a socio-cultural model. This model takes into account learners' unique identity markers, such as race, age, gender, language and the systems they are part of, and how interaction with these systems may contribute as either protective or risk factors (Alvarado et al., 2019; Smit et al., 2020; Waitoller & Kozleski, 2013). Barriers to learning can be defined as those internal or external aspects of influence that need to be removed, reduced or circumvented in order for learners to reach their full potential within an inclusive mainstream classroom (Bouwer, 2016).

According to the DoBE (2005), barriers arise within the education system as a whole, the learning environment and/or the learner. This idea of barriers to learning, although a far cry from the previous pathologising of learners, is still partly embedded in the medical deficit approach, as it assumes that differing neurological, cognitive, sensory or physical abilities are barriers to learning in a mainstream environment (Engelbrecht, 2019). It therefore infers that difference in ability equals lack and subsequent additional support. On the upside, the DoBE recognises that differing abilities per se are more likely to cause a barrier when paired with other systemic factors, such as inflexible curricula, teaching practices, socio-economic circumstances and school culture. Waitoller and Kozleski (2013) refer to this as intersectionality and warn of pitfalls with regard to focusing on learners' need for specialised support in one area, only to exclude other aspects.

In order to be able to address learners holistically, there needs to be a school and community culture that values inclusive pedagogy as fundamental to the optimal functioning of all learners. According to Florian and Beaton (2017), inclusive pedagogy implies that the way in which learners are addressed, including curricula, teaching practices and support, should aim to not marginalise through "differentiation strategies designed with individual needs in mind" (p. 870). No longer can a reductionist approach be the default, as this might cause failure in identifying and addressing the complex intersection of barriers, leading to further exclusion. When there is resistance to a holistic view of barriers, it often reflects the deep-seated cultural and historical pedagogical traditions within that community that still pervade to exclude rather than include. These deep-seated pedagogies are laid bare by the current Covid-19 pandemic, especially those that relate to accessibility of distance learning and basic nutrition (UNESCO, 2020).

In order for learners to have their learning process supported within an inclusive framework, teachers need to have knowledge of inclusive pedagogies. Inclusive pedagogy is informed by a socio-cultural understanding of learning that acknowledges that all learning takes place

within learners' particular context and their array of social relations. This approach to learning, and the community in which it occurs, questions what has historically been practised in schools. In the past, abilities were perceived to be fixed, and if learners were unable to cope with what was given to them, their differences were exacerbated through institutional practices such as grouping or separate provision (Spratt & Florian, 2015). Within an inclusive education framework, schools are encouraged to conceptualise learning difficulties, not solely based on individual needs, but also from a pedagogical perspective (Moscardini, 2014). The question now arises, how do the teaching practices in schools either contribute to or reduce exclusion? This approach views the difficulties experienced by learners as "professional dilemmas" (Spratt & Florian, 2015, p.90) for which all role players need to work together in order to find new approaches that will include all and reduce stigmatisation. This collaborative approach to teaching holds firm at its core the idea that all children can learn together through responding to individual differences that exclude labelling, grouping or removing (Carrim, 2019; Darling-Hammond et al., 2020; McIntyre, 2009).

As with most concepts, implementation tends to occur on a continuum, depending on the context. Teaching practices within an inclusive system are no different. According to Dyson (2001), what distinguishes inclusive pedagogy, on the one end of the continuum, from inclusive practices, on the other end, is when teaching is influenced by the individuals' values and beliefs rather than their response to enforced legislation or policy procedures. Within the CHAT framework, the object of an activity system, which in this case is the transformation of mainstream schools to functioning inclusive schools, depends largely on the motives and interpretations of those who form part of it. Successful transformation is therefore as much reliant on policy and legislation as on the individual members' practices, values and beliefs regarding inclusion (Carrim, 2019). This might cause tension between departmental expectations and the traditional teaching practices of school staff. The concept of inclusive pedagogy places the responsibility for teaching and learning firmly on the shoulders of class teachers, and the tension almost forces them to partner with specialists to explore new ways of doing (Spratt & Florian, 2015). This gives rise to possible new collaborative partnerships to replace the old notion of referral and advice, providing all role players with the opportunity to co-construct knowledge through professional partnerships. In full-service schools, the role of the learning support teacher in brokering such partnerships is essential for successful transformation (see Section 1.4.4).



## 2.6 THE ROLE OF LEARNING SUPPORT TEACHERS IN FULL-SERVICE SCHOOLS

Historically, the role of the learning support teacher was defined within the individualised medical deficit paradigm with emphasis on the remediation of perceived disability. The provision of support was problem-focused and often lacked any consideration of systemic influences and context. Since the end of the apartheid era, the South African education system has undergone continuous metamorphosis in an attempt to address the barriers that excluded learners from access to quality education. Within an inclusive education system the focus of support has taken on a more systemic approach. Research indicates that the role of teachers, and in particular learning support teachers, has become more complex and comprehensive within this system (Dreyer, 2013). Learning support teachers are therefore challenged with adapting to the new, more comprehensive role, which sees a shift from viewing children as having special needs with regard to education towards a promotion of participation through the removal or circumvention of barriers (Bornman & Rose, 2017).

The concept of learning support, as opposed to remedial education, acknowledges that all learners have the potential to learn independently, at their own pace, using the strategies and learning styles of their choice, and working towards performing in accordance with their own abilities (Bouwer, 2016). The concept is a constructivist approach to cognitive development that views learning as an active process of constructing knowledge within a particular context, rather than acquiring it. Knowledge is therefore shaped, constructed and reconstructed in depending on the time and context. Vygotsky's zone of proximal development is relevant here in that optimal development lies just beyond where the learner is currently functioning, and can be achieved through the needed mediation (Bouwer, 2016). The success of individualised support rendered to learners based on their zones of proximal development hinges on the learning support teacher's ability to not only view learners and their barriers holistically, but to also have sufficient influence within a particular school to engage staff in similar practices.

The traditional practices of individualised or small-group support and remedial programmes have given way to a more systemic approach, as previously mentioned. The shift relies on learning support teachers to be able to provide professional guidance and support to teachers to enable them to modify programmes in their class, thereby accommodating any learner who may experience difficulties (Symeonidou, 2002). They are also expected to work together to find answers and develop new practices (Dreyer, 2013). This shift implies a real 360-degree change in their role and the impact that they are expected to have within the school system. Where they were previously seen as 'support', their role has now become



more active as leaders and agents of change for inclusion in both the school and the community (Gavish, 2017).

According to the WCED, one of the key performance areas of the learning support teacher is the responsibility for implementing capacity building programmes to ensure early identification and intervention relating to barriers to learning (see Appendix A). This includes training staff and parents, developing and implementing programmes and policy, such as the SIAS policy, and reporting these initiatives to the learning support advisor, who is part of the inclusive and specialised learner and educator support (see Appendix A). The WCED also highlights, as part of the learning support teacher's job description, that they provide specialised learning support as a means of strengthening the SBST. Learning support teachers are expected to form an integral part of the SBST through training, sustaining and promoting members to identify barriers to learning, develop intervention strategies and differentiate the curriculum and assessment. They are also expected to participate in inter- and intrasectoral networks and collaborations that promote inclusive schools as centres of care and support for teaching and learning. From the abovementioned one can deduct that the role of learning support teachers has increasingly become a consultative and collaborative one (Dreyer, 2013; Gavish, 2017; Spratt & Florian, 2015). However, they are still expected, as a core competency, to render direct learning support to learners with moderate and high levels of needs. The consultative and collaborative component, as central as it seems, is overshadowed by a timetable that needs to be filled with small-group support and is commonly limited to three administration periods.

In order for learning support teachers to carry out all of the abovementioned duties, they need in-depth knowledge of learners' disabilities and barriers, and how these manifest within the learning environment. They need to be knowledgeable with regard to the curriculum, pre-empting the barriers learners might encounter and knowing how to differentiate the curriculum to address these, as well as being able to co-teach with teachers. Their work is therefore not limited to learners, but they are required to work actively with teachers and the curriculum. In addition, they will need strong interpersonal and collaborative skills (Gavish, 2017). White Paper 6 (DoE, 2001) envisioned that support staff would be trained and orientated to ensure that they can support the system as a whole through the transformation process. This whole-school approach to support has at its core the expectation of learning support teachers as being knowledgeable in teaching learners with specific disabilities, supporting teachers as agents of change, facilitating collaborative practices, becoming information-consultation agents and providing curriculum support through inclusive pedagogy (Dreyer, 2013; Gavish, 2017).

The role of learning support teachers is however not set in stone, as they function within the specific district as well as the context of the particular full-service school where they are placed. So, regardless of what policy and legislation expects, learning support teachers' role largely depends on the proactive way they carve out their place within the particular school, the roles they advocate to assume and the extent to which school management allows this. Many of the learning support teachers employed in 2020, transitioned from the previous system of "unit", adaptation or resource classrooms. Their role historically perpetuated exclusion and through this process they were also seen as separate from the rest of the staff, often referred to as an "extra pair of hands" (Van de Putte et al., 2018, p. 888). This inherent separateness is in itself a barrier to working at a whole-school level and might hinder the impact that learning support teachers can have on the transformation of full-service schools. According to research done among learning support teachers in Italy in 2018, they were often not recognised professionally due to the fact that they were seen as distinct or special members of staff (Aiello & Sharma, 2018). In Italy, this has led to "micro-exclusion" that is exacerbated by the learning support teachers' feelings of inefficiency and marginalisation (Aiello & Sharma, 2018, p. 208). Within the South African context, learning support teachers are not merely members of the school as activity system, but also the district that employs them. Their allegiance and alliance are therefore more complicated and place them in a peculiar position.

## **2.7 LEARNING SUPPORT TEACHERS AS BOUNDARY BROKERS**

CHAT as analytical lens provides an understanding of how learning support teachers are able to influence and be influenced by the activity systems of which they form part. It can be used as a framework to understand how participation towards a particular goal is mediated by rules, divisions of labour and particular tools embedded in specific socio-cultural, historical and political contexts (Gretschel et al., 2015). As a metaphorical torch it illuminates the current structure of interactions and the gaps that might exist between current goal-directed actions and possible alternative outcomes. However, activity systems do not only function on their own, but also in relation to other activity systems. Any two activity systems can therefore be viewed as operating with similar or often competing objects that may lead to the need to negotiate new objects based on these contradictions (Kelly et al., 2008). One might even go further and hypothesise that from a district perspective, learning support teachers are sent to full-service schools with particular guidelines, policies and an ever-changing job description to underpin their work. Within their new activity system their perspective regarding inclusion and their particular role within it, as mediated by the abovementioned, may lead to tension, disturbance and ultimately contradictions within their

new activity system. It is however within this unease that the opportunity for change, growth and development lies. The learning support teacher, as a member of the district and the full-service school, can be seen as a boundary broker, engaging with the tools of different communities of practice with the possibility of facilitating lasting change (Arts & Bronkhorst, 2019; Waitoller & Kozleski, 2013).

Similar to what Datnow (2002) refers to when she talks about transplanting educational reform, learning support teachers, as potential boundary brokers, are placed in schools and expected to not only integrate within the school as an activity system, but also to broker departmental policy and school pedagogy. Those who have been placed in schools of which they were previously not part might struggle with the “outsider role”, as referred to by Waitoller and Kozleski (2013, p.41). Those who converted from resource classes might be plagued by micro-exclusion, as referred to by Aiello and Sharma (2018). They all run the risk of being marginalised within their community, or not afforded full membership, as they are also part of another community (Waitoller & Kozleski, 2013). In order to determine successful boundary crossing we need to look closely at what is referred to by Walker and Nocon (2007) as ‘boundary-crossing competence’. This refers to the ability to competently function in multiple contexts through self-dialogue, dialogue with others and the use of tools to manage and integrate discourses and practices across these culturally and politically charged social boundaries.

This begs the question, what needs to be present in order for the abovementioned to play out? The notion of competency has historically been viewed as residing within the individual person, measurable by performance. When working within a CHAT framework, competency cannot merely be viewed as residing within the individual subjects, but is an aspect that is partially socially constructed. It is therefore influenced by “becoming a full participant, or not, in the culturally defined practices of a community of engaged persons or an activity system” (Walker & Nocon, 2007, p.178). One could therefore argue that in order to successfully predict boundary crossing that might lead to expanded, joint objectives, there needs to be socially constructed competency and what Edwards (2006) refers to as ‘relational agency’. Relational agency refers to the capacity to engage with others in the light of expanding the object of the activity in which one can recognise the motives and resources brought forward by others and align one’s own responses to them.

Learning support teachers are expected to use those tools that are associated with inclusive education and informed by policy, including co-teaching, curriculum differentiation and cultural responsiveness. The appropriation of such tools is done according to the institutional

context in which they are used and highly dependent on the negotiation of a joint object between the activity systems. In order to be successful brokers, learning support teachers need to develop their understanding of key concepts such as inclusion, collaboration, curriculum differentiation and cultural responsiveness, while simultaneously having the ability to translate these concepts to institutional contexts. This translation will mediate how teacher and school staff appropriate the tools and therefore directly influence learners' experiences (Waitoller & Kozleski, 2013).

## **2.8 CONCLUSION**

In summary, full-service schools are seen as the frontrunners for the implementation of inclusive education in South African. In the past, these schools were converted to full-service schools without the necessary buy-in from leadership and staff. Many schools still base their full-service school status on having a learning support teacher and funds for a class assistant, rather than on the access and equitable education they provide. It seems that the learning support teacher is set up to be this boundary broker of policy and institutional practice, without necessarily being afforded the post level, and authority, to accompany it.

The next chapter presents a detailed discussion of the research process, including the paradigm, design, methodology and the ethical considerations addressed in the study.

## CHAPTER 3

### RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

#### 3.1 INTRODUCTION

According to Burr (2015), knowledge is culturally as well as historically specific and relative. Through this research study, I aimed to gain an understanding of the realities faced by the participants while taking into account that people create their own realities through fluid mental constructions that are continuously sustained by social processes (Riese, 2019). Truth and reality can therefore never be absolute. The focus of this study was to, together with the participants, co-create and depict their unique realities. The planning of a research study depends on what Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2018, p. 29) refer to as its “fitness for purpose”. The unique purpose of the research determines the design, which subsequently informs the methodology.

This chapter comprehensively discusses the paradigm, design and methodology that guided the research process. It focuses on how the design was structured to provide answers to the research questions, thereby speaking to the purpose of the research. The research methodology included the selection of participants, data collection methods, the analysis process and the verification of the findings. Ethical considerations that were relevant to the study are also discussed.

The figure below is a visual representation of the research paradigm, design and methodology.

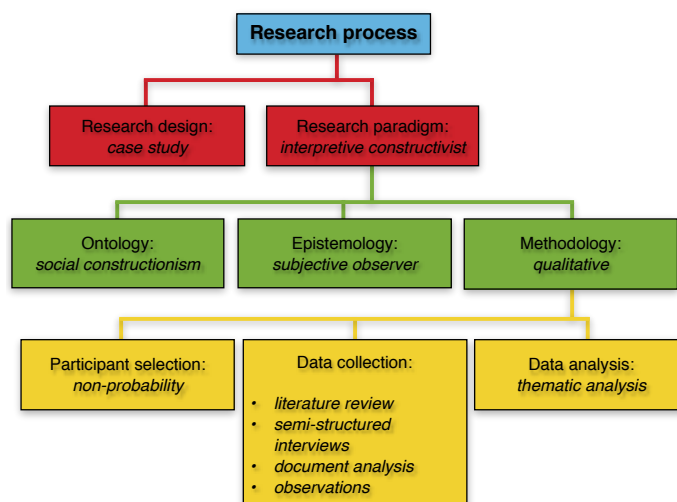


Figure 3.1: The research process of the study

### 3.2 RESEARCH PARADIGM

What is my philosophical orientation? What do I believe about the nature and production of knowledge? These questions, and subsequent answers, require a reflexive process and have the ability to shape research in profound ways. I am part of my research because I approach it from a particular paradigm, which in turn provides the framework for examining problems and finding solutions. According to Denzin and Lincoln (2018, p. 45), “paradigms represent belief systems that attach the user to a particular worldview”. Due to the implicit nature of these paradigms, one often does not recognise them. Each paradigm looks at the social context differently and makes assumptions about the nature of social reality. This study was conducted within an interpretive, constructivist paradigm, assuming that reality is socially constructed and that there are multiple realities or interpretations of a single event at any particular point in time, as stated by Merriam and Tisdell (2016). I believe that every participant has a set of beliefs that guide their collaborative actions and from which they presume to create meaning of, and insight into, their lived experiences.

It is argued that paradigms rest on different ontologies (how the nature of reality is understood), epistemologies (the relationship between the researcher and the knowledge and how it is understood) and methodologies (how knowledge is produced). Researchers need to consider more than merely the phenomenon being studied, but should also look closely at the ontological premises that underpin it, as well as the epistemological basis for investigating and conducting research into it (Cohen et al., 2018). It is through this process that research planning becomes less of a practical exercise and more of a reflection on one's beliefs of the nature of knowledge and being.

Within an interpretive paradigm, the nature of reality, or ontology, is viewed as how each individual holds a socially constructed view of reality. From a constructivist point of view, they are viewed as anticipatory, meaning-making beings who actively construct the meaning of social situations and then act according to these interpretations (Patton, 2015). These meanings that are used to interpret situations are culturally and contextually bound. Interpretations are subsequently made by individuals, however managed or guided by the presence of a particular cultural, historical and social undertone. With CHAT as a theoretical lens one can attempt to account for the link between individual action and what is socially and culturally influential. Individuals, situations, objectives and objects are unique and have meaning bestowed on them, as opposed to possessing meaning of their own (see Section 1.4). I was interested in the meaning individuals conferred within a particular activity system and how these interpretations influenced the prospect of relational agency and collaboration towards functioning in full-service schools.

Epistemologically, behaviour, and thereby data, is socially situated, context-related and context-dependent (Cohen et al., 2018). Meaning is socially constructed through interaction within a social context. That social context is never fixed, measurable or agreed upon. The opportunities for multiple constructions of reality that continuously evolve are rife. These constructions are influenced by a “gendered, multiculturally situated researcher” (Denzin & Lincoln, 2018, p. 52) who approaches the world from a particular framework, asking a set of questions that are consequently examined in specific ways. Researchers’ role is to understand the context and its influence on behaviour and perspectives. The relationship between the researcher and the participants is interactive and the researcher’s focus is on the subjective accounts, views and interpretations that are reported, including his/her own (Cohen et al., 2018).

Within an interpretivist paradigm, there is a need to put analysis into context. It is therefore interested in understanding and explaining the subjective reasons and meaning that lie behind social interaction. Through employing an interpretive approach, the researcher expects no absolute facts to stem from the research questions, only the pursuit of a holistic perspective of the phenomenon, as experienced by the participants within the bounded system (Chetty, 2014).

### **3.3 RESEARCH DESIGN**

Scientific enquiry requires careful planning. The research design refers to the flexible process of connecting one’s theoretical paradigm to strategies of enquiry as well as methods of collecting empirical material (Denzin & Lincoln, 2018). It was decided that a case study would best be utilised to guide this study from the initial research questions to the subsequent implementation through obtaining in-depth descriptions of a phenomenon within its “real-world context” (Yin, 2018, p. 46). According to Merriam (2009), case studies focus on a bounded system where a specific phenomenon is of particular interest to the researcher. Case studies are unique in the sense that they require participation, or interaction, on the part of the researcher (Ghesquière, Maes, & Vandenberghe, 2004). They aim to understand real-life situations in an in-depth way, paying particular attention to the social world and the meanings participants attribute to this world. Case studies focus on particular or specific phenomena rather than aiming to generalise research findings (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). As this study was a mini-thesis, the scope was limited to an in-depth description of the experience and perceptions of four participants, taking into account available time and resources. I therefore employed a case study design to explore a bounded system “over a period of time through detailed, in-depth data collection involving multiple sources of information” (Creswell, 2013, p. 97).



The bounded system refers to the learning support teachers employed by the WCED and stationed at full-service schools. Through the use of a case study I could develop a detailed portrayal of how each learning support teacher collaborated within their particular context. The purpose was therefore to understand the perspectives, worldviews and commonalities of individuals who found themselves in particular circumstances and contexts (Schwandt & Gates, 2018). A case study aims to “understand the experiences, perspectives, and worldviews of people in a particular set of circumstances” (Denzin & Lincoln, 2018, p. 608). My research was therefore based on the assumption that the reality was constructed by interaction, appreciation and understanding of the learning support teachers’ unique, lived experiences in full-service schools.

### **3.3.1 Role of the researcher**

In the pursuit of a thorough and holistic perspective of the phenomenon in question, the researcher is the primary instrument for data collection and analysis. As the primary instrument, researchers, taking into account that they themselves are situated within a particular social setting and flawed by an array of possible biases, need to be “sufficiently intuitive to accurately read the context under study” (Barratt, 2016, p. 49). This history that accompanies researchers guides as well as constrains their work within any particular study (Denzin & Lincoln, 2018).

‘Good’ research is referred to by Macfarlane (2009) as an authentic representation of the researcher’s belief and values. Being authentic is, however, in contradiction to being neutral or objective. “Authenticity demands being aware of our own inner feelings” (Macfarlane, 2009, p. 105) and implies that researchers have integrity and subsequently their research can be trusted. The road to authenticity demands a deeper knowledge of who we are with regard to our personal and professional experiences (Keane, 2015). During my journey towards authenticity I kept reflective notes with regard to my personal experiences, preconceived ideas as well as aspects that came to the fore during the interview process. My journey leading up to this study went from teaching in a special educational setting to the role of a learning support teacher servicing two full-service schools. I was eventually moved to serve only one full-service school, while doing weekly projects in high schools. Working in more than one full-service school made me aware of the influence of context and made me curious with regard to the experience of learning support teachers functioning within these differing contexts towards a seemingly shared objective of addressing the needs of all learners. I was not employed at any of the schools that were approached to participate in this study.



### 3.3.2 Context of the research

Social location, often used synonymously with social identity, refers to researchers' gender, social class, culture and ethnicity and how these markers intersect with the broader context, such as language, community and broader social culture (Henslin, 2013). Within qualitative research, the perspectives and experiences of individuals are always embedded in the contexts that shape their lives. The way in which they experience and relate to these contexts, and the world itself, is subjective and can change over time (Ravitch et al., 2016). Case studies have the ability to observe effects in real contexts, while simultaneously recognising that context is a powerful causal factor of both causes and effects. Therefore, to generate valuable and useful data regarding the particular case, an in-depth understanding of the context is needed (Cohen et al., 2018).

Embedded in the CHAT framework is the notion of contexts being shaped over time by the cultural and historical happenings of a particular community, as discussed in Chapter 1 (see Section 1.4). This could not be more evident than in the history and progression of the role of learning support teachers. They have adapted and morphed from one job description to the next based on what the current political and social climate expected from society. They have shifted from resource classes, which valued segregated intensive small-group support, to whole-school support through the extraction of small groups. Every subsequent change with regard to how many learners need to be withdrawn, additional support services rendered and administrative responsibilities does in reality not bring new ways of doing things, but rather adds a new dimension to an already voluminous list of duties. The latest job description holds at its core whole-school support and transformation, but still expects that they support previous resource class learners and extract smaller groups (see Appendix A).

For my study, I selected learning support teachers employed by a particular district of the WCED who work in full-service schools. Two of the participants were placed at full-service schools in the catchment area by the learning support advisors working for the particular district. The other two cases were in charge of the resource classes when the job description changed to that of learning support teacher, and they simply transitioned into the new role. Within the CHAT framework, this positioning (see Figure 3.2) afforded them the opportunity to develop responsive practices to mediate between systems in order to negotiate new ways of working towards functional and responsive full-service schools. This unique placement put them in the position of being information-rich participants for my research study.

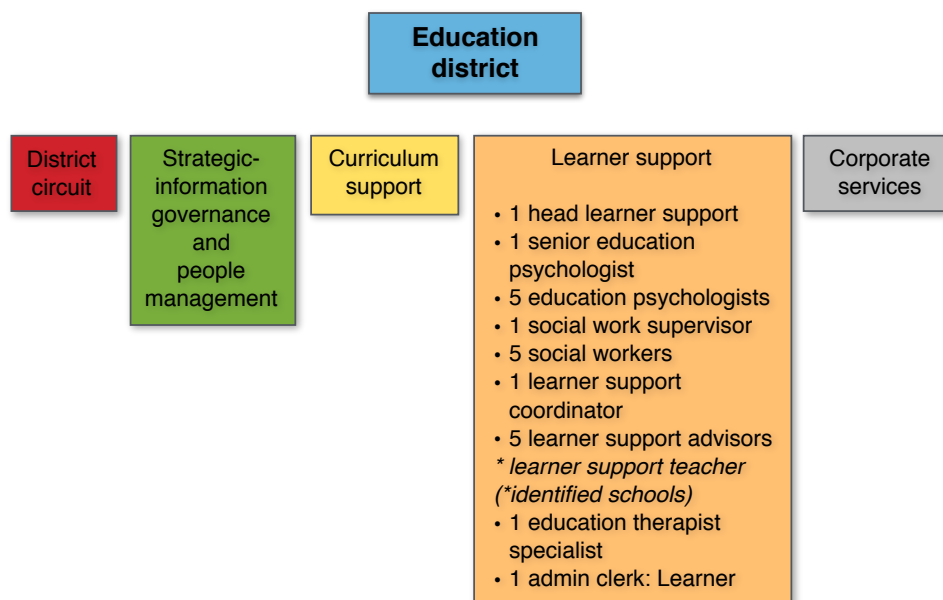


Figure 3.2: Organisational positioning of the learning support teacher's post

### 3.4 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

ASA is a methodology that originated from CHAT and that has been proved valuable for qualitative researchers “who investigate issues related to complex real-world learning environments” (Yamagata-Lynch, 2010, p. 1). As a methodology it can be valuable for understanding human activity within a particular collective context (Engeström, 1987). Over the past decade there has been various studies referring to ASA as a descriptive tool to capture the process involved in organisational change (Barab, Schatz & Scheckler, 2004; Harness & Yamagata-Lynch, 2016) and to identify contradictions and tensions within a system that shape developments in educational settings (Barab et al., 2004; Razak et al., 2018).

According to Williams and Hummelbrunner (2011), a CHAT-based inquiry combines three important components: 1) a systems component, which helps construct meaning from situations; 2) a learning component, which implies learning from those meanings; and 3) a developmental component, which allows expansion of those meanings towards action. ASA could therefore help me understand my participants' activity in relation to their context and the way in which their activities and context affect one another. It also provided a way to document the historical relationships among activities by identifying how the results from past activities affect new activities (see Yamagata-Lynch, 2010). This historical, contextual influence is especially relevant to the role and functioning of learning support teachers, as their role has significantly changed during the past 20 years (refer to Section 2.6), while functioning in contexts with their own historical and contextual influences.

### 3.4.1 Research participants

The product of qualitative inquiry is always “richly descriptive” (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016, p. 15). Producing such information in the shortest amount of time requires thoughtful participant selection or sampling. The aim is to understand and gain insight, therefore one should select a sample from which one can learn the most. The selection process allows the researcher to think about what the boundaries of the population being studied are and make a decision based on this information. The participants chosen are viewed as expert sources of information, knowledgeable in the context within which they operate. For this study, I used non-probability or non-random sampling to enable the selection of a number of information-rich cases from the larger population of learning support teachers at the particular district. My research question and scope guided my decision with regard to the sample size. The aim was to generate saturated data that will allow rich, thick descriptions of enough participants to compare and contrast data and findings. I was also expected to stay within the requirements of a thesis of limited scope.

This study formed part of an international research project between Flanders and South Africa. This project was spawned by the international movements in inclusive education and the changed legislation and policies of the education departments in both Flanders and South Africa. Flanders approved a bill, referred to as the M-decreet, in 2014 to realise inclusive education and decrease the number of special educational needs learners in special education. This implies that the heterogeneity of the classroom population will increase; more children with special needs will be included in regular schools. This further implies increased pressure on the mainstream teacher to ensure that the curriculum and didactical approach are sufficiently differentiated to support all learners. The aim of the project was to generate multiple in-depth case studies of teacher collaboration practices in emerging inclusive schools. During the first phase of the project, data were collected that highlighted the need to further explore the role of the learning support teacher in full-service schools.

Full-service schools, as stated in Chapter 2, refer to mainstream schools that provide equitable and quality education through supporting all learning needs (DoBE, 2010). According to the Guidelines for full-service/inclusive schools (DoBE, 2010), a full-service school with more than 500 learners “must have a full-time learning support teacher who is trained to support the implementation of inclusive education” (p. 23). For this reason, the project team decided to focus on full-service schools, as there is a greater probability that they have experience in addressing diverse needs and collaborating with staff, teachers, parents and other professional individuals. The information regarding potential full-service

schools and the learning support teachers was provided by the learning support advisors at the district. Their role as gatekeepers was to help me gain access to participants who would provide a wealth of knowledge.

Finding full-service schools that reflected post provisioning as stipulated in the policy document was challenging. One of the schools had been split into two schools, of which one then became a full-service school and the other remained a mainstream school. However, the learning support teacher was made to be shared by the now separate schools, although the full-service school surpassed 1 000 learners. I therefore had to be flexible and take these differing contexts into consideration. The learning support teachers in the other three schools were placed at the full-service schools for five days a week, with another interim learning support teacher who visited two of the schools to provide additional support. Table 3.1 gives an indication of the participants' qualifications, previous experience and how long they have been employed in their current position.

Table 3.1: Demographic information of participants

<b>Participants<sup>8</sup></b>	<b>Time in current position</b>	<b>Previous experience</b>	<b>Qualifications</b>
P1	4 years	24 years (Foundation Phase) 3 years (resource class teacher)	BEd
P2	4 years	8 years (Foundation Phase)	BEd
P3	29 years	2 years (Foundation Phase)	BEd BEdHons (Educational Psychology) BPsych Equivalence Programme
P4	2 years	Part-time work and study: 3 years (stepdown facility), 2 years (private schools), 1 year (learning support teacher, itinerant schools)	BEd BEdHons (Educational Psychology)

<sup>8</sup> The abbreviation P is used to refer to the participants.

The selection criteria for participants were the following:

- They were appointed as learning support teachers.
- They were employed in the same district.
- They had been in the learning support teacher position for at least a year.
- They were willing to participate in the research study.

Based on the information provided by the learning support advisors I was able to select participants who would be willing to join the study and tell their story. The degree and manner with which each became involved varied. This included how much they shared, how they positioned themselves within the broader discourse and how they related to me.

### **3.4.2 Data collection methods**

As mentioned earlier, qualitative research focuses on meaning in context, requiring data collection methods or instruments that are sensitive to any underlying meaning (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Data are primarily collected through fieldwork, which has the researcher spending time in the setting under study (Patton, 2015). This allows the researcher to observe within the particular context, interview individuals and analyse necessary documents. Case studies, in particular, are known for their flexibility or adaptability with regard to the number of methods of data collection used to investigate a research problem (Ponelis, 2015). Regardless of flexibility, it is through the process of using multiple sources of data that triangulation is possible and the opportunity arises for significant insights to emerge (Yin, 2018).

In order to address the aims and objectives of this research study, data were collected through a comprehensive literature review, four individual semi-structured interviews, document analysis and observations, which included field notes made during visits prior to the interviews and informal talks. The unit of analysis was the learning support teachers as the subjects, and the interviews conducted were the primary source of data. The secondary information was obtained from the field notes, which included relevant policy documents, the learning support teacher job description and observation notes from visits and informal talks. This section discusses the procedures and the specific methods employed to collect data.

#### **3.4.2.1 Literature review**

Before the planning process progresses too far, it is important to ground the study in reliability and validity, which is partially achieved through conducting a thorough literature review (Cohen et al., 2018, Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). A literature review investigates

previous thinking and research, thereby helping researchers to position their enquiry within a framework and shape their actual problem statement and purpose of the study. Most importantly, I believe, is identifying the gap within the particular field, as this points to the significance of what needs to be addressed, why it needs to be addressed and how it relates to, and possibly extends, what has thus far been explored in the field. In order to come to the abovementioned conclusions, one needs to read widely. A literature review can therefore demonstrate how the present study can advance, refine or even revise what is already known (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016).

A literature review is by no means a descriptive summary of what has been read, but rather an organised and developed argument (Cohen et al., 2018). The literature I used was sourced from many different channels, including academic journals, scholarly books, education policy documents, relevant legislation and the internet. In order to provide a coherent, persuasive, logical and purposeful review of the abovementioned sources, the literature must be collected, synthesised and presented in a particular sequence. This allows for progression towards a cumulative argument and possible conclusion of what needs to be studied, and why. In my literature review, I had to initially contextualise learning support teachers' job descriptions within the inclusive education movement, taking into account how they can collaborate to ensure the optimal functioning of full-service schools. I therefore covered topics of qualitative research, CHAT, inclusive education, full-service schools, collaboration, barriers to learning and the role of the learning support teacher.

#### *3.4.2.2 Semi-structured individual interviews*

In qualitative research, the aim of an interview is for the researcher and participant to engage in a conversation of which the focus is on information regarding the research questions. I chose to conduct semi-structured interviews as my primary data collection method. A semi-structured interview is the "most commonly used data collection strategy in qualitative research" (Beitin, 2012, p. 244). The interviews were based on an interview guide (refer to Appendix B) with a mixture of more and less structured questions (see Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). The questions were used flexibly with the focus on acquiring specific data from the participants, while leaving enough room to explore any relevant details that might have come to light. The interview guide provided the needed structure to ensure consistency across the interviews, including both open- and closed-ended questions, allowing enough room for additional questioning and further exploration. However, I also considered Beitin's (2012) recommendation to be flexible and shift footing to stay with the participants' stories. The interviews were recorded and then transcribed verbatim, with the prior consent of the participants (refer to Appendix C).



Prior to the interview, I visited each participant at school to discuss the project and their expectations. During this meeting we informally discussed the study and the participants shared some of their experiences. Field notes were made during these discussions (see Figure 3.3). This initial meeting established rapport prior to our 90-minute interview, which was held in each participant's class at their respective schools. Each interview was conducted with the help of the questions, as formulated in the interview guide. After all the interviews were conducted and transcribed, the field notes and initial ideas from the transcribed interviews were noted as the first steps in the analysis process.

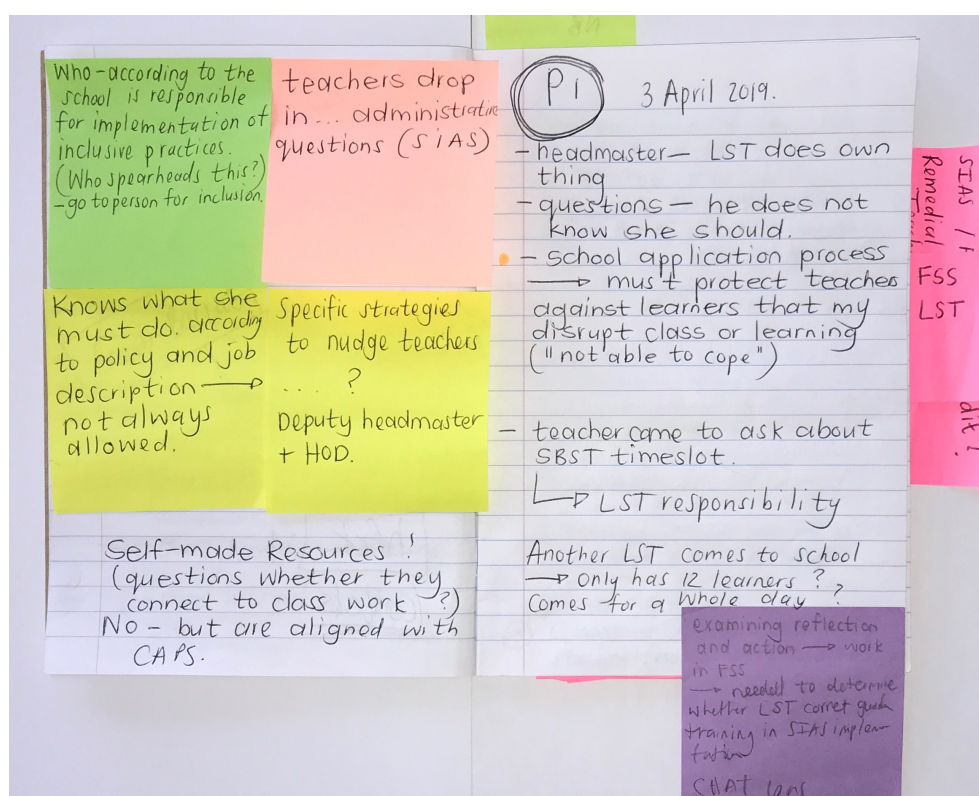


Figure 3.3: Example of field notes made during initial meeting

### 3.4.2.3 Observations

According to Merriam and Tisdell (2016), "observational data represent a first hand encounter with the phenomenon of interest rather than a second hand account of the world obtained in the interview" (p. 137). Observations were conducted during my initial visits to the school. On more than one occasion, the learning support teachers forgot that I was coming and did not have enough time for the interview. During the visits and the informal talks that followed, I observed and made notes. It was especially during these informal talks and visits that I could observe their position within the school. These field notes provided valuable data regarding the context of the schools and the positioning of the learning support

teachers within them. With the CHAT framework, these contexts are very important, as they might prove helpful in understanding why the schools do things as they do, and why these actions might be in direct conflict with the stated objects of the system (see Williams & Hummelbrunner, 2011). The field notes were used as supplementary or secondary data during data analysis.

#### 3.4.2.4 Document analysis

For the document analysis I examined the inclusive education policy and guideline documents. The documents used are listed in Table 3.2. I also considered data that were derived from my field notes.

Table 3.2: Data collection methods

Method	Data source	Information provided
Interview (4 x 90 minutes)	Transcripts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Richly descriptive, personal narratives of learning support teachers</li> </ul>
Observations	Field notes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Day-to-day functioning of the learning support teachers in the particular schools (rules and division of labour within the particular schools)</li> <li>- Historical and community contexts in which the schools were situated</li> <li>- Observed functioning of the schools as full-service schools</li> </ul>
Document analysis	Documents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Learning support teacher job description (Appendix A)</li> <li>- Education White Paper 6 (DoE, 2001)</li> <li>- SIAS policy (DoBE, 2014)</li> <li>- Guidelines for full-service/inclusive schools (DoBE, 2010)</li> <li>- Action step: National model (DoBE, 2010)</li> <li>- Guidelines for responding to learner diversity in the classroom through curriculum and assessment policy statement (DoBE, 2011)</li> <li>- Guidelines to ensure quality</li> </ul>



		education and support in special schools as resource centres (DoBE, 2007)
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### 3.5 DATA ANALYSIS

Data analysis is central to producing credible qualitative data. In case study research, the researcher, as the primary instrument, should display the ability to understand, describe and interpret the participants' experiences and perceptions, allowing them to uncover meaning within the particular context (Maguire & Delahunt, 2017). If done with the necessary care, this will afford the researcher richly descriptive narratives and a holistic understanding of the case being studied. Thematic analysis was used as “a method of identifying, analyzing and reporting patterns (themes) within data” (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 79). Thematic analysis provides procedures that are both accessible and systematic and allows for the generating of codes and themes (Terry, Hayfield, Clarke, & Braun, 2017). Codes refer to the smallest units of analysis and capture data that might be relevant to the initial research questions. These codes are then used as building blocks for larger patterns of meaning, known as themes (see sections 3.5.2–3.5.4).

The goal of thematic analysis is identifying themes that appear to be interesting or important, and using these themes to address the research questions or particular issue (Maguire & Delahunt, 2017). The process is therefore not merely about summarising data, but also of making sense of the data for the study to say something worthwhile or contribute something meaningful. According to Braun and Clarke (2006), there are two levels of themes, namely semantic and latent themes. Semantic themes refers to the “explicit or surface meanings of the data [where] the analyst is not looking for anything beyond what a participant has said or what has been written” (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 84). Analysis, however, should move beyond semantic themes and “start to identify or examine the underlying ideas, assumptions, and conceptualisations – and ideologies – that are theorised as shaping or informing the semantic content of the data” (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 84). From a cultural-historical perspective, analysis needs to be grounded in the cultural and historical context of the community and education movement as a whole to make sense of that which might emerge.

The approach used was a bottom-up or inductive approach to analysis. This means that the data were coded without trying to fit them into a pre-existing coding frame (Braun & Clarke, 2006). The aim is not to discover “the beginning of arguments of the end of rationalizations”, but rather to find within the broken-down data “explicit rationalizations and implicit

signification" (Attride-Stirling, 2001, p. 388). The process of analysis did not start with the first coding, but rather as soon as the first interviews were completed when ideas for codes and possible themes were noted. Figure 3.4 provides an example of notes made as the first steps of my data analysis. This process continued throughout the coding/analysis process.

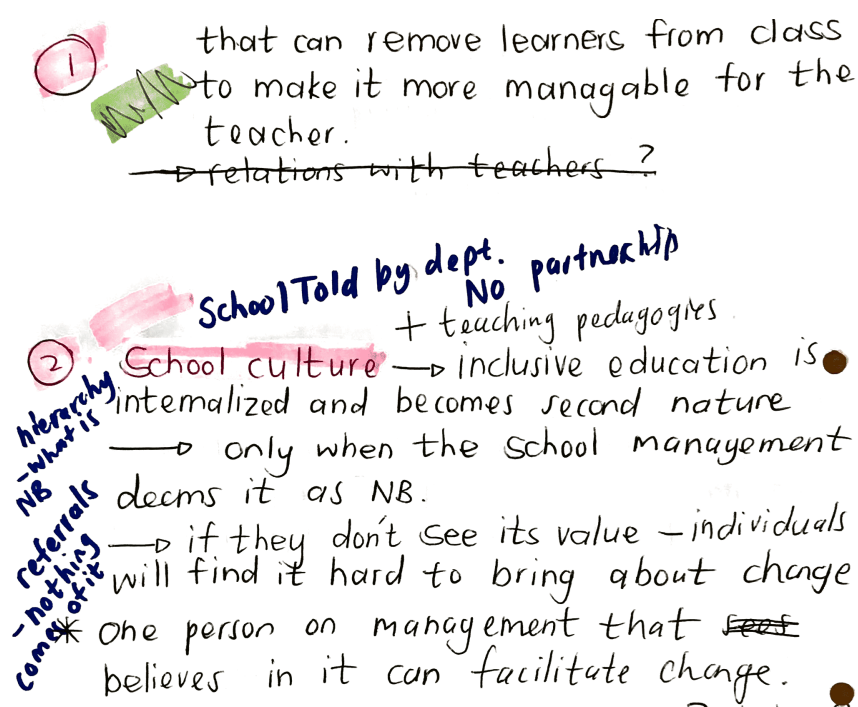


Figure 3.4: Field notes made after interviews as the first steps of my data analysis

As a means of making sense of that which emerged, ASA was used to analyse the dynamics of the activity systems. I was interested in learning support teachers' influence, or lack thereof, on both activity systems of which they formed part and how their interpretation and use of mediating tools supported them in reaching particular outcomes. The activity systems that they formed part of were however deeply seated in very particular cultural and historical contexts, which in turn had a significant influence on their ability to function according to their roles and responsibilities. These reciprocal influences play an important part in determining what affords and constrains collaborative practices.

According to Merriam (2002), "qualitative data analysis does not progress in a linear fashion, but rather happens simultaneously, alongside data collection; often with no clear cut point where data collections ends and analysis begins" (p. 14). The data analysis process for this study comprised of phases based on Braun and Clarke's framework (2006).

### 3.5.1 Familiarisation and immersion

The first phase is for the researcher to familiarise him-/herself with the data. Interviews were held in person, and through dialogue and conversation certain initial interests and thoughts emerged. These initial thoughts were noted as field notes during the initial meeting as well as notes made during the interview process (see Figure 3.5). Following these initial thoughts and ideas, I immersed myself in the data by reading and re-reading the transcripts of all four interviews. Appendix C is an example of one such transcription. The concept of immersing oneself in the data involves not only repeated reading, but also includes what Braun and Clarke (2006, p. 87) refer to as reading in an “active way”. This means reading to engage by actively searching for patterns.

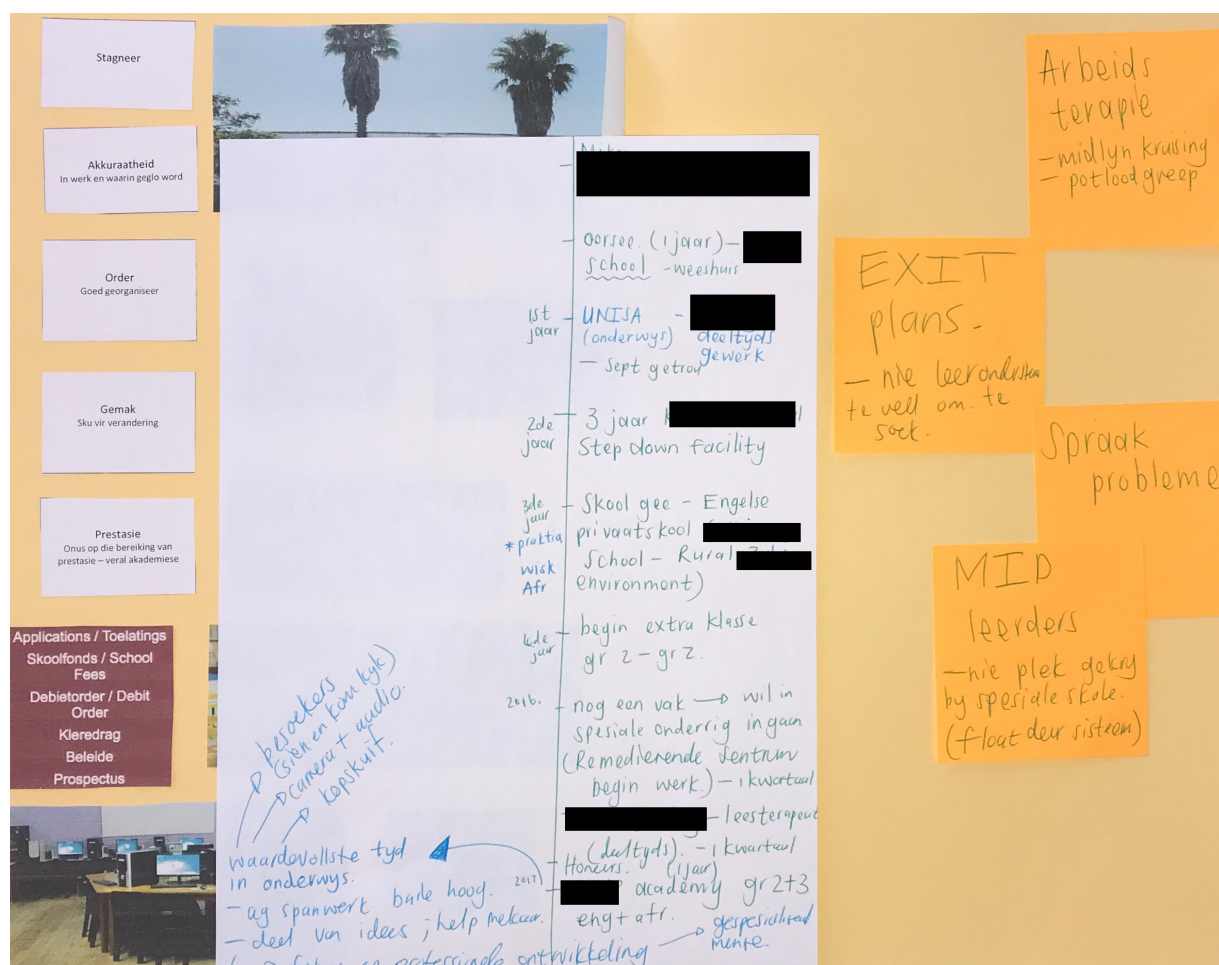


Figure 3.5: Notes made during a semi-structured interview

### 3.5.2 Coding into themes

During this phase, I started to organise the data in a meaningful way through the process of axial coding (see Appendix D). Although this process seems rudimentary, it must be completed with rigour and attention to detail, as it is the coding process that provides boundaries, ensuring that that which is coded, and later themed, is not redundant, but

meaningful and useful to the study. Open coding was used, which implies that there were no pre-set codes, but that codes were developed and modified as the process continued (see Maguire & Delahunt, 2017). Coding allows researchers to reduce the large amounts of data into smaller, meaningful parts through a process of clustering categories and sub-categories. I initially worked through each interview separately, paying attention to each item and identifying recurring patterns or interesting sections. Thereafter I looked for common themes across all four interviews. As no data are without contradiction, attention was paid to instances where accounts departed from the dominant story, noting these tensions and inconsistencies, as recommended by Braun and Clarke (2006).

### 3.5.3 Searching for themes and reviewing those themes

Themes refer to coherent and meaningful patterns of data that relate to the research questions or the issue being studied. Figure 3.6 shows an example of initial themes that were identified during this stage of the analysis. By studying the coded data, I actively constructed themes as a means of collating all of the coded data. Once this was done, individual themes that might prove meaningful could be identified. However, getting to this part of the analysis one cannot assume that any of these initial themes will hold as they are. Further investigation might indicate the need for them to be revised, refined, separated or discarded (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

LST (+1) and outsider

154	D: Om terug te kom na hulle toe en <u>hulle kom net dit afdwing</u> .	expectations
155	En ek voel daar word nie, onse stem word nie eintlik	
156	gehoor nie. Want elke vergadering wat ons bywoon, word	
157	daar gepraat oor <u>werk wat ons moet doen</u> . Dit wat ons in	
158	<u>plek moet sit</u> . As hulle hier kom dan moet dit... daar word	
159	<u>nie 'n stem gegee vir ons wat in die klas is om te sê jy...</u>	* LST voice
160	<u>dit is hoe ons voel</u> . Dit is vir ons onmoontlik om dit te	Green stem gegee
161	doen. Dit is vir ons bonatuurlik om dit te doen en dit. Dan	↳ moet een hê,
162	ons het nie 'n stem nie en ek voel dit is nie reg nie. Ek	maar moet gegee
163	voel <u>ons moet 'n stem</u> het en ons moet kan praat om	word.
164	<u>hierdie ding te laat werk</u> . As jy vir my vra <u>voel ek leer</u>	
165	<u>ondersteuning werk nie in die ware sin van die woord</u>	
166	<u>soos wat dit moet werk nie</u> .	
450	D: Internet hier te hê. Maar my hande is afgekap. Onse	LST hands cut off
451	internet stelsel is van so 'n aard ingesit, die, wat noem 'n	
452	mens die ding wat hier in...	
506	Vrydag. Eintlik is <u>sulke stremende faktore wat jy nie</u>	barriers - time
507	<u>kan verby kom wat maak dat jy voel jy net nie kan</u>	can't function
508	<u>funksioneer soos wat dit moet funksioneer nie</u> .	
537	D: Dit maak dit oneindig, <u>en ek kan maar praat, niemand</u>	LST outsider
538	<u>steur vir hulle daaraan nie</u> .	outsider voice
539	N: Ja, so dit moet van bo af kom?	"insignificant"?
698	met hulle werk en as ek 'n <u>keuse gehad het sou ek wil</u>	inclusive edu as NO
699	<u>voortgaan met hulpbron klas waar daai kindertjies</u>	"barrier"?
700	<u>bymekaar is want hulle word soos 'n famillietjie</u> . En	voice

Both systems want LST to exert power in other system but neither gives them the space, means, voice to do so.



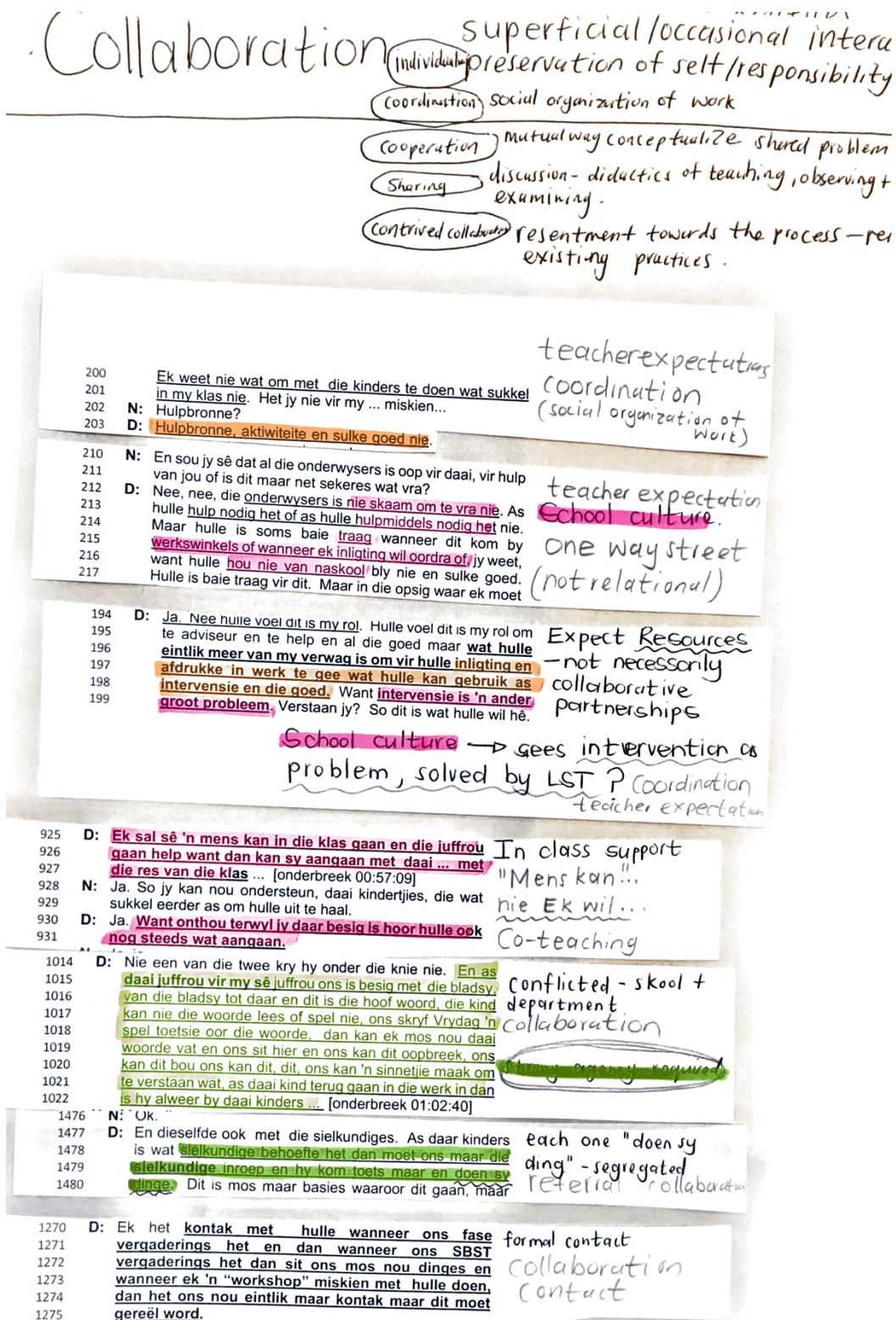


Figure 3.6: Example of initial themes that emerged

### 3.5.4 Defining and naming themes

The process of defining and naming the themes entails looking at how these themes fit into and relate to the individually coded data as well as the entire data set. Figure 3.7 shows the process of reviewing themes at the level of the coded data towards reviewing at the level of the entire data set. This part of the process calls on the researcher to determine where the

individual themes have a voice of their own and whether they speak to one another to form a coherent story. During this phase, I returned to the research questions and their theoretical underpinning as a means of addressing them in light of the patterns that emerged from the data (see Attride-Stirling, 2001). Any re-coding that was needed was done during this phase of the analysis process. Figure 3.7 illustrates how the research questions were used as a framework to organise the data into themes and sub-themes.





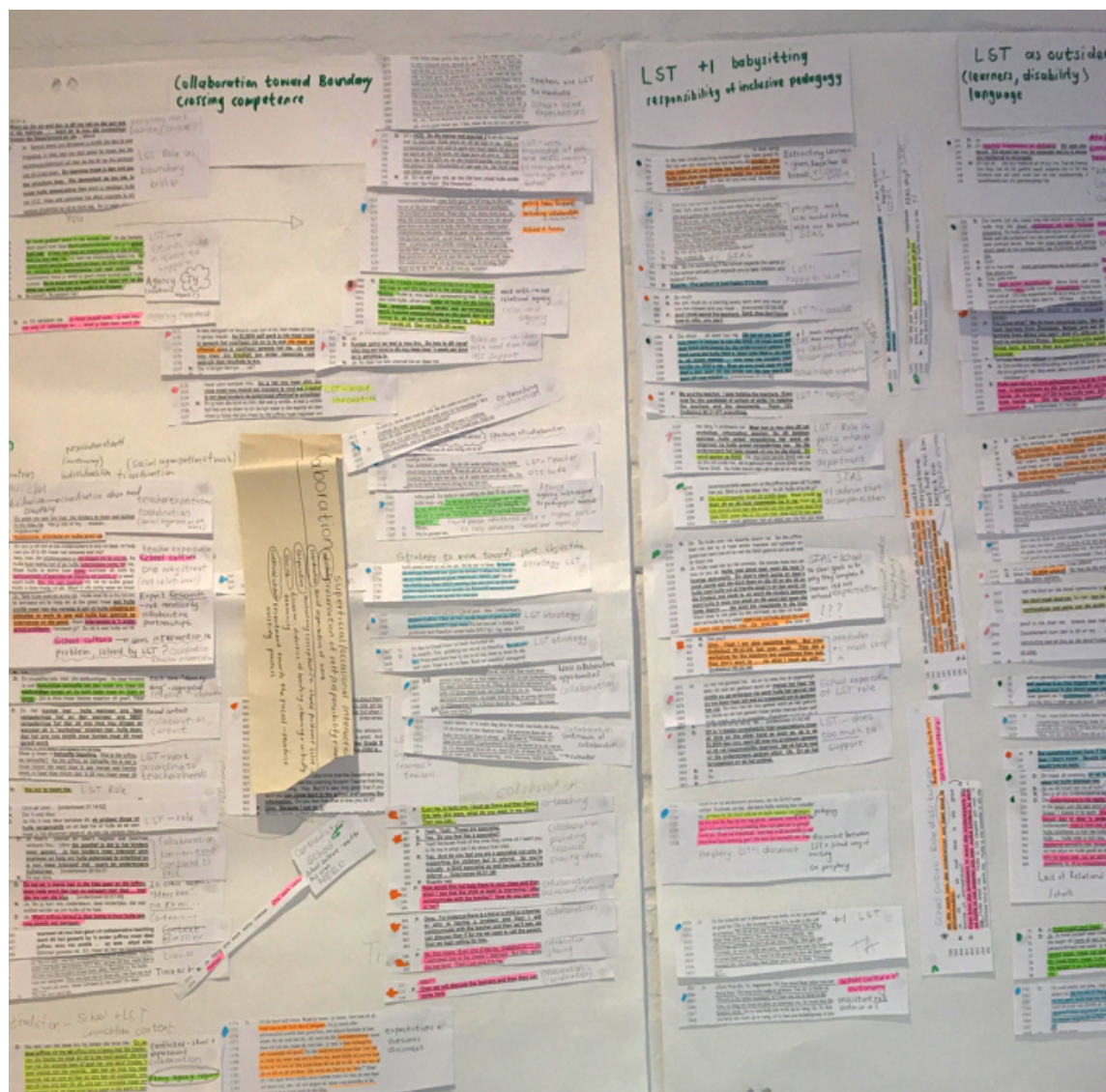


Figure 3.7: The process of reviewing themes at the level of the coded data (top) and at the level of the themes of the entire data set (bottom)

### 3.5.5 Producing a report

This process is the final opportunity for analysis, and requires of the researcher to relate back to the literature and their initial research questions to ensure they are able to produce a scholarly report based on their findings (Braun & Clarke, 2006). According to Morse (2018), evidence is not something that is situated 'out there' waiting to be found. Evidence refers to that which needs to be produced, constructed and represented. This notion of participation of the researcher in the interpretation process does not imply a lack of rigor. According to Denzin and Lincoln (2018), objective representation of reality is impossible. Qualitative interpretations are therefore constructed and my role was that of reflexive researcher and interpreter, while making visible the theoretical concepts used for interpretation. During this process I also took into account the cultural and historical contexts (see Chapter 2) and included my conception of development and the themes that were constructed from the study (see Appendix D).

### 3.6 TRUSTWORTHINESS OF THE STUDY

According to Morse (2018), it is the researcher's agenda that determines the "primary use of either validation or verification strategies" (p. 1399). Terminology associated with traditional scientific inquiry, such as 'reliability' and 'validity', has gradually been replaced by some researchers with terminology such as 'credibility', 'transferability', 'dependability' and 'confirmability' when referring to how researchers can ensure the trustworthiness of qualitative research studies (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016; Miles, Huberman, & Saldaña, 2020).

#### 3.6.1 Credibility

The credibility of research takes into account how believable the findings appear to the participants. It therefore hinges on the extent to which the researcher's depiction of the participants matches their perceptions (Cohen et al., 2018). According to Merriam and Tisdell (2016), qualitative research studies people's constructions of reality. As the primary instrument of data collection and interpretation, the researcher accesses interpretations of reality directly from observations and interviews. This implies that my position as the primary instrument for data collection puts me 'closer' to the 'reality' of my participants. This positioning allows for "adequate engagement in data collection" as referred to by Merriam and Tisdell (2016, p. 245), and allows the researcher the opportunity to get as close as possible to the participants' understanding of the phenomenon.

Strategically, it is through the process of triangulation that the credibility of findings can be increased (Harrison, Birks, Franklin, & Mills, 2017). Although objective reality can never be captured, issues of internal validity in this study were addressed by using multiple methods of data collection, including a semi-structured interview, document analysis and observations. I employed various sources of data, including interviews, field notes based on observations, documents and a thorough literature review. The data gathered during the interviews could therefore be checked against what was observed in context as well as what was obtained through documents, artefacts and the relevant literature.

The researcher's positioning, or reflexivity, plays a significant role in the integrity of qualitative research. According to Patton (2015, p. 130), the term 'reflexivity' emphasises the "importance of deep introspection, political consciousness, cultural awareness, and ownership of one's perspective". Probst and Berenson (2014) refer to how the researcher affects and is affected by the research process, including the participants. As a researcher I needed to acknowledge my biases and assumptions in order to determine how these might have influenced how I conducted the research and the conclusions I arrived at. Reflecting in my field journal, I noted that I needed to check myself from judging how the participants or



the school was functioning at the given time. My role was not as a learning support teacher representative; it was to give an honest and credible recollection of the narratives of four very different individuals working within similar, but contextually different environments.

### **3.6.2 Transferability**

Transferability refers to the degree to which the study makes it possible for the reader to apply the findings to other similar situations or contexts. In descriptive case studies the intent or purpose of the researcher is not typicality (Schwandt & Gates, 2018), but rather to represent a “solid, hard concrete phenomenon” (Morse, 2018, p. 1374). Schwandt and Gates (2018), however, argue that a single descriptive case is in some sense “typical” or “average” (p. 609) and therefore possibly representative. Viewed with CHAT as my lens, I could also follow Stake’s (1995) argument that well-crafted case studies that consist of storied, personal, contextually situated accounts provide us with narratives of the participants’ lived experience, thereby contributing to naturalistic generalisation.

In cases where specifics from the research can be compared, the original research gains more credibility, as it becomes, to a larger extent, generalisable. The researcher can however not control the contexts to which future researchers want to apply their findings. In order to establish transferability, I chose rich, thick descriptions as a strategy (see Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). These detailed and comprehensive descriptions applied to the setting, participants and findings, so that any possible future comparison can be thoroughly evaluated.

### **3.6.3 Dependability**

In qualitative research, dependability rests upon the quality of data collection and analysis, focusing on whether the research studies that which it set out to (Ponelis, 2005). The focus is therefore on how accurately and comprehensively the initial research questions were covered. The process of establishing dependability in qualitative research does not strive for uniformity, but rather for reliable interpretations from the researcher. These interpretations may differ if looked at by another researcher, but should consistently be a reflection of the multiple interpretations and meanings afforded to particular events by the participants (Cohen et al., 2018).

### 3.6.4 Confirmability

Patton (2015) refers to Lincoln and Guba's criteria that view confirmability as parallel to objectivity and are concerned with determining that the data and interpretations were not only "figments of the inquirer's imagination" (p. 990). In order to ensure this, data need to be visibly linked to assertions, findings and interpretations in such a way that reflects trustworthiness and authenticity. The researcher is therefore responsible for demonstrating how conclusions and interpretation were reached (Nowell, Norris, White & Moules, 2017). Confirmability raises questions regarding how well the findings are supported by the participants. Linking what was found to the literature, and particularly similar findings, contributes to the confirmability of the research (Morse, 2018).

### 3.6.5 Data verification strategies

Although as a qualitative researcher I will never be able to "capture an objective truth", there are strategies that can be implemented to increase the credibility and dependability of my research (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016, p. 244).

#### 3.6.5.1 *Triangulation*

The process of triangulation is concerned with using multiple indicators throughout the research process as a means of conveying the dependability, credibility and potential transferability of a study (Morgan & Ravitch, 2018). It therefore counters any concerns there might be with regard to findings being a result of a single method, a single source or a single investigator's perspective (Patton, 2015). I triangulated by using diverse methods of data collection, including interviews, document analysis, observations and literature sources. Multiple sources of data were collected by interviewing four learning support teachers, with the same job description, all employed by the same district and working at different full-service schools.

#### 3.6.5.2 *Peer examination*

My study was conducted as part of a master's degree under the supervision of a university. Peer review or examination was therefore automatically incorporated into my process. I was fortunate to be part of a larger research project that allowed me to be exposed not only to my supervisor, but also to the perspectives and input of my peers.

#### 3.6.5.3 *Rich descriptions*

The product of qualitative research is richly descriptive as a means of contextualising the study. This allows readers to determine whether their situations match the detailed research context and ultimately whether these finding can be transferred (Merriam, 2018). Words and

images are used to convey what has been gained through the process, including quotes, field notes, interviews and electronic communication, all contributing to supporting the research findings.

#### *3.6.5.4 Audit trail*

An audit trail refers to the comprehensive account of how the study was conducted and how the data were analysed. To construct my audit trail, I noted how my data were collected through observation notes and the transcriptions of interviews. Participants were informed during our initial meeting of the process of data collection. Starting from my very first visit to the schools, notes were kept concerning ideas and thoughts that later developed into possible themes. Following the interviews and transcriptions, these tentative themes, as well as the coding process, were documented. My field notes provided me with a record of my interactions with the data as well as how I moved through the analysis and interpretation process that led to my findings. Chapters 3 and 4 provide a comprehensive description of the research process and data analysis.

### **3.7 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS**

Qualitative research is quite distinct from quantitative research in that producing data requires a closer and sometimes long-term relationship with participants in different contextual settings (Hammersley & Traianou, 2012). The quality of rich descriptions depends on the rapport established by the researcher, juxtaposed with possible bias and validity issues. In order to protect the integrity of the participants and my research, various ethical issues needed to be considered. According to Cohen et al. (2018), ethical judgements are not absolute, but lie on a continuum, ranging from what is ethically clear to what is clearly unethical. Ethical issues, although universal, need to be interpreted based on the particular research context. Keeping this in mind, one becomes aware of ethical issues that arise during every stage of the research.

Prior to starting the research process I received ethical clearance from the Research Ethics Committee as part of a research collaboration funded by the National Research Foundation (FLGR160605168020) and Fonds Wetenskaplike Ondersoek (G0G5117N). Permission was subsequently granted by the WCED for access to the schools. The letter of permission was sent to the District East Education Department, requesting schools in their catchment area. The learning support advisors acted as gatekeepers, putting me in touch with possible participants. Once they agreed, I contacted the schools to obtain permission from the principals. Subsequent meetings were arranged with the participants and principals to ensure that they were able to make an informed decision regarding their participation and to

provide them with an opportunity to ask questions. Various ethical principles were considered and are discussed below.

Having obtained ethical clearance for the project, I did not have to submit my proposal again, but I had to adhere to the Research Ethics Policy Document of Stellenbosch University. This document provides a framework in addition to the existing value system of Stellenbosch University. It is aimed at promoting scientific integrity and ethically responsible research by formally endorsing the Singapore Statement of Research Integrity and the University of Pittsburgh guidelines on research data management and ensuring compliance with other applicable research-related norms, standards and regulations. The Health Professions Council of South Africa's code of professional ethics is one of these related regulations. Under this code I, as an intern educational psychologist, am guided by ethical principles, of which I discuss a few below that were of particular importance to this research process.

### **3.7.1 Autonomy and informed consent**

The researcher needs to respect the autonomy of participants by gaining informed consent, and where appropriate, regard them as equals during the process (Hammersley & Traianou, 2012). The principle of informed consent arises from the participants' right to freedom and self-determination (Cohen et al., 2018). Respecting and protecting self-determination imply that the participant becomes partly responsible should anything go wrong during the research. Through informed consent, the participants are told what would be required of them and they can then weigh up the risks and benefits of participation. As part of self-determination, participants have the right to refuse to take part or withdraw even once the research has started. In this study, the participants were allowed access to information that explained the purpose of the study. Each participant received a letter outlining the study (see appendices F and G) and participation was voluntary.

### **3.7.2 Confidentiality and anonymity**

Confidentiality refers to the process of protecting participants from unwanted exposure of their personal data and opinions. To promote anonymity, participants' names and identifying characteristics are withheld (Cohen et al., 2018). The participants were informed that the information that I obtained would remain confidential and solely accessible by me and my supervisor. The learning support teachers' positioning made them vulnerable to scrutiny from the schools and district. It was therefore very important for me to be able to assure them of confidentiality to enable them to be open and honest. The participants gave permission for the interviews to be recorded and were assured that the recordings and

transcribed data would be securely stored to protect their identity and prevent any harm or embarrassment to them.

Regardless of all the steps I took to protect the participants and their information, I still had to inform them of any limits of anonymity. Working in a school setting makes participants more vulnerable to possible identification, regardless of pseudonyms. I therefore had to be mindful of the quotes I used, as well as during the writing up of the final report, to ensure that there was no identifiable information.

### **3.7.3 Non-maleficence and beneficence**

Non-maleficence and beneficence are key ethical principles when working with an individual (Allan, 2016). Non-maleficence requires both researcher and participants to consider what the consequences of the research could be for the participants and vice versa (Cohen et al., 2018). All research, however, involves risk or harm that cannot completely be minimised. The responsibility of researchers therefore lies in minimising such risk to the best of their ability (Hammersley & Traianou, 2012). Prior to conducting the research, I considered what could cause harm and applied certain strategies accordingly.

According to Cohen et al. (2018), the complement to non-maleficence is beneficence. It considers the possible benefits that the research could bring, to whom it would be beneficial and how. The outcome of my research may lead to an improvement in communication between full-service schools and districts to ensure that learning support teachers are heard, valued and accepted. The research provides an opportunity for learning support teachers to tell and reflect on their stories, giving them a voice they so often feel they do not have.

### **3.7.4 Fidelity**

The principle of fidelity refers to the extent to which the researcher, as a professional, is trustworthy. Society requires from professional people to be more trustworthy than the public (Allan, 2016). As a researcher, I therefore always put the participants' interests before mine while providing them with a safe and contained space where they could engage in the interviews freely while feeling respected and valued.

## **3.8 CONCLUSION**

This chapter gave an account of the research design and methodology used to conduct the study. An explanation was given of how I ensured the validity and reliability of the research, how data were verified and what ethical considerations steered the research. The results of the data collected are presented in the next chapter.

## CHAPTER 4

### RESEARCH FINDINGS

#### 4.1 INTRODUCTION

This research aimed to develop narratives of learning support teachers' trajectories of collaboration and relational agency and their role in developing inclusive pedagogies in full-service schools. To this end, I needed to explore:

- the participants' perception of their role in full-service schools;
- their perceptions and understandings of collaboration; and
- the mediating phenomena that enable or obstruct learning support teachers' relational agency and collaborative practices in these school communities (affordances and constraints)?

This study aimed at eliciting in-depth qualitative information through semi-structured interviews with learning support teachers in four full-service schools. The use of CHAT as a theoretical lens highlights the importance of context when gathering information (see Section 1.4). How schools operate, the rules that guide them, the division of labour and how things have historically been done have bearing on how they function today.

In its attempt to streamline and create uniformity, policy is still interpreted within a particular activity system based on what that activity system values. Each full-service school therefore functions as a unique activity system, with a learning support teacher forming part of each. The membership afforded to the learning support teacher will also vary depending on an array of variables. The research recognises that the learning support teachers' perceptions were influenced by their relationship and interactions within the particular school and district context.

Table 4.1 shows the main themes and sub-themes that emerged during the research, each with the inclusion criteria used.

Table 4.1: Themes, sub-themes and inclusion criteria

Theme	Sub-themes	Inclusion criteria
<b>The key role of the learning support teacher in the functioning of the full-service school</b>	The 'outsiders'	Excluded, forgotten, shoved out, language, barriers to learning, community, exclusionary practices, inclusion as outsider
	The learning support teacher and inclusion as the 'plus 1'	Additional administration, SIAS, referral, extra pair of hands, plus 1
	The learning support teacher's voice	No voice, no-one listens, skills level, support, advisory role, fight
	Collaboration and the role of agency	Referral, resources, one-way support, sharing, individualism, cooperation, coordination, contrived collaboration
	Boundary-crossing competence	Agency, creative, innovative, relational work
<b>Access vs. accommodation</b>		Accommodation, applications, full-service school status, differentiation, pedagogy, systemic barriers
<b>School culture</b>		Rules, work ethic, division of labour, attitudes, values, leadership, teacher expectations, role distribution

## **4.2 THEME 1: THE KEY ROLE OF THE LEARNING SUPPORT TEACHER IN THE FUNCTIONING OF THE FULL-SERVICE SCHOOL**

This theme refers to the perceived expectations held by the participants with regard to the role of the learning support teacher in contributing to the successful functioning of the full-service school. Learning support teachers and their positioning as subjects in two activity systems, working towards a seemingly uniform object, are a unique phenomenon that was explained in Section 1.4. Although both of these activity systems, the school and district, work towards promoting access and accommodation for all, they are contextually very different. These inherent differences mean that they might have different expectations of how the learning support teachers need to function based on their interpretation of their objective. These interpretations will be addressed later (see Section 4.2.5). From the perspectives of the teachers and based on the document analysis, the school and district see the potential of the learning support teachers as boundary brokers, able to advocate and influence the other system. The tension that might arise due to the boundary work needs to be examined by an active learning support teacher, as it is only through agency that the possibility of new ways of thinking and doing may arise. Both of these systems seem to want the learning support teacher to exert this type of power in the other system, but neither is willing to necessarily give them the voice to do so.

The participants were introduced in Chapter 3 (Table 3.1). The schools they form part of were diverse in their contexts. All but one school either had the majority of their staff travel to the school from outside of the school community or serviced learners from other communities. This might not seem significant, but it is relevant when looking at the themes regarding belonging, not only of the learning support teachers, but also of the learners to whom the school provides access. The majority of the teachers who teach at the schools had been teaching there since before the schools were converted into full-service schools. Many of the learners who experienced barriers to learning had been referred to the school via another school or the district.

When the SIAS policy was rolled out, the learning support teachers were of the first to be trained. As mentioned in Section 1.2 the expectation from the district level was that they would broker the departments' policy at school level and thereby assure implementation. However, to be able to do this, learning support teachers would need to have some level of agency to want to broker policy, should be afforded some influence within the particular school and should have relational agency to be able to engage with others while doing so. The sub-themes that emerged are now discussed.



### 4.2.1 The ‘outsiders’

To be positioned as an outsider in this study means to work in a full-service school for the majority of the week, but to still not be viewed by the school as part of the staff. These learning support teachers were viewed as being employed by the district and placed at the school, and were often overlooked when meetings were planned. This was made clear by the following comments by the participants.

*P1: So, we are new positions that were created and we are placed here, so we are not easily accepted in the school. And you are seen as an outsider. You are figuratively here, but you are not really part of the school setup. (P1: 68-72)*

*P2: But sometimes even here if they do have a meeting then I don't know. No-one can inform me. Then I would just sit here. (P2: 99-101)*

*P4: They have planning meetings, but I don't even know when, you understand? (P4: 1426-1428)*

This form of exclusion is often very subtle and even evident in the case of P3, where the learning support teacher had transitioned with the school and had been a staff member for 29 years. In this instance, the school, regardless of the years in service, still inadvertently viewed the support position as inferior by compromising the learning support teacher's workspace when there were issues with space.

*P3: The LSEN needs to move out. So, at the end of the day we get the store rooms. (P3: 1113 -1114)*

The notion of the outsider has followed the learning support teacher throughout history. Aiello and Sharma (2018) refer to this distinction of learning support teachers as being different to other staff, in this case employed by the district, as leading to micro-exclusion (see Section 2.6). P3 referred to the fact that many learning support teachers did not have good relations at schools and that it resided with the learning support teacher to remediate this.

*P3: You as LSEN need to make yourself part of the child and school community. So, that then leads to good relationships that some of the other LSENs don't have. (P3: 1412-1415)*

After a discussion with the headmaster, P4 had the following to say about the previous teacher appointed as the resource class teacher:

*P4: No one knew what was going on in her class. So, he did not know what she taught them, or which programme they followed. They were not at all integrated into the bigger picture. (P4: 272-275)*

P1 took this further by implying that learning support teachers were left to fight for membership of the school community. If one was unable to attain such membership, it might lead to less favourable conditions.

*P1: ... if you don't have a strong personality then you will not survive in a school like this. (P1: 53-55)*

*You must make yourself part [of the school]. (P1: 73)*

The participants had historically removed learners from the mainstream classroom to support them elsewhere. According to their job description, this is still the primary method of operating (see Appendix A). The term 'outsider' therefore does not merely apply to the learning support teachers, but also includes those learners who are deemed different and need to be supported elsewhere. In the case of P4, where the school transformed into a full-service school as a result of having a pre-existing resource class, the outsider terminology referred to more than merely the learning support teacher. It included learners with barriers who needed specialised support. The presence of these learners was viewed as an administrative burden.

*P4: Since I started here I have had the feeling that those special class learners were only a big administrative burden for the school. (P4: 207-209)*

*The only thing they did together was attend assembly. An even then they were not seated in-between their peers... so they were actually never part of the school. (P4: 267-270)*

In another instance, a school in a particular area had slowly started to service learners outside the catchment area, which might be attributed to their conversion to a full-service school 10 years ago. This allowed a sense of outsider mentality to creep in, as the learners were not contextually 'theirs' and the accompanying language might also have been foreign. P1 referred to the changes among the learner population from mostly Afrikaans to

predominantly English. Although the teachers had remained Afrikaans teachers from the immediate community, the learners were no longer from that particular community. P2 serviced a community where learners were not able to speak the language of learning and teaching, but the services at the school were free.

*P1: And the coloured teachers are Afrikaans. That was the school. The school has now changed so much and is busy becoming primarily English. (P1: 243-245)*

*Our communities' children don't go to school here ... (P1: 234)*

*P2: And it is difficult for them to understand isiXhosa. Because they only hear isiXhosa here, at home they are speaking their own language. (P2: 519-521)*

*... they don't want to go back because here it's free. (P2: 525-526)*

Although the ideal is for full-service schools to become beacons of good inclusive practice through collaborative partnerships (DoBE, 2010), it seems that the idea of segregation still heavily applies to learners who experience barriers to learning. There is an overwhelming approach to want to 'fix' learners, and this job is delegated to the learning support teacher. This idea of fixing implies that there is something innately wrong with the learner, thereby regressing to a medical deficit approach. It seems fair to say that this segregation further perpetuates the labelling of outsiders, as it reinforces what Cummings, Dyson and Todd (2011) refers to as asymmetrical relationships between learners, parents, teachers and the learning support teacher. P1's response highlights how learners who experienced barriers to learning became their responsibility entirely.

*P1: At the school they expect me to help all the children. All the children that have learning difficulties, learning disorders or learning barriers. (P1: 87- 89)*

*They feel that as soon as a child is identified as a child with learning difficulties then it is out of their hands. Do you understand? That is how they feel. It is out of their hands. It is a problem for 'learning support' to address. (P1: 1235-1239)*

P2 referred to herself as a member of the SBST and received referrals via them of learners who needed to come to her for intervention.

*P2: I'm just one of the members. Then we will discuss learners and they can come here. (P2: 111-114)*

The implication of seeing learners, barriers, language and the learning support teacher as outsiders is that it perpetuates exclusion rather than inclusion. It also implies that the learning support teachers do not have the needed membership to contribute to collaborative partnerships in meaningful ways. This has implications for them becoming agents of change, as they are left with little to no power if they are not included in some way. The participants did not feel included and expressed this as follows:

*P1: ... in the beginning of the year we are obligated to work in the Grade 1 classes. But as soon as you enter the classroom there is a different atmosphere. The teacher feels you are there to observe their work. You are checking whether they are prepared, whether they have resources. They feel you are watching THEM. (P1: 936-938)*

*P4: ... I do feel that you play an important advisory role. And that teachers should feel that if they don't know what to do they can come to you and say: "This child does this and this and this ... and I have tried this. It is not working; can you help me?" But I feel there needs to be more space or room for us to fulfil that role, for example more free periods so that one can go and observe in the classroom. (P4: 1377-1385)*

From a CHAT perspective we cannot assume that schools are unwelcoming towards learning support teachers just because they have historically been segregated through certain rules and aspects regarding the division of labour (see Section 1.4). Contradictions might arise as a result of tensions between different nodes in the system, such as the learning support teacher as a subject and the rules of the school as a system (Engeström, 2016, p. 70). Nothing happens in isolation.

The learning support teachers did not directly work for the school, and therefore did not have a superior to check up on aspects such as timetables. Their advisors checked their roster quarterly, but daily they were responsible for their own way of working. This allowed them a certain sense of independence or autonomy. This independence or autonomy seemed to function as a double-edged sword. On the one hand, it allowed them a sense that they were a step above the others, placed at a school but working for the district, thereby affording them the slightest sense of authority they so desperately seemed to need. This also had

implications for further excluding them, as they seemed to be governed from a different place and might not be subject to all the rules of the full-service school.

*P4: ... the fact that I am placed here by the district feels to me like they [the school] cannot really prescribe to me. You understand ... because I am from the district. So, I almost feel that although I am post level 1, I am a bit ahead or higher up, because I came from outside. (P4: 1561-1567)*

On the other hand, it might lead to certain behaviours that influenced how teachers responded towards them. In the case of P1, the teachers felt that she did not consistently and regularly fetch learners and they wanted her to be held accountable.

*P1: My timetable never works out. This week a message was sent that teachers are complaining they want to know how often children are withdrawn, because it does not happen consistently. I don't want to do it consistently, when I fetch a group the half hour is almost done and we have not really done much because I have just explained and then I still need to pack the sounds and then sort things ... then the half hour is done. Now I feel I haven't done anything. Then I continue because I want to do something of value with the children. So, I continue and then fetch another group regardless of what the timetable says. The timetable is only there because it needs to be there. (P1: 1408-1425)*

The role of learning support teachers today leans more towards a collaborative and consultative role. They are therefore required to work actively with not only learners, but teachers too. If there is an outsider culture with regard to learning support and learning barriers, the role of learning support teachers becomes increasingly difficult, as they need to actively carve a place for themselves and the learners for whom they advocate.

#### **4.2.2 The learning support teacher and inclusion as the 'plus 1'**

As mentioned earlier (see Section 2.3), many full-service schools are often viewed as ordinary mainstream schools that provide access to all and have a post provisioning for a learning support teacher and funds for a class assistant. The learning support teacher to an extent becomes the school's 'plus 1' and is often given additional work from the education department, such as managing the completion of the support needs assessment (SNA)<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> The SNA document is the first step in school-level support in terms of the SIAS policy. It is referred to as the teachers' assessment (strengths and needs) and intervention (support already rendered) and is required as a first step before any additional interventions are explored or considered.

documents as part of the SIAS policy. This is much like what Van de Putte et al. (2018) refer to when talking about the learning support teacher as an “extra pair of hands” (p. 888). They are viewed as responsible for the support of learners with additional needs and anything that constitutes learning support in the full-service school. The education department, in an attempt to successfully broker its implementation, expects that all learners who were referred to the learning support teacher undergo a complete SNA before they can be seen for support.

***P1:** We are not allowed to see learners without SNAs. But if we have to wait for those SNAs then we will wait till the end of the year. (P1: 1187-1189)*

This decision, I believe, is an attempt at contrived implementation, inadvertently allowing schools to view the SIAS policy as additional administration to be completed by the additional member, or plus 1 – the learning support teacher. According to the participants, schools see the SIAS process and documents as additional administration and it becomes the learning support teacher’s responsibility. This was made clear by the following comments by the participants.

***P1:** Man, it is just a lot of extra work for the people. So, I have to drive it. (P1: 1211-1212)*

*It seems that I am now more in charge of SIAS, I must ensure that the SIAS documents get to the teachers. I must ensure that they do the SNAs ... (P1: 1183-1187)*

***P2:** I must assist the teacher. SIAS, they don’t know how to refer you see. (P2: 499-500)*

*You’re actually a SIAS specialist as well because that is the referral. (P2: 891-893)*

***P3:** I am seen as SIAS. (P3: 1298-1300)*

***P4:** I [drive it]. (P4: 2124)*

As previously mentioned, full-service schools receive funds for a class assistant.<sup>10</sup> The responsibility to appoint someone from the available funds had in some instances become the responsibility of the learning support teacher.

*P4: I literally have only a document they sent me via e-mail and they said: "This is the contract for the teacher's assistant, and this is the job description." So, I only received a document. I just read through it and made my assumptions and then I was like: "Here we go!" You understand, I actually have no idea, no one came to discuss it with me. I have no idea how I must manage her. I just manage her as I see fit. (P4: 1929-1936)*

*Look, the Tuesday that she arrived here I spent the entire day with her. I showed her the school, I explained how things work, where she signs in and out. Here's the kitchen and this and that. Here's your job description, let's go through it. What don't you understand? You understand I am not HR here? (P4: 1961-1967)*

Full-service schools seem to have certain expectations of the role of learning support teachers, which is primarily that they are in charge of any and all learners who require intervention. There is, however, also an expectation that removing learners with moderate to high needs for learning support acts as a buffer for teachers and is often seen as 'giving them a break' from having these learners in their class.

*P1: ... that we withdraw learners and that they come sit here for a while so that they [teachers] can honestly get a bit of a break. (P1: 206-208)*

P4 referred to how there was still too little being done to support learners in class who might have certain barriers to learning. ISPs, as a representation of how learners are supported in the classroom, are only completed for official purposes. They should be completed by members of the SBST together with the class teacher and parent or caregiver. However, these forms seem to be completed by the teacher under supervision or with some assistance of the learning support teacher, if necessary.

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<sup>10</sup> Funds for a class assistant, also referred to as a teacher's assistant, is paid to full-service schools annually. The school is then responsible for appointing a candidate with the appropriated funds. Prior to 2018 there was no clear indication of the duties of such assistants. Since 2018, the teacher's assistant contract was sent to the learning support teachers who have 'unofficially', in certain cases, been put in charge of the appointment and management of such assistant. Duties include supporting learners throughout the school through small-group withdrawal or in classrooms.

***P4:** Where we have now obviously learnt ... it is not necessarily that you are like this, you may actually have some or other problem and all you need are a few adaptations, then you are actually able to do it. (P4: 334-337)*

*Only when I need the documents, then the ISP gets done. Where the ISP should actually be the first step. (P4: 631-632)*

According to P1, the expectations are for learning support teachers to, through small-group intervention out of class, support learners to be able to function in class.

***P1:** The teachers are firstly going to say that the role of the learning support teacher is to help the learners that struggle, that have learning problems that they cannot reach. We need to bring them to a place where they can learn, read and write. (P1: 180-185)*

This notion of being extra or an add-on is however not in all cases limited to the learning support teacher, but also refers to the idea of full-service schools as inclusive schools. P1 indicated how the SIAS policy, as a possible mediating tool to supporting all learners in the classroom, was viewed as not functioning, because learners were not being referred to other schools that could better address their needs.

***P1:** They all feel that, because it is a hefty document [SIAS], and there are strengths and there are weaknesses. They feel they complete all of these things for the weak learners, then they are tested, because they are weak, but then they still stay in class. (P1: 1218-1224)*

*Then they want to know from me why they fill in all these forms when nothing happens to the child. The child is still in the class. (P1: 1226-1227)*

The lack of capacity from class teachers to accommodate learners who experience barriers to learning was echoed by P1, who commented on how learners with barriers are seen to need help from outside.

***P1:** As soon as the child arrives in the classroom and the teacher cannot handle the child, they don't know how to work with the child, it means I must let the psychologist come in. (P1: 361-364)*



*The teacher feels the learner holds them back. (P1: 860)*

There seems to be a discrepancy between what policy states and how this is implemented on ground level. There is still a sense that individuals have specialist knowledge and that learners should be referred elsewhere to be tended to by others. There seems to be little capacity for agency, and tools, such as the SIAS policy, are perhaps incorrectly interpreted as forms to be completed for referral purposes, as additional administrative work for the additional set of hands.

#### **4.2.3 The learning support teacher's voice**

Learning support teachers, although still at a post level 1 position, are expected to step into an advisory role within the school system.

*P3: And my role is to facilitate and support and then to ensure ... to help ensure the school has the training ... that the skills are developed and ... to sort of extend the role of the teacher. (P3: 434-438)*

From a CHAT perspective, there is potential for their role to include mediating resources and artefacts as a means of enhancing performance (see Section 1.4.2). This way, the participants in the activity system can learn to use them with the help of a collaborative partnership with the learning support teacher. In such a case, the learning support teacher's role is to mediate within the culturally specific context of the particular full-service school. This type of active participation relies on two very important variables, namely the skills and training of the learning support teacher and whether they feel they have the voice to establish and actively engage in such relational partnerships. P4 and P3 described how not all learning support teachers possess these skills.

*P4: ... the level of competency of the learning support teacher plays a huge role, because you need to know when to help and when not to help. And ... not everyone has these abilities to their disposal. (P4: 1397-1400)*

*P3: People did not really embrace her, because they felt that she did not do the job that she was supposed to do. (P3: 1876-1879)*

The need to have skilled professionals in this role to ensure forged relationships and partnership seems contrary to the way learning support teachers have been, and still are, recruited and appointed. There seems to be a theme of converting resource class teachers

into learning support teachers, evident in the WCED annual report of 2016–2017 (see Section 1.1), regardless of whether they have adequate skills as defined in the job description. If the learning support teacher plays such a crucial role, should the recruitment of such individuals not be extremely important and based on a set of desired skills? Among the four participants, there was a marked difference concerning the pedagogy of those who were trained in learning support and those who were placed in learning support positions. Those who converted from resource classes saw their primary focus as supporting learning in small groups.

***P1:** The school expects me to help all children. All children with learning problems, learning obstacles or learning barriers. (P1: 87-89)*

***P2:** We will discuss the learners and then they can come here. (P2: 113-114)*

*That they can't read. They can't write. (P2: 126)*

The participants who specialised in support through postgraduate studies (see Table 3.1) were more inclined to see their role as an advisory and collaborative one.

***P3:** I you look at our job description's roles and responsibilities, then it says that we must conduct workshops. We must give demonstration lessons. We must share desperate cases, coordinate and support the development of optimal functioning SBSTs. We must advocate for the implementation of policy, which means we must be involved with policy. An active role in the implementation of SIAS. So that is what I am currently busy doing. Supporting the SBST in the development of the ISP... (P3: 1813-1822)*

***P4:** You play a very important advisory role. And teachers need to be able to feel that if they don't know what to do, they can come to you. (P4: 1378-1382)*

*My challenges are, I would say primarily to change the mainstream classroom teacher's perspective, to ensure that they will be willing to work with those learners. And to understand that it is more about the learner than the curriculum, because their focus is primarily on the curriculum and academic performance which leads the CHILD themselves to get lost. ... and that people can change their views and try and get to the child through their way of teaching. (P4: 1316-1324)*

The school and district expectations of the learning support teacher rely heavily on them having the voice to do so. What I found was that they did not feel they were afforded such a voice by either the school or the district. In retrospect, it seemed that their inability to feel heard led to feelings of helplessness and hopelessness. These views are both detrimental to becoming active participants in collaborative relations.

*P1: ...we need to have a voice... (P1: 163)*

*We must continuously accept and accept and accept, but we have no voice to speak. That does not work. Things are just always put down on us ... (P1: 1031-1034)*

*No one wants to fight for us on ground level. (P: 1128-1129)*

*P4: My ideal would be to be able to speak to the HOD, and the HOD goes and tells them [the teachers]. (P4: 2048-2050)*

*I cannot address it [teachers that don't comply to certain protocol or arrangements]. (P4: 2544)*

The learning support teachers therefore found themselves positioned in a school, either as an outsider perpetuated by the hierarchy and division of labour, or, due to their perception of their position, as being a step above the rest of the staff, reporting to the district and not the school. These contradictions can cause what Engeström (2016) refers to as systemic disturbances. These are clear tensions between the learning support teachers' roles in the schools (activity system), the hierarchy with regard to whom they report to (rules) and what is expected from their position (division of labour).

#### **4.2.4 Collaboration and the role of agency**

As discussed in Section 2.4, the continuum of collaboration ranges from superficial or occasional interaction, where there is a heavy focus on the preservation of oneself and one's autonomy, to sharing, where the didactics of teaching and operating are discussed and critically examined. Somewhere in-between there is what is known as 'contrived collaboration' (Sergiovanni, 2004). It is here where collaborative practices are expected and almost forced, more often than not leading to the reinforcement of existing practices.

Linking to the notion of the learning support teacher as a 'plus 1', it seems that the level of collaboration in which the participants are engaged in full-service schools is mostly the supply of additional resources to use with learners experiencing barriers to learning.

*P3: I am trying to make things easier for them. (P3: 1349-1350)*

*P2: ... most of the time they come "Oh, I want you to fill me in what can I do about the child." (P2: 888-889)*

*P1: "I don't know what to do with the kids that struggle in my class. Do you maybe have resources, activities and things like that?" What they actually expect from me is to provide them with information and copies of work that they can use as part of their intervention. Because intervention is another huge problem. (P1: 195-203)*

The support may be viewed as a one-way street, rather than relational, as P1 pointed out:

*P1: Teachers are not shy to ask if they need help or resources. But they are sometimes very slow to react when it comes to workshops or when I need to convey certain information to them, because they don't like staying after school. (P1: 215-216)*

The most common practices that surfaced regarding collaboration seemed to lean towards specific divisions of labour, as determined by each activity system. Those activity systems that valued a mutual way of conceptualising problems and solving them leaned towards cooperation, while others tended to be more autocratic, valuing the preservation of the self. This was true for the learning support teacher and the teachers. The defining aspect of how labour is divided depends on school management, which is discussed later (see Section 4.3). Those schools whose leaders lacked advocacy for inclusive pedagogy seemed to have more cooperation happening among teachers than collaboration, therefore lacking any joint discussion or problem solving. Everyone seems to stick to their lane:

*P4: ...one person is responsible for the mathematics and one person is responsible for the language... (P4: 365-366)*

*One person does it on their time and then they 'pass it along' ... when it is done, understand? So there is not really a time for me to sit in, then to say: "Oh okay, but do it like this or like this or like that ..."* (P4: 1431-1435)

**P1:** *Yes really, we work past one another. We work past one another.* (P1: 1073-1074)

*If there are learners that have a psychological need then we have to get the psychologist in. He comes and tests the learner and does his thing. That is basically what it is about.* (P1: 1478-1480)

In instances where schools had management who valued inclusive pedagogy, I saw attempts at cooperation, where there seemed to be mutual conceptualisation and problem solving being encouraged. P3 indicated how plans were made to engage the community through creating a community centre at school, during weekends.

**P3:** *Look, our new approach is to open our workshops to the community.* (P3: 294-296)

Departmental and government resources that were available were used and where gaps were identified, the private sector engaged. This form of problem solving benefits all learners.

**P3:** *There is technological progress. The school is now at that place where they give every teacher in the classroom a TV screen or interactive whiteboard.* (P3: 442-444)

*That was as a result of collaboration with businesses.* (P3: 448-449)

Addressing pedagogy, however, seems taboo, even in schools that value inclusive practices. Although some teachers were open to critically examining teaching practices, according to the learning support teachers, they had proven to be by far the minority.

**P3:** *... when I go for collaborative teaching, because it worked with another teacher, but this teacher does not really want to. She is always more clever.* (P3: 1665-1667)

**P2:** *Even though in Term 1, I must go there and there's this lady she says, "What do you want in my class?"* (P2: 372-373)

**P4:** *[Do they want you to come into the classrooms?] Not at all. NOT AT ALL. (P4: 1834-1835)*

**P1:** *The teachers are not really open to something like that. (P1: 935)*

This notion of contrived collaboration was also visible with regard to the rules set forth by the advisors at district level.

**P1:** *Now they compel you to see 'moderate to high', and you are obligated to see and work with a group of ten to fifteen children, while the teachers already work with ten to fifteen children in their group and don't make much progress. (P1: 867-871)*

What was observed concerning contrived collaboration was that it almost led to learning support teachers not doing much, being totally overwhelmed by the formulated expectations. I found that at two of the four schools the learning support teachers were doing administrative work with every one of my visits. They were either completing SIAS forms, not done as supposed to by the teachers, or getting administrative work in order before a visit from their advisor or psychologist.

The lack of inclusive pedagogy was also reflected in the important role that referrals played in all four full-service schools. According to their job description (see Appendix A), the learning support teachers must help identify learners in need of further support and assist with completing the necessary referrals to either the DBST for support or placement in another school. The learning support teachers indicated referrals as an important part of their job description.

**P1:** *Once the child gets here and the teacher is unable to handle the child in class, they don't know how to work with the child, then it means I must get the school psychologist to come in. The child is tested and then they say the child does not have the abilities to sit in a mainstream classroom, because his IQ is low and that is how it is. The test is there and an application needs to be made to X.<sup>11</sup> He cannot be in mainstream. I sit with hundreds of reports of children, because this is a full-service school ... whose IQ is so low that they will not be able to function normally in a mainstream classroom. They cannot, but there is no place for them in special*

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<sup>11</sup> A special school for children with intellectual disabilities.

*schools. So, what happens to those reports the psychologists write. I must file it. That is what happens to it, because there was no space in the special school, now they come here, now I must apply for him to a special school. (P1: 361-379)*

***P2:** Learners stay at our school and they [teachers] are complaining that we're just referring those learners for nothing. (P2: 629-630)*

***P4:** Or the child comes to me, or they are on medication, or the child needs to be referred for therapy. Or an evaluation. Those are the three options. There are no other options. When those options have been exhausted, then the next question is: "Okay what is the plan? Where are we going to place the child?" So they are sent back out again. (P4: 2154-2159)*

*Many of the teachers say they don't want the parents to get the idea that they are doing therapeutic activities in class, or even with learning support, because then they won't take the child to a therapist. They might feel the child already gets therapy in the class so why should they pay an extra R100 for a speech or occupational therapy visit? (P4: 1762-1768)*

Referrals are almost the opposite of relational agency, as it insinuates a knowledgeable other and a lack of any attempt to support, as it does not fall in one's domain. Although the learning support teachers, with a job description that seems to change annually, seem to want to act more innovatively with regard to support, there is still an expectation from schools that referrals be made to support a child outside of the classroom.

The learning support teachers who actively brokered departmental policy craved more opportunities to sit with teachers and help them plan lessons to help them differentiate the curriculum to reach the entire class audience. Interestingly, their choice of wording still insinuated them imparting knowledge to others, therefore being the knowledgeable other.

***P4:** I feel there needs to be more sessions where we can sit with them when planning lessons. And sit together and say: "Oh I see the activity you are doing, but let's try this and this or maybe try this activity or that game and make this a group activity and differentiate a bit more here." You understand, so to work with them. (P4: 1403-1409)*

*The other problem, not everyone [teachers] come to me. I will say, let me know when you have time then I will sit with you, and then they never get back to me. (P4: 2111-2114)*

**P1:** *What else can we put in place to accommodate learners? (P1: 1499-1500)*

According to P1, collaboration was hindered by the DoE, which is prescriptive with regard to the support that needs to be rendered.

**P1:** *So then, how can I say, a general type of support is given. They feel this way and you need to address it in general. I feel I want to work directly with the child's problem. (P1: 995-998)*

There seems to be a disconnect between how learning support teachers received training, and in what, and what the curriculum required. P1 expressed concern with regard to training and material she received to use. She felt that they do not address what the child needed to be able to do in class, and that this led to the child being supported outside of the class while simultaneously falling further behind in curriculum content.

**P1:** *Now they come here and I tell them about the moon that shines and I give them my own vocabulary; the moon shines in the night and the sun shines in the day. My own high-frequency words I am giving. The child does not seem to cope and I am struggling. In class they have different words that they also struggle with. They just continuously struggle and don't experience success in class or here. What will happen to him? He cannot seem to grasp it. (P1: 1004-1012)*

*He does not grasp one of the two. And if the teacher tells me we are busy with this page and these are the main vocabulary and the child cannot read or spell the words. We are writing a test on Friday, then I can take those words and we can break them up and build them, make sentences to understand their meaning. Then he can possibly also do what the other kids do when returning to class. (P1: 1014-1022)*

Whether learning support teachers are sufficiently supported with regard to the curriculum is debatable, as the curriculum advisors are not part of the 'learner support' group at the district (see Figure 3.2).



P3, on the other hand, took on a more consultative role as a member of the school management team. She moved across grades while reporting to the head of department.

*P3: That child is already identified in Grade R and I have meetings with them to discuss. Mrs X asks if I can speak to the Grade R teachers to check how far they're with the curriculum and interventions. The Grade 1's and Grade 2's and ... then say what they need the Grade R's to be proficient in. (P3: 1229-1237)*

The focus of support is therefore not necessarily on what the district prescribes, but is contextually focused and needs-based.

#### **4.2.5 Boundary-crossing competence**

Walker and Nocon (2007) refer to the ability to competently function in multiple contexts through self-dialogue, dialogue with others and the use of tools to manage and integrate discourses and practices across culturally and socially charged boundaries as 'boundary-crossing competence'. From my observations, it seems that a prerequisite for successful boundary crossing is what Edwards (2006) refers to as 'relational agency'. For the study, I found that agency was something the learning support teachers understood.

*P1: You must train yourself. You cannot wait for training. (P1: 1225-1226)*

*So, you must be willing, when things don't work, to try something different. (P1: 1401-1402)*

*P3: As LSEN you don't function as you used to and you are not as effective as you were in the past. You need to be more creative, using other resources to try and get the same results. (P3: 1172-1176)*

Exclusionary practices from the school or district could however dampen these attempts at agency, leading to learning support teachers feeling that they have no voice and regardless of their efforts they are not afforded the membership they need to feel empowered or better themselves and their practices.

*P1: I cannot talk anymore, no one is bothered by what I have to say. (P1: 537-538)*

Agency in itself, although an important component, refers to the ability to identify goals and direct action towards those goals, followed by an evaluation of the success of the action

taken (Edwards, 2006). So, if learning support teachers are to become innovative in their attempts to accommodate learners, they will need to be agentic practitioners.

*P1: You need to be willing to try something else. (P1: 1401-1402)*

*P3: Your vision needs to include creative ways to develop those learners' potential effectively. (P3: 1133-1134)*

*P4: I am going to take time and validate myself through my actions. (P4: 1588)*

Although agency implies engagement in innovative learning, adaptation of practices and negotiating with others, it still largely focuses on individual responsibility, self-evaluation and action (see Section 2.4). Relational agency, on the other hand, considers the relationships that need to be forged to achieve mutually aligned goals. This type of agency seems harder to come by and more dependent on the institutional context, values and attitudes than agency. P4, with a strong asset-based approach in mind, experiences the institutional context challenging:

*P4: The other day at the SBST meeting I was listening to them talking and thought: "Am I ever going to get it right?" (P4: 2418-2419)*

If learning support teachers are to be competent in their role in full-service schools, they need to be afforded full participation. From my observations they are not, but instead are given a supporting role within the activity system, much like the learners they advocate to support. This has implications for their ability to do what the district expects them to do (see Section 2.6).

#### **4.3 THEME 2: ACCESS VS. ACCOMMODATION**

The term 'access' in this study refers to a learner's ability to find a school and be accepted at a school. 'Accommodation' refers to the school's ability to cater for the individual needs of learners who have gained access to their school. Waitoller and Kozleski (2013) refer to access as well as participation and success. So it has become apparent that full-service schools transition from mainstream schools, often without understanding or buy-in from the school staff or management. In fact, some schools did not have a choice in the matter.

*P1: There are referrals from the district ... go to X, they are a full-service school. Because the learners are struggling in mainstream classrooms where the teachers*

*don't help them and when referrals to special school were unsuccessful because there was no space. Then they must go to a full-service school. (P1: 333-339)*

This sort of action could be validated if the support they receive from full-service schools surpasses that which they receive in their current mainstream classroom. In some schools, this might be the case, but my study involved four full-service schools and there was only one who made even an attempt at accommodating the differing needs of their learners to the extent that would be considered good practice. The learning support teachers at the other three schools were very honest about the extent to which their full-service status served the learners enrolled:

***P1:** The teachers know it is a full-service school, but they don't really know how a full-service school should operate and they don't really like change. The only thing that makes us a full-service school is that at the moment we accept any learner. We cannot turn a learner away. (P1: 291-296)*

***P4:** Here are some teachers that don't know what a full-service school is. The school does not promote itself as a full-service school. (P4: 179-181)*

*These children [previous resource classes] should actually now be accommodated in mainstream classrooms. I feel the school is not willing to do this. And the parents are not aware that they should be accommodated in the mainstream classroom. But as soon as they find out they are going to enrol their children ... (P4: 195-199)*

When asked about accommodating learners with different needs in a single classroom, P4 replied:

***P4:** ... we are not ready for that. (P1: 201)*

She commented on how many teachers approached the teaching process from their own point of view, not considering the differing needs of learners.

***P4:** You see, to try and change their view of the child, to try and reach them also through their method of teaching. I almost fell over when I heard that many of the Foundation Phase teachers don't work in groups. They only teach the classical method. This cannot be, it is impossible that every child in your class learns the*

*same way. And that teachers are so arrogant as to think that that one lesson reached all the children in class. (P4: 1323-1332)*

When asked about the functioning of two schools, of which one was a full-service school and the other not, P2 had this to say:

*P2: But here, I don't know whether it is since it is a full-service school they have an assistant teacher. So, I don't know whether since it is a full-service school, the other side [school] ... there is no assistant. (P2: 247-250)*

P4 described how learners who initially obtained access, but had been found to need additional support, were left with little to no support while awaiting alternative placement.

*P4: We have a few learners, how do you say, that are ... 'mildly cognitively impaired', that are still hanging around here, that did not have successful applications to special schools. So ... we have a few of these, but they should actually be accommodated in the school. Most of them come to me, but it is obviously not enough. I feel they are just floating around. (P4: 1677-1683)*

These schools therefore seemed ready to provide access, but not yet to accommodate these learners.

*P1: The child is firstly placed in the school, before the school is ready for the child. And that is the big problem. A BIG problem! (P1: 729-731)*

P4 indicated how the schools' focus was not on addressing barriers and accommodating all learners, but rather on obtaining good results in assessment measures. They believed this to be an indication of the work they were doing.

*P4: X received wonderful results for their systemic tests and they went to the district to do a presentation regarding preparation for the systemic tests, or how you prepare the learners. Then I ask: "What are we busy with here?" Some of those learners see me and I know for a fact they cannot do what is expected, if you change even the smallest detail they would not know what to do ... (P4: 451-458)*

Clearly, in the almost 20 years since the publication of White Paper 6, I can agree with Engelbrecht et al. (2015) that progress has been made in providing access. However,

access is futile if the full-service schools are not able to integrate these learners into the classroom by providing them with quality educational experiences rather than continuously trying to send them elsewhere.

#### 4.4 THEME 3: SCHOOL CULTURE

'School culture' in this theme refers to the values and attitudes of the school as an activity system. This includes the unique individuals who are the subjects of the system, influenced by the historical context, rules and division of labour within the particular system. Successful transformation is therefore not determined by policy and legislation, but is mostly reliant on the practices of the members within this system. This implies that for full-service schools to become beacons of good practice, they need leadership who value transformation through "developing cultures, policies and practices that celebrate diversity, respect difference and value innovation and problem-solving" (DoBE, 2010, p. 9). All four participants indicated that inclusive practices and pedagogy were primarily reliant on whether or not the school management, in particular the principal, deemed this important.

*P1: "It's got to come down". Someone higher up must say: "Sorry guys, this is how it is supposed to be." (P1: 509-510)*

P4 did not get much support from the principal, as he did not seem to value aspects of support structures due to not knowing how and why they are functional.

*P4: I just need to still get the principal on board. It is not that he is not positive regarding the SBST, he just does not know what it is about. (P4: 2593-2595)*

*Everything is just always fine: "Go on Ma'am." (P4: 2597)*

Schools are however still not deeming addressing barriers and accommodating all learners as an important aspect of the school culture. I found this troubling, as the sole function of full-service schools is to be 'more inclusive' than mainstream schools. There still seems to be a struggle between what has historically been valued and what requires attention today. P1 found it hard to arrange a time for the SBST, as it usually clashed with sport.

*P1: On a Tuesday and a Wednesday it is SBST, but it is also the two days for sport coaching and sport matches. People have various responsibilities and then want to know from me where they should be. Because if the sport does not happen there are problems. (P1: 1340-1345)*

The SBST plays a fundamental role in addressing barriers to learning and when they do not get the needed timeslot, it sets a precedent that it is not worthy or of no importance. At one of the schools, the learning support teacher had the deputy principal as an ally concerning the importance of these meetings. Him prioritising these meetings and the work done there provided the learning support teacher with a platform from which she could operate and collaborate.

***P4:** The view of the SBST and the view of learning support ... he [deputy principal] makes it a priority. (P4: 2587-2589)*

Very often, the historical context influences how the community views the functioning of a school. Parents often demand that their children receive the best education and that any barrier to such education is evaluated and possibly removed. In the case of P1, the school community often saw any disability as a possible drawback for their child's education.

***P4:** We have a large group of parents that are not really open to or accepting of children with such disabilities, they feel that it impedes their children. (P4: 246-249)*

At all the schools, some particular rules or beliefs influenced how the learning support teachers engaged within the system. Schools that are set in their ways and that have functioned in a particular way for years often do not react well to change or innovation. Their attitudes and values can be traced back to an earlier time when a particular hierarchy was often valued. This hierarchy makes relational agency and collaboration very difficult, because it assumes that those with age or status will always know better. This does not only hold implications for staff collaboration, but in such hierarchical structures children's opinions are also often the least valued.

***P4:** I am new at the school, with many teachers who have been here for years. So, I think they feel, no they know how things work here and they have been here for years. I cannot just come in and tell them. (P4: 1574-1577)*

*I would say the older people influence the younger ones. Because the older people are in leadership positions. (P4: 1334-1336)*

*And they tell the others how things should be done. And the young ones are new and obviously insecure and feel that they still need to find their place. So they want to fit in and belong and have to work with the group. (P4: 1338-1341)*

*P1: And the teacher is the adult and has the power. If a teacher decides to write off a learner, that they are not in the mood for you, then they are going to do it. And that child does not have many rights. (P1: 686-690)*

## **4.5 CONCLUSION**

In this chapter I presented the data that were collected from the individual interviews and informal talks held with the participants as a means of exploring the participants' perceptions regarding the issues addressed in the research questions. This has been presented in conjunction with the comprehensive literature review presented in Chapter 2.

There seems to be a gap between policy and practice. The SIAS policy is almost in a sense reinforcing old paradigms. Therefore, instead of schools changing their values, beliefs and cultures, there is compliance only for the sake of being able to tick off that it was done. The learning support teachers, for all intent and purposes, should collaborate with role players as a means of supporting teachers, learners and parents. Their ability to take on such a role is largely dependent on whether the schools' leadership and culture deem these practices as important and provide them with the needed membership to be able to collaborate.

Chapter 5 moves from participants' individual perspectives towards a comprehensive understanding of how learning support teachers see their role in full-service schools, how they view collaboration and what present factors either afford or constrain their efforts. The chapter concludes with the limitations of the study and recommendations for future research.

## **CHAPTER 5**

### **DISCUSSION, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

#### **5.1 INTRODUCTION**

In the previous chapter I used thematic analysis as a means of presenting the perspectives of four learning support teachers working at full-service schools. This process of analysis, in an attempt to organise and report the data in such a way that contributes to the integrity of the study (Patton, 2015), is illustrated in Figure 3.5 as well as Appendix D. In this chapter I transition from the individual perspectives of the four learning support teachers to a more comprehensive representation of the role of learning support teachers in full-service schools, how they collaborate within, and as part of, their particular activity system, while considering that which affords or constrains collaborative practices.

Disturbances and contradictions are fundamental concepts in CHAT. They may stem from within the components of an activity system (e.g. between rules), between activity systems themselves (e.g. division of labour and subjects) or between how things are at present and how they used to be. In terms of CHAT, disturbances and contradictions are seen as “potential springboards for learning, innovation, and development” (Williams & Hummelbrunner, 2011, p. 227). Despite their potential for transformation of activity systems, they also possess the power to be disabling. According to Murphy and Rodríguez Manzanares (2008), contradictions need to be acknowledged in order to contribute to transformation. They further state that such transformation needs to take place at a systems level, rather than at an individual level. This reverberates what Engeström and Sanniño (2011) concluded, namely that resolution can only be found through collective and systemic efforts.

#### **5.2 THE ROLE OF THE LEARNING SUPPORT TEACHER**

When referring to the job description of the learning support teacher, we can deduce that their role in full-service schools has become more consultative and collaborative in nature (Dreyer, 2013; Gavish, 2017; Spratt & Florian, 2015). As their line managers and superiors, the learning support advisors send them to full-service schools with particular guidelines, policies and expectations. Within the new activity system, the full-service school, they will probably engage in activity mediated by these policies, guidelines and expectations. This very mediated action may lead to tensions and contradictions if the activity system does not deem the same object as their motive for action. This ability is known as boundary-crossing competence (Walker & Nocon, 2007), discussed in Section 2.7.



One however assumes a few fundamental components to successful boundary crossing (see Section 1.4.4). Firstly, the learning support teacher is knowledgeable with regard to the curriculum and specifically how to differentiate the curriculum, can pre-empt possible barriers to learning and can collaborate and forge collaborative partnerships. Secondly, an individual alone cannot bring about the level of change needed to make full-service schools functional, and for deep-seated institutional change to take place, one needs to look at the school management and their values and attitudes towards the implementation of inclusive education. Thirdly, inclusive education and collaboration are synonymous with whole-school development and therefore involve more than changing individual practices, but go deeper to include the context, climate, attitudes and culture of the whole school (Walton et al., 2014).

### **5.2.1 Learning support teachers' role as outsiders**

Learning support teachers find themselves in a peculiar context concerning belonging. They are employed by the district, but stationed at full-service schools. This placement in itself creates a particular context from which they need to navigate and work. They succumb to the multiple views and perspectives of the school and district community, but are not fully embedded in either. They have either been 'converted' from being resource class teachers, who along with their class have historically been excluded, or they have succumbed to being transplanted, moved from one school to the next. Belonging is linked to identity, with collective identity referring to how a professional community values itself as a group and how this community sees the group as embedded in and valued within the organisation (Hökkä et al., 2016). As a post level 1 staff member, learning support teachers are neither part of the teacher collective identity nor of the school management team. They are therefore expected to support learners and teacher alike, but from an outsider position, while still being viewed as being an expert and made responsible for various administrative duties.

This idea of viewing themselves as separate of the rest is dichotomous in its origin. The first aspect of being viewed as separate is situated within the historical context of outdated approaches and practices of labelling and categorising learners based on ability, something Oswald (2019) and Engelbrecht (2019) conclude is still very relevant in South African schools. Both learning support teachers and learners who experience barriers to learning have historically been excluded and it does not seem as if that much has changed. The second aspect of being viewed as separate can be described as a means at self-preservation. Learning support teachers report to their advisor at the district and not directly to the school or principal. This provides them with a sense of being a step above the rest of the staff at school. This sense of pride in the unique position they represent may contribute

to a strengthened understanding of themselves as a group, contributing to their collective agency (Hökkä et al., 2016).

Regardless of whether their exclusion is perpetuated by their view of their hierarchical position or the socio-cultural conventions of the school at which they work, being excluded has implications with regard to whether or not they can do their job and leads to tensions within the activity system. According to Maringe and Phrew (2014), “one way of supporting teachers in full-service schools is the provision of site-based learning support teachers” (p. 221). Their report found that the Gauteng DoE (2011) envisages the role of the learning support teacher as “coaches in managing diversity of learning needs” (p. 18) while moving into classrooms to support teachers and learners. Maringe and Phrew (2014), however, highlight possible risks involved, which include “being consigned to a full-time remediation timetable” (p. 221). In this study, learning support teachers were being dealt this very fate while being delegated to and made responsible for all those learners experiencing barriers to learning. This leaves virtually no time for any collaborative or consultative work.

According to Trust (2017), “each community has a set of collectively negotiated rules, or sociocultural conventions” (p. 100). He refers to these conventions as either explicitly stated or implicitly understood and as guiding the behaviour of subjects as well as their interaction within the community. These rules offer a possible lens to the way in which to become full participants in the community. Context plays an important role here. Although the object of full-service schools, based on policy and guidelines, is providing access and quality education for all (DoBE, 2010), this does not imply that this is the object of the particular schools. According to Engeström and Sanniño (2018), an object arises from a need within the system and therefore reflects the true motive of the collective activity. According to Oswald (2019), teachers need to be willing to resume a key role in support, accepting responsibility for differentiating the curriculum. This will however only happen if the collective activity values an inclusive pedagogy. Learning support teachers will therefore possibly take on one of two roles. They will use the tension and contradictions between what is currently practised and what they know should be happening to address the lack of support, or they will conform to the collective activity of the system in which they find themselves.

Here too lies the possibility for change. Vermeir, Kelchtermans and März (2017) argue that educational artefacts, for example inclusive policy, are imbued with a particular intention by claiming to contribute to better education for all. This notion of improving education puts in question existing practices. They state that the use of these artefacts depends largely “on the process of individual and collective sense-making by the staff members of the school”

(Vermeir et al., 2017, p. 116). Learning support teachers' strength lies in brokering these artefacts, to facilitate the process of interpretation and negotiation. However, they will need some leverage to be able to do this.

### **5.2.2 The voice of the learning support teacher**

Although learning support teachers seem to be perfectly positioned to broker policy within their system, there are certain prerequisites for this to be done successfully. They need to have a voice to do so. This voice, which may be strongly linked to belonging to a particular system, does not depend solely on belonging, but also on the agency of the learning support teacher. Agency has been defined by many authors and in many different ways. According to Giddens (1984), agency refers to the intentional action of an individual in response to a problematic situation. Ahearn (2001), on the other hand, suggests agency to be a socio-culturally mediated capacity to act, implying that individual action is socially determined. In the case of the learning support teacher, it seems that Archer (2000) describes it best as a dualistic concept where the individual's actions influence and are influenced by the social context.

If learning support teachers are to be agents of change, who broker policy based on the specific context of the school in which they are placed, they need to have the ability to view themselves in this light. They need to have the necessary skills set to engage in innovative learning, be able to adapt to diversity within their working environment and be able to negotiate with parents and colleagues, while making independent choices, reflecting a fine balance between their own preference and shared decision making (Toom et al., 2015). The appointment of skilled learning support teachers should get preference above converting previous resource class teachers, a known strategy of the WCED (2017).

Agency, however, as Archer (2000) argues, is a dualistic concept. In a study by Namkung, Moate and Ruohotie-Lyhty (2020) it was found that teachers' professional agency was largely influenced by what they call "socio-cultural legitimization" (p. 11), taking into account the interplay between individual teachers and the condition of their environment. Learning support teachers, regardless of how agentic, might not have an opportunity to voice themselves if the community, rules or division of labour impede their ability. They therefore require what Fourie (2017) refers to as "social capital" that touches on their "ability to draw from resources, knowledge and power by establishing multiple ties with appropriate agents" (p. 7). She also found that there was immense value in networking as a means of improving one's social capital, thereby establishing a sense of belonging in order to stand a chance of bringing about meaningful change through addressing diverse needs.

Full-service schools, when taking into account their post provisioning, might be wrongly conceived as ordinary mainstream schools, with the exception of a learning support teacher and funds for a class assistant. Learning support teachers' role as additional staff members in full-service schools based on the abovementioned might imply that inclusive pedagogies in full-service schools are solely their responsibility. This notion of 'additional' is further exacerbated by their appointment by the district and placement at full-service schools. These schools, therefore, receive a learning support teacher and do not appoint one per se.

The learning support advisors at district level, as their superiors, use the learning support teachers as a way to broker policy. This seems fair, as they assume that they are in the position to do so, but what seems to be lacking from the district is taking into account whether these learning support teachers have the 'rank' or 'authority' (voice) within their particular school context to do so. If not, then they are placing enormous pressure on individuals who are not in the position to bring about change, while running the risk of not having policy, such as the recently implemented SIAS instrument and process, accepted and integrated at school level. The implementation of policies such as the SIAS policy, including the learners they primarily serve, might be wrongly considered the sole responsibility of the learning support teacher. Such assumptions promote further exclusion rather than inclusion.

Walton et al. (2014) found that feelings of powerless as a result of curriculum demands, assessment requirements, systemic barriers and the capacity to address diverse needs had a negative impact on teacher agency and self-efficacy. They further state that feeling insignificant can hinder their ability to take responsibility for their own professional development, often reverting to old habitual patterns of working in isolation. If this is true for teachers, so too for learning support teachers who are, more often than not, not part of the teacher collective and seem to stand alone.

### **5.3 AFFORDANCES AND CONSTRAINTS OF COLLABORATION IN FULL-SERVICE SCHOOLS**

If collaboration is viewed as a prerequisite for successful inclusion, one needs to determine how learning support teachers collaborate in schools, and, if they are unable to, what the constraining factors are.

#### **5.3.1 Collaboration in full-service schools**

Collaboration in this study was most certainly mediated by the particular context of the full-service school. From the participants it emerged that structural aspects such as time

constraints, communication structures, openness for co-teaching, teacher empowerment and autonomy all influenced the collaborative practices of a school. The continuum of collaboration (see Section 2.4) ranges from occasional collaboration, in which the focus is often on preservation of self, to sharing, where didactics of teaching and operating is discussed. From the participants' perspectives, the collaborative practices within their particular contexts were limited to sharing resources with staff members or working with a particular staff member who had the authority to do their bidding for them. Collaboration is not a natural occurrence. Bellibas et al. (2020) argue that institutional transformation has an important role to play in fostering a collaborative culture.

The concept of sharing resources can be referred to as an attempt at the social organisation of work or tasks. Where the learning support teacher must support, and the support needed is resources or specialist knowledge or advice, quick answers on a demand basis. They are therefore used for their specialist knowledge, but this is not a long-term solution to addressing barriers. Although they are expected to co-teach, this is something that is not often done in these schools. This lack of contact means no-one is given the opportunity to learn, enrich or even change their way of thinking and doing within the classroom. Sharing as a form of collaboration still perpetuates exclusion by segregating tasks based on knowledge. In the case of the learning support teachers, it allows the school to place the responsibility of responding to all learners on their shoulders, as teachers claim to not be able to differentiate the curriculum or support these learners.

Contrived collaboration is another form of collaboration that refers to doing things because it is expected of one, but without buying into it. At an institutional level, this type of collaboration often leads to systems that are only there for window dressing and may reinforce negative attitudes and practices. With the implementation of the SIAS policy, there were initially, and still is, a great deal of form completion only for the sake of compliance. According to the participants, learning support teachers are viewed as the brokers of the SIAS policy and therefore the cause of additional administration. All four learning support teachers noted that their role was to assist in the implementation of the SIAS policy, demanding the completion of the documents and the following of protocol. Teachers therefore complete the forms and the learning support teachers check them. The participants were of the opinion that in instances where teachers are unable to complete the forms for whatever reason, the learning support teachers are held responsible.

When it comes to supporting learners with barriers to learning who have been identified by the teacher, discussed at the SBST and who have a completed SNA document, there seems

to be a disconnect with regard to what is done. The learning support teachers and class teachers do not collaborate with regard to the type of support that is needed, and without being allowed in the teachers' classrooms, or even consistently invited to grade meetings, effective support is not possible. From the onset, learning support teachers, especially those who were merely converted from resource classes, lacked a strong curriculum foundation. The district, in their attempt to provide training and upskill learning support teachers, often provided training and resource materials. These, however, lacked input from curriculum advisors, who did not form part of the learner support team at district level (see Figure 3.2).

### **5.3.2 Access and accommodation in full-service schools**

Full-service schools, as a key strategy for the implementation of inclusive education, have an important role to play in providing school-based support for all learners through collaboration with parents, the community and DBSTs. Their purpose is therefore not only to create greater access, but also to provide quality education for all learners through collaboration with special schools and eventually support neighbouring schools (DoBE, 2010). This implies that access alone does not constitute inclusion.

How each activity system makes sense of inclusion is an important consideration. Full-service schools provide access to all children, including those with low to medium support needs, but learners should also be afforded the opportunity to learn and develop their full potential within these systems. From the participants there was consensus regarding teachers' perceptions of their abilities to accommodate learners with diverse needs. This was reflected in them wanting those learners removed by the learning support teacher, or referred to another school. Dreyer (2017) also found that mainstream teachers still believe that they are unable to teach learners with diverse learning needs and that this is best addressed by specialists, in the case of this study the learning support teachers, who then become responsible for their learning and support. So, if teachers are not able to differentiate the curriculum and learning support teachers are not afforded membership or space to collaborate, the ethical questions that arise are whether full-service schools provide more learning opportunities for these vulnerable learners than segregated education currently does, and whether full-service schools can be deemed inclusive if they can only provide access, but not accommodate the learners.

This belief that learners need to be supported elsewhere creates what can be referred to a contrived functioning of the system, as things are put in place and done for the sake of it being a full-service school. If there is a clear lack of buy-in from management and staff, it will lead to a further exclusion rather than the desired inclusion (Sharma & Pace, 2019). I found

that the view was often that learners whose applications to special schools were not successful were encouraged to find a full-service school. Whether this full-service school can address their needs, is another question entirely. One therefore needs to take a hard look at what is happening in these full-service schools. Are they becoming beacons of good practice or rather 'dumping grounds' for learners who struggle in mainstream classrooms? Are they acting in the best interest of the child and are they being transparent and honest with parents when referring to full-service schools when they know that they do not have the additional resources?

We are beyond the point of justifying why inclusive education is necessary (Dreyer, 2017). We are now faced with "finding ways to implement practical measures to ensure educational support for all" (Dreyer, 2017, p. 9). These practical measures need to take into account what Florian and Beaton (2017, p. 870) refer to as inclusive pedagogy (see Section 2.5). Inclusive pedagogy as a pedagogical response avoids marginalising through differentiation strategies "designed with individual needs in mind". More full-service schools do not equal more inclusion. We cannot continue adding schools to the list of full-service schools if the schools do not, at least in terms of management, values, attitudes and pedagogy, endorse inclusion. This will most certainly not pave the way for inclusive practices.

### **5.3.3 Leadership and school culture**

According to Harris (2020), evidence shows that from an institutional level, effective leaders are those who are "culturally and contextually sensitive" (p. 144). She further explains that these leaders are familiar with the "socio-economic, demographic, cultural and historical composition of the community which governs the school" (Harris, 2020, p. 144), while simultaneously being attuned to the needs of the community and open to change. Full-service schools in South Africa mandate good leadership to ensure a successful transformation. This leadership involves more than merely enforcing policy and practices on staff, but goes deeper to consider the climate, context, attitudes and culture of that particular activity system. Inclusive education needs reflective leaders who are willing to delve deep and look at what practices, attitudes and values are currently still in place that serve to exclude rather than include.

According to Darling-Hammond et al. (2020), these leaders include principals who "can nurture relational trust among staff member by creating time for staff collaboration" (p. 108). Their role should include the distribution of leadership to various subjects as a means of addressing the hierarchy within the rules and division of labour, allowing individuals with a



strong sense of agency to engage in school-based practices that are aligned with the efforts of their colleagues while contributing to school improvement through a joint objective (Bellibas et al., 2020).

School culture is mediated by what has culturally and historically been acceptable and commonly practised. One cannot presume that changing schools to full-service schools and giving them a learning support teacher will suffice in changing the system. According to Florian and Beaton (2017), “a major aspect of teachers’ professional identity is control” (p. 881). One can assume that the same is true for the school as an activity system, as well as the subjects who have been doing things in a particular and comfortable way. One therefore need to strive for a school culture that is willing to listen and give agency, not only to the staff, but to learners too. We cannot believe that the way the current system is working is the ‘only’ or the ‘best’ way, but need to be open for collaborative practices in which everyone is open to learn from others. Children need to begin to view learning as the meaning-making process it is, rather than being forced sit and be taught.

When it comes to schools, and how they are viewed from a district perspective, one needs to acknowledge the role that measures such as the systemic tests play (see Section 2.3). With limited resources, full-service schools are audited as mainstream schools and held accountable for their results. Assessment measures such as the systemic tests create pressure that forces practices that benefit statistics rather than the development of inclusive pedagogies. Scores are used to praise schools for being able to successfully teach the curriculum, without taking into account that most schools “teach to test”, without learners engaging in a process of meaning making and real learning.

Contradictions can only contribute to change if they are acknowledged (Murphy & Manzananares, 2008). This implies that the individual agency of a learning support teacher towards the accommodation of all learners in a full-service school is almost impossible without at least some form of collective or systemic effort (Engeström & Sanniño, 2011).

## **5.4 RECOMMENDATIONS**

The findings that emerged from the data provided a framework for the following recommendations:

### **5.4.1 The role and responsibility of the learning support teacher**

The current job description of learning support teachers reflects changes in how they are expected to function. They are not merely responsible for providing small-group support to

learners, but also have a collaborative and consultative role to fulfil in which they support teachers and staff in adapting the curriculum to ensure that all learners are provided quality educational opportunities in the classroom. In their new role, they are seen as instrumental in promoting inclusion. They will therefore need the skills and necessary authority to be able to work at a whole-school level, forging relationships, supporting teachers, coordinating support services and promoting inclusive practices. Dreyer (2008) recommends that learning support teachers be promoted to post level 2 as a means of acknowledging “the essential role they play in schools and provide them with the authority to manage the implementation of learning support in mainstream classes” (p. 233).

**Recommendation 1:** Criteria for appointing learning support teachers in full-service schools should reflect the skills needed for them to function within these contexts.

**Recommendation 2:** Reconsideration of the post level structure of learning support teachers in full-service schools. A possible post level 2 position should be considered.

#### 5.4.2 Collaboration in full-service schools

It is important that all the relevant role players, including the school management, learner support advisors, teachers and learning support teachers, understand what working collaboratively entails. There needs to be processes in place that ensure that everyone is aware of the roles and responsibilities of their colleagues, and a culture of trust that facilitates open communication between all role players. There needs to be a clear understanding of who works together, how they work together, to what end and who is held responsible.

**Recommendation 3:** A collaborative culture should be fostered in full-service schools based on trust, joint ownership and accountability.

**Recommendation 4:** Full-service schools can no longer be audited based on systemic test results. They should be given opportunities to problem-solve and share their practices with other schools instead of using the time to coach systemic tests.

From this study it was clear that in order for full-service schools to become inclusive, not just in their admission of learners, but also in the quality of education provided, there needs to be a transformation of policies, practices and attitudes (Oswald, 2019; Walton et al., 2014). Inclusion mandates good leadership that envisions the school as a beacon of transformation (DoBE, 2010).

**Recommendation 5:** Principals and the school management team should be given the necessary training and support to encourage a change in cultures, policies and practices.

**Recommendation 6:** School principals and the school management team should be held responsible for the functioning of full-service schools.

Research shows that teachers often view themselves as victims of unwelcome change (Walton et al., 2014). Changes can result in them feeling powerless in the face of curriculum demands and in terms of their capacity to address diverse needs. Powerlessness hinders teachers' agency and self-efficacy towards successful transformation and one often sees old habitual patterns of isolation creeping in. As a countermeasure to feeling powerless, they can be included in discussions regarding their needs and continuing professional teacher development training that might be beneficial towards their ability to collaborate and address diverse needs.

**Recommendation 7:** Continuing professional teacher development training should be provided to address collaborative problem-solving skills and all teachers' ability to address diverse needs in their classrooms in creative ways.

In order for learning support teachers to support learners in the classroom through co-teaching, as well as in small groups, they need sufficient curriculum knowledge. Training and support should therefore not be limited to the learning support advisors, but also include a strong curriculum component.

**Recommendation 8:** District-based curriculum advisors should form an integral part of the learner support team and should provide guidance, training and support to school-based learning support teachers.

## 5.5 IMPLICATION OF FINDINGS FOR EDUCATIONAL PSYCHOLOGISTS

Prior to 1994, educational psychologists played a pivotal role in the assessment and placement of learners with learning difficulties and disabilities (Eloff & Swart, 2018). For that reason, their role was that of clinician or 'knowledgeable professional' who assessed with the aim of placing learners either in special schools or in special classes, and interventions were focused on that particular learner. This narrow focus on individual diagnosis and

treatment diminished the scope of practice, limiting the educational psychologists' ability to use and share knowledge and skills effectively.

Ideally, today the educational psychologist's role is that of a change agent (Eloff & Swart, 2018) who is capable of supporting and empowering those who are in direct contact with the learners as well as the system within which these learners function on a daily basis. In this study it was clear that the expectations of educational psychologists are still limited to the medical deficit approach, with the main focus on assessment and referral. According to Pillay (2014), the ultimate goal for educational psychologists is to collaborate and consult with various stakeholders, in and out of schools, as a means of supporting and empowering all learners and school communities to ultimately support themselves. There seems to be a long road ahead for educational psychologists, who, especially while being caught in a pandemic, will need to advocate for their collaborative and consultative role, rather than give in to the expectations held by others to solve certain problems with their expertise.

## **5.6 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY**

The scope of this study was limited to four learning support teachers stationed at full-service schools in one education district of the Western Cape. This study does not claim to reflect the experiences of all learning support teachers. The focus was on the participants' storied, personal, contextually situated accounts. Although generalisability was not the intended outcome, the inclusion of principals, teachers, parents and the district level learning support advisors may have contributed to a more comprehensive account.

## **5.7 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH**

- The study could be extended to include other districts in the province.
- The findings could be used to lay the foundation for a mixed-methodology research project including a greater number of learning support teachers.
- The findings could also be used for a design-based study to study the development of the learning support teacher's role and the inclusive culture and capacity in schools.
- Ethnographic studies may also provide insight into all the role players' perceptions and the development within the culture of the school that either facilitate or hinder the implementation of inclusive education and collaboration between staff members, staff and learners, staff and parents, etc.
- A study on the perceptions of teachers, parents, principals and learners of the role of the learning support teacher might also be insightful.

## 5.8 CONCLUSION

Moving through the Covid-19 pandemic, the education sector, like many other sectors, is holding on to its bootstraps. Every day brings new challenges, fears and anxieties. From the WCED we have seen many initiatives<sup>12</sup> as a means of addressing the mounting socio-emotional needs of learners, teachers, staff and parents. The facts are however that teachers are not going to be able to complete the curriculum for 2020, which will leave significant gaps in children's education, and it is the poorer learners and schools that will be least likely to make up for lost time (Van der Berg, 2020). The barriers of those who experienced barriers to learning prior to Covid-19 will have been exacerbated. Now more than ever one needs to implement a holistic view of barriers, as failure to do so will lead to further exclusion.

What we know is that the difficulties experienced by our learners are what Florian and Spratt (2015, p. 90) refer to as "professional dilemmas". These dilemmas are best approached through collaboration of all role players in an attempt to find new approaches that include all and reduce stigmatisation. In order to replace the old notion of referral and advice, all role players should have the opportunity to co-construct knowledge through professional partnership. Within the full-service school context it is the envisioned role of the learning support teacher to broker such partnership, with the objective being the successful transformation of full-service schools to beacons of good practice.

Their ability to influence and broker such partnerships largely depends on whether or not they have the necessary skills and agency, whether they are afforded membership in the school and whether the leadership of that school promotes practices, attitudes and values that serve to include rather than exclude. Change with regard to a single aspect, such as more agentic learning support teachers, is necessary, but not sufficient for institutional change.

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<sup>12</sup> <https://sites.google.com/wced.info/psycho-social/home>

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## APPENDIX A

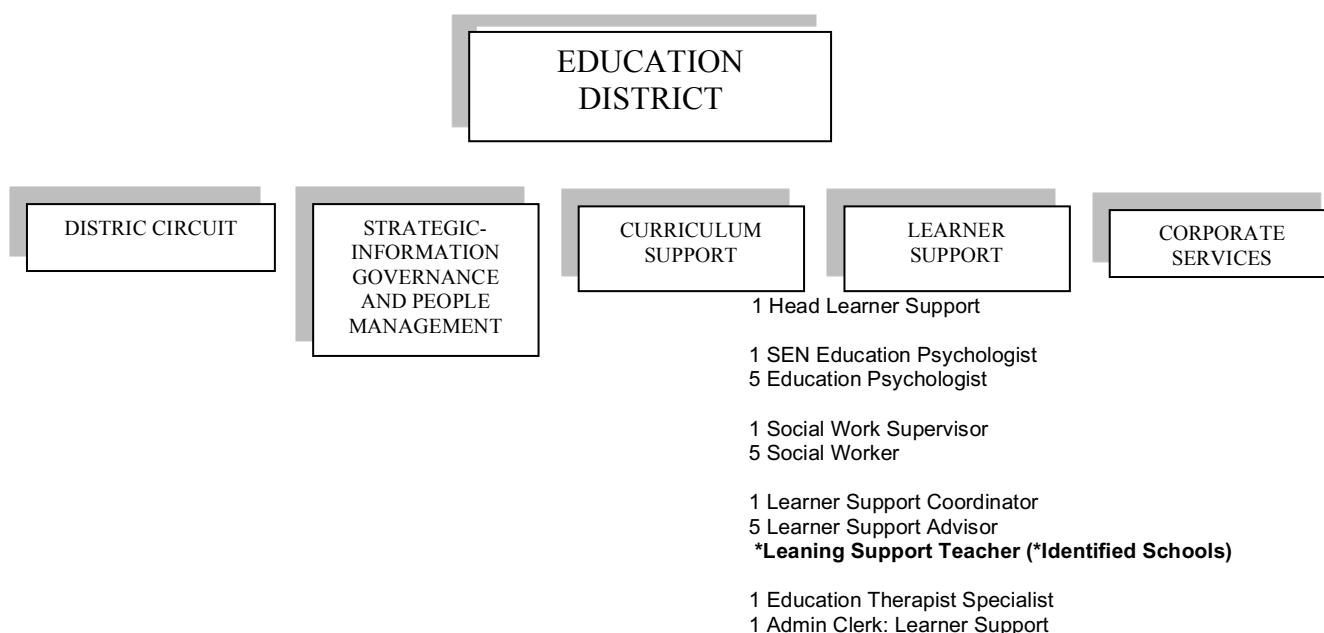
### Western Cape Government

#### Job Description

##### JOB INFORMATION

<b>JOB TITLE :</b>	LEARNING SUPPORT TEACHER: LEARNER SUPPORT (INCLUSIVE AND SPECIALISED LEARNER AND EDUCATOR SUPPORT (ISLES)
<b>PROVINCE:</b>	WESTERN CAPE
<b>DEPARTMENT:</b>	WESTERN CAPE EDUCATION DEPARTMENT (WCED)
<b>LOCATION:</b>	EDUCATION DISTRICT
<b>DATE FOR REVIEW</b>	
<b>SURNAME AND INITIALS EMPLOYEE</b>	
<b>PERSAL NUMBER</b>	
<b>CHIEF DIRECTORATE</b>	DISTRICTS
<b>DIRECTORATE</b>	EDUCATION DISTRICT

## 1. ORGANISATIONAL POSITION OF POST



## 2. MAIN PURPOSE OF THE JOB

*To render a learning support / remedial education service within Public Ordinary Schools in the Education District*

## 3. KEY PERFORMANCE AREAS

**KRA 1** Implement learning support capacity building programmes for early identification of and interventions relating to barriers to learning.

1.1 Train teachers, parents and support staff (e.g. class assistants):

- in the early identification of learning barriers, particularly barriers to accessing the curriculum.
- to manage identified learners who experience curriculum barriers to learning (e.g. Individual Support Plan (ISP) / Group Support Plan (GSP) / Exit Plans).

1.2 Develop and implement goals/needs driven initiatives/programmes and workshops for parents and School Governing Body's (SGB's) to prevent and address learning barriers.

1.3 Implementation of Inclusive Education Policies including the Screening Identification and Assessment Support (SIAS) Policy:

- Implementation of the learner support pathway: conduct assessments; provide curriculum interventions to learners experiencing barriers to learning within a school(s), effective lesson planning and use of appropriate LTSM, short term withdrawal, collaborative teaching, learner tracking
- Identify learners in need of further support and assist with completing the necessary referrals
- Provide assistance to and training of teachers, parents, SGBs, etc. in collaboration with the Learning Support Advisor, with regards to legislation and the implementation of policies related to children experiencing barriers to learning within a school(s).
- Promote an inclusive ethos within a school(s) in collaboration with the all relevant role players.

1.4 Report quarterly on the implementation of learning support intervention programmes within a school(s) for early identification of and curriculum interventions relating to barriers to learning to the Learning Support Advisor (Inclusive and Specialised Learner and Educator Support) (ISLES).

**KRA 2 Provide specialised learning support to strengthen School-based Support Team(s) (SBSTs).**

2.1 Form an integral part of the SBSTs within the school(s).

2.2 Train, sustain and promote SBSTs within a School(s) with regards to:

- early identification of curriculum barriers to learning
- intervention strategies
- differentiated curriculum and assessment (including accommodations / concessions).

2.3 Collaborate with District-Based Support Team (DBST) to support learners experiencing curriculum barriers to learning.

2.4 Render direct learning support services to learners with moderate and high level needs.

2.5 Provide Learning Support inputs for the district with regard to policy development and reviews.

**2.6** Report quarterly on the Learning Support / Remedial Education Interventions to the Learning Support Advisor (Inclusive and Specialised Learner and Educator Support) (ISLES).

**KRA 3 Participate in inter- and intra-sectoral networks and collaborations.**

3.1 Promote inclusive schools as centres of care and support for teaching and learning (CSTL) and use this framework to coordinate support from other sectors including the provision learning support expertise in the role out of the Integrated School Health Programme.

3.2 Collaborate on learning support matters with the multi-disciplinary teams at the Special Schools/ Resource Centres and Full Service Schools/Inclusive Schools to include learners who experience curriculum barriers to learning.

3.3 Participate in inter- and intra-sectoral forums to support and enhance the capacity of the system to address curriculum barriers to learning.

3.4 Report quarterly on learning support participation in and contributions to inter- and intra-sectoral networks to the Learning Support Advisor (Inclusive and Specialised Learner and Educator Support) (ISLES).

**4. FORMAL QUALIFICATIONS AND INHERENT REQUIREMENTS**

Qualifications required	Essential	Desirable
Relevant 4 year education qualification with remedial /learning support / Inclusive Education Modules	X	
Driver's License B	X	
Registration with the South African Council of Educators (SACE)	X	

**5. JOB RELATED WORK EXPERIENCE**

Work experience required	Time span	Essential	Desirable
0-3 years experience as a teacher (Preference will be given to Teachers with relevant experience)	0 years		X

**6. JOB RELATED KNOWLEDGE**

<b>Job related knowledge</b>	<b>Essential</b>	<b>Desirable</b>
National and Provincial Education legislation, policies and regulations	X	
National Curriculum Statement	X	
Inclusive Education Policies, guidelines and practices	X	
Learning Support theory, interventions and practices	X	
Information and Knowledge Management	X	
Assessment and evaluation tools	X	
Learning Strategies and Teaching Styles	X	

**7. JOB RELATED SKILLS**

<b>Job related skills</b>	<b>Essential</b>	<b>Desirable</b>
Organisation and Planning skills	X	
Report writing skills	X	
Systemic analysis and reasoning skills	X	
Interpersonal skills	X	
Computer literacy	X	
Communication and language skills (2 Official Languages)	X	
Presentation, facilitation and empowerment skills	X	
Problem Solving and Analysis skills	X	
Client Orientation and Customer Focus	X	

**8. JOB RELATED COMPETENCIES (To be determined by DotP Assessment Centre)**

<b>Core Competencies</b>	<b>Essential</b>	<b>Desirable</b>

<b>Process Competencies</b>	<b>Essential</b>	<b>Desirable</b>



**9. WORK CONTEXT AND ENVIRONMENT**

<b>Type of Working Hours:</b>	Usually day time working Regular additional hours	
<b>Working Hours:</b>	Normal weekly hours	40
<b>Travel:</b>	Time spent travelling (excl. from/to work)	

**AGREEMENT**

<b>Agreement</b>	This job description has been consulted and agreed to between the relevant parties.	
<b>Employee</b>	<i>Signature</i>	<i>Date</i>
<b>Learning Support Advisor</b>	<i>Signature</i>	<i>Date</i>
<b>Learning Support Coordinator</b>	<i>Signature</i>	<i>Date</i>
<b>Head Learner Support</b>	<i>Signature</i>	<i>Date</i>
<b>Director Education District</b>	<i>Signature</i>	<i>Date</i>
<b>Director: Specialised Education Support</b>	<i>Signature</i>	<i>Date</i>
<b>Chief Director: Districts</b>	<i>Signature</i>	<i>Date</i>
<b>Deputy Director General Institution Development and Coordination</b>	<i>Signature</i>	<i>Date</i>



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## APPENDIX B

### SEMI-GESTRUKTUREERDE ONDERHOUDSGIDS VIR LEERONDERSTEUNINGSONDERWYSER

#### Onderhoud 1

**Samewerking in inklusiewe onderwys: Leerondersteuners se perspektiewe en praktyke**

**Deelnemer (naam en van):** .....

**Skool:** .....

**Datum:** ..... (tyd: .....)

**Onderhoudvoerder – wat ek benodig:**

Onderhoudskedule 1

Instemmingsvorm (Informed consent form)

Bandopnemer (ekstra batterye) en rugsteuntoestel (selfoon/skootrekenaar)

A3 Hierdie is my skool (Google Maps; waardes kaartjies; foto's; kaart van skool en gemeenskap)

A3 Tydlyn

5'	INLEIDING	
	<p><b>Welkom</b> by die eerste onderhoud. Dankie dat jy tyd ingeruim het om jou ervarings met my te deel.</p> <p><b>Doel van projek</b> Voordat ons begin wil ek jou net herinner aan doel van die projek: In hierdie projek wil ons by jou leer van jou ervaring van samewerking ter ondersteuning van diverse leerbehoefte van leerders in jou klas.</p> <p>Ons sal gesels oor <u>wat jy doen</u> in jou klaskamer en oor jou sienings oor die <u>DOEL van samewerking</u>, naamlik die hantering van die diverse leerbehoefte. Daar is <u>geen regte of verkeerde</u> (antwoorde of) idees nie. Ek wil van jou leer.</p> <p><b><u>Jou eerlike menings en ervarings is belangrik.</u></b></p> <p><b>Temas</b> In hierdie onderhoud gaan ons vyf temas dek:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Jou skool</li> <li>2. Jou onderwysberoep</li> <li>3. Spesifieke leerbehoefte van leerders in jou klaskamer en hoe jy hierdie behoeftes hanteer</li> <li>4. Hoe jy saamwerk met ander om hierdie diverse leerbehoefte te hanteer</li> <li>5. Faktore wat samewerking ondersteun maar ook aspekte wat uitdagings t.o.v. samewerking teweegbring.</li> </ol> <p><b>Instemmingsvorm (consent form)</b> Soos uiteengesit in die vorm, sal die data vertroulik en anoniem hanteer word (sowel jou naam as die skool se naam).</p> <p><b><u>As navorser wil ek jou eerlike ervaring en menings hoor sodat ek by jou kan leer.</u></b></p> <p><b>Tyd</b> Ons behoort ongeveer 90 minute besig te wees. Dui asseblief aan indien jy 'n ruskans wil neem.</p> <p><b>Opneem van onderhoud</b> Soos jy kan sien, maak ek 'n klankopname (bandopnemer). Ek wil die data transkribeer sodat ek die data wat jy met my deel en wat ek dink jy sê, kan ontleed. Dit sal ook help dat ek eerder op ons gesprek kan fokus as om uitgebreide notas te neem. Het ek jou toestemming om ons gesprek op te neem?</p> <p><b>Nog vrae?</b> Het jy enige ander vrae voordat ons begin?</p> <p><b>Teken vorm</b> Reg, voordat ons begin, teken asseblief die instemmingsvorm. Hierin dui jy aan dat jy ingelig is rakende al die aspekte soos uiteengesit in die vorm en dat jou deelname vrywillig is.</p>	<p><b>FOLIO</b> met vyf temas</p> <p><b>Bandopnemer/selfoon</b> (rugsteuntoestel)</p> <p><b>Instemmingsvorm</b></p>

15'	<b>TEMA 1: JOU SKOOL EN DIE GEMEENSKAP</b>	
	<p><b>WEBBLADFOTO'S; ANDER FOTO'S; WAARDE KAARTJIES</b>            Ek het 'n paar foto's van die skool se webblad/gemeenskap/konteks gekopieer.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Hoe verteenwoordig hierdie die foto's dít wat die skool na buite wil vertoon? (missie, visie, kernwaardes, ens.)</li> <li>Watter waardes en prente voel jy verteenwoordig dít wat die skool na buite wil vertoon? Is dit wat hulle wil vertoon?</li> <li>Hoe voel jy pas jy hier in? Is jy deel van hierdie beeld/praktyk?</li> <li><b>COLLAGE:</b> Is daar 'n verskil in wat die skool en die departement van jou verwag? So wat is die skool se verwagtinge van 'n leerondersteuner en wat is die adviseur/departement se verwagtinge van die leerondersteuner? Wat is die ooreenkomste en verskille?</li> </ul> <p>Hierdie is 'n kaart van die skool gemeenskap.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Vertel my van die skoolgemeenskap en die gemeenskapslede.</li> </ul> <p><i>[Aanpor t.o.v. bevolkingsdigtheid; kultuur; diversiteit; SES; taal; verband met skool – hindernisse en steun – oop of toe? Toelatingsvereistes?]</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Verhoudings tussen die skool en die gemeenskap.</li> </ul> <p>Enigiets wat jy wil byvoeg?</p>	<p>WEBFOTO'S</p> <p>Notas            Een bladsy skool; ander departement (adviseur)</p> <p>Kaart van skool (Google Map)</p>
20'	<b>TEMA 2: JOU ONDERWYSLOOPBAAN</b>	
	<p>Trek 'n tydlyn en voltooi met deelnemer.</p> <p>Vertel my van jou loopbaan as onderwyser/leerondersteuner (aanvanklike onderwyskwalifikasies, skole, grade en/of vakke onderrig, posisies, aantal jare onderwyservaring).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Van wanneer af is jy 'n leerondersteuner by hierdie skool?</li> </ul>	<p>Tydlyn/plakkaat</p> <p>A3-papier, lêer; penne, kryte, ens.</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Wanneer het jy besluit om 'n onderwyser te word en toe 'n leerondersteuner?</li> <li>• Wanneer en waar is jy as onderwyser/leerondersteuner opgelei?</li> <li>• Wanneer en waar het jy begin skoolhou? Grade?</li> <li>• En toe?</li> <li>• Toe?</li> <li>• Hoekom het jy besluit om 'n onderwyser/leerondersteuner te word?</li> <li>• Tydens jou opleiding (studies), kon jy jou vereenselwig met die ideale beeld van 'n onderwyser (die prentjie van hoe die ideale onderwyser moet wees)?</li> </ul> <p><b>Jou huidige situasie</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Wat motiveer (dryf) jou (tans) as leerondersteuner?</li> <li>• Vertel my van jou huidige uitdagings en suksesse as leerondersteuner.</li> <li>• Wat maak dat jy by die skool bly of wat dryf jou weg?</li> <li>• Het jy enige professionele opleidingsaktiwiteite (kortkursusse/werkswinkels) bygewoon wat jou as leerondersteuner gevorm het? (<i>Vul in op tydlyn</i>)</li> </ul> <p><b>Veranderinge in onderwys</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Indien jy 'n collage sou maak van hoe die posbeskrywing van 'n leerondersteuner oor die afgelope 10 jaar ontwikkel/verander het, hoe sou dit lyk? (Een kant die posbeskrywing toe jy begin het, en wat die posbeskrywing nou behels.)</li> <li>• Hoe het jy hierdie veranderinge hanteer? En tans?</li> <li>• Voel jy dat jy gekwalifiseerd is of bevoeg is om te doen wat vandag van jou verwag word?</li> <li>• Wat dink jy is die belangrikste bevoegdhede waaroor leerondersteuners vandag moet beskik?</li> </ul>	Verwys terug na nota-collage
15/20'	<b>TEMA 3: HANTERING VAN DIE BEHOEFTE VAN ALLE LEERDERS IN DIE KLASKAMER</b>	

	<p><i>Soos reeds verduidelik, is die fokus van die navorsing samewerking in inklusiewe onderwys. In kort: Daar word van onderwysers verwag om diverse leerbehoefte van alle leerders in klaskamers te hanteer.</i></p> <p><i>Volgens Witskrif 6 en die SIAS-beleid moet onderwysers en steunpersoneel saamwerk met ander om te beplan en strategieë uit te voer om spesifieke leerbehoefte te hanteer om sodoende ondersteuning aan alle leerders in die klaskamer te bied.</i></p> <p><i>Met die volgende vraag wil ek meer leer oor wat diversiteit in die praktyk vir jou beteken, die uitdagings wat diversiteit bied in jou klaskamer en hoe jy dit hanteer .</i></p> <p><b>Skool (as voldiensskool)</b> Kom ons begin by jou skool.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hoe het hierdie skool verander na 'n meer inklusiewe skool? Wie dryf daardie verandering na jou mening?</li> <li>• Wie is volgens jou aan die spits van inklusiewe onderwys en julle skool se status as 'n voldiensskool?</li> <li>• Wat is na jou mening die grootste struikelblok in die verwesenliking van 'n meer inklusiewe skool?</li> <li>• Op watter wyse is hierdie skool anders as ander skole?</li> <li>• Vertel my van die samewerkings- en ondersteuningstrukture in die skool.</li> <li>• Wat is jou rol in die voldiensskool?</li> </ul> <p><b>Die klaskamer</b> Kom ons beweeg nou na jou klaskamer.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Vertel my oor diversiteit in die skool. Wat is tipiese kwessies? (<i>skryf dit neer op notas</i>)</li> <li>• Hoe word leerders na jou verwys en hoe hanteer jy die diverse behoeftes van leerders in jou klaskamer asook in die skool? Wat presies doen jy?</li> <li>• Om diversiteit in jou klaskamer te verteenwoordig, wat dink jy het jy addisioneel nodig?</li> </ul>	<p>[Fokus: Diversiteit: ... wat ... uitdagings ... hoe hanteer]</p> <p>Skryf kwessies oor diversiteit neer en plak in A3-lêer</p>
10'	<b>TEMA 4: SAMEWERKING IN INKLUSIEWE ONDERWYS</b>	
	Ons fokus spesifiek op samewerking en watter faktore dit	

	<p>ondersteun of inhibeer in die skool.</p> <p>Daar word dikwels voorgestel dat onderwysers en steunpersoneel 'n meer inklusiewe praktyk kan ontwikkel deur saam met ander te werk.</p> <p><i>Met verwysing na die diversiteite wat op notas staan:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Met wie werk jy saam om diverse leerbehoefes in die volediensskool te hanteer?</li> <li>• Wanneer, hoekom, met wie werk jy saam?</li> <li>• In konkrete terme – beskryf HOE julle saamwerk/nie.</li> <li>• Op watter manier is die resultate van die samewerking sigbaar in jou klaskamer?</li> <li>• Op watter manier is die gevolge van samewerking sigbaar in die skool?</li> <li>• Hoe help hierdie samewerking jou om diversiteit te hanteer/nie?</li> <li>• Hoe sal jy praktyke wat goed werk om diverse leerbehoefes te hanteer beskryf teenoor praktyke wat nie so goed werk nie?</li> <li>• Wat vergemaklik samewerking en wat bemoeilik dit? (vaardighede, waardes, kennis, begrip, houdings)</li> <li>• Is daar enigiets oor samewerking wat jy nog wil byvoeg?</li> </ul> <p><b>Buite die skool</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Met wie werk jy saam buite die skool om hierdie kwessies te hanteer?</li> </ul> <p>Hoekom?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Is hierdie samewerking doeltreffend/nie?</li> </ul>	
10'	<p><b>TEMA 5: FAKTORE WAT SAMEWERKING BEVORDER EN BELEMMER</b></p>	



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Wat maak dit vir jou moontlik om saam met ander te werk?</li> <li>• Wat maak dit moeilik?</li> <li>• Wat het jy geleer van samewerking met ander?</li> <li>• Wat het jy geleer van inklusie tydens jou samewerking met ander?</li> <li>• Vertel my van die ondersteuning (gegee; ontvang; ondersteuning van ander; impak van ondersteuning).</li> </ul>	<p>Vraag verwys na:</p> <p>1 gegee</p> <p>2 ontvang</p> <p>3 saam (ondersteuning van mekaar)</p> <p>4 impak daarvan</p>
5'-10'	<p><b>TABEL</b></p> <p><i>[KYK NA DIE TYD ... het ons nog 20 minute oor?]</i></p> <p><i>Kom ons kyk na hierdie tabel. Om ons besprekings konkreet op te som, help my asseblief om die oop ruimtes te voltooi.</i></p>	Tabel
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Kom ons begin met die rolle en verantwoordelikhede t.o.v. samewerking en ondersteuning in jou skool. Wie is verantwoordelik vir wat in die skool?</li> <li>• Hoe bevorder/fasiliteer die toewys van verantwoordelikhede/werksverdeling samewerking vir inklusiewe onderwys? Wat bemoeilik samewerking?</li> <li>• Wat is die strukture, prosedures en roetines wat samewerking vir inklusiewe onderwys ondersteun? Wat bemoeilik dit?</li> <li>• Watter ander elemente (of faktore) in die skool ondersteun samewerking vir inklusiewe onderwys? Wat bemoeilik dit?</li> <li>• Enigiets anders in die skool wat samewerking ondersteun? Of moeilik maak?</li> <li>• Hoe bevorder die volgende faktore samewerking: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Beleid oor inklusiewe onderwys?</li> <li>Kurrikulum?</li> <li>Assessering?</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	

	<p>Wat bemoeilik/benadeel dit?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Is daar enigiets buite die skool wat samewerking vir inklusiewe onderwys ondersteun? Of bemoeilik?</li> <li>• Watter eienskappe in die groep (2, 3 of meer persone) bevorder samewerking? Watter eienskappe in die groep belemmer samewerking?</li> <li>• So, wat is jou persoonlike eienskappe wat samewerking vir inklusiewe onderwys ondersteun? En wat is jou persoonlike eienskappe wat dit vir jou moeilik maak om saam te werk?</li> </ul>	
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Dankie. Wil jy enigiets byvoeg oor samewerking vir inklusiewe onderwys?

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#### **AFSLUITING**

Enige vrae? Baie dankie vir jou tyd.

#### **REFLEKTIEWE NOTAS DEUR NAVORSER**

1. My eerste indrukke van deelnemer:
2. Watter temas het deelnemer (a) op gefokus (b) vermy?
3. Faktore wat negatiewe impak op die data het?
4. Hou die navorsingsvraag as gids/riglyn. Lys die navorsingsvrae.
5. Watter elemente (faktore/aspekte) van die onderhoudskedule moet opgevolg of verfyn word?
6. Watter elemente en/of aspekte van hierdie onderhoud was minder suksesvol? Hoe kan ek die vrae verfyn vir die volgende onderhoud?

## TABEL: SAMEWERKING EN ONDERSTEUNING

*Kom ons kyk na hierdie tabel. Om ons besprekings konkreet op te som, help my asseblief om die oop ruimtes te voltooi.*

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Kom ons begin met die rolle en verantwoordelikhede t.o.v. samewerking en ondersteuning in jou skool. Wie is verantwoordelik vir wat in die skool?</b></li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Hoe bevorder/fasiliteer die toewys van verantwoordelikhede/werksverdeling samewerking vir inklusiewe onderwys?</b></li> </ul> <p><b>Wat bemoeilik samewerking?</b></p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Wat is die strukture, prosedures en roetines wat samewerking vir inklusiewe onderwys ondersteun?</b></li> </ul> <p><b>Wat bemoeilik dit?</b></p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Watter ander elemente (of faktore) in die skool ondersteun samewerking vir inklusiewe onderwys?</b></li> </ul> <p><b>Wat bemoeilik dit?</b></p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Enigiets anders in die skool wat samewerking ondersteun?</b></li> </ul> <p><b>Of moeilik maak?</b></p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Hoe bevorder die volgende faktore samewerking:</b>  <b>Beleid oor inklusiewe onderwys?</b>  <b>Kurrikulum?</b>  <b>Assessering?</b></li> </ul> <p><b>Wat bemoeilik/benadeel dit?</b></p>

- **Is daar enigiets buite die skool wat samewerking vir inklusiewe onderwys ondersteun?**

**Of bemoeilik?**

- **Watter eienskappe van samewerkende vennote bevorder samewerking? (OF Watter eienskappe van mense bevorder samewerking?)**

**Watter eienskappe is struikelblokke tot samewerking?**

- **Watter eienskappe in die groep (2, 3 of meer persone) bevorder samewerking?**

**Watter eienskappe in die groep belemmer samewerking?**

- **So wat is jou persoonlike eienskappe wat samewerking vir inklusiewe onderwys ondersteun?**

**En wat is jou persoonlike eienskappe wat dit vir jou moeilik maak om saam te werk?**



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## APPENDIX C

### Example of interview transcript

- N: Alhoewel dit seker die van oudste voldiensskole is.
- D: Presies, en die ding is veral omdat daai Downsindroom-eenheid hier was ... was daar 'n perspektief in die gemeenskap, soos ek dit nou kan aflei, dat jy kan jou Downsindroom, of jou gestremde kind hier kom aansoek voor doen, want hier is 'n klas vir hulle.
- N: Oukei ja..
- D: Maar hulle het dit gesien as 'n aparte klas, verstaan. Hierdie klas is in die skool, maar dis nie deel ... dit gaan nie my gewone kind se klas benadeel nie.
- N: Ja.
- D: Verstaan, waar nou ... waar hierdie kinders eintlik nou in hoofstroom geakkommodeer moet word, voel ek dat die skool self sien nie kans daarvoor nie. En die ouers weet nie dat die kinders eintlik in hoofstroom geakkommodeer moet word nie, maar as hulle gaan weet, dan gaan hulle hulle kinders inskryf.
- N: Ja.
- D: En ons is nie gereed daarvoor nie.
- N: Oukei, dis interessant vir my, want jy ... die skool het die bronne. Die skool het in die verlede kinders geakkommodeer. Maar vandat die klas toegemaak is, is dit minder akkommoderend ... geen.
- D: Geen.
- N: Dit is ... ja ... ek het ook daai idee gekry.
- D: En die slegte ding vir my is ... dit voel ... hoe ek dit beleef het vandat ek hier gekom het, het dit vir my gevoel asof daai spesiale klas, was so 'n groot admin, en was so 'n groot ...
- (Juffrou kom in die klas in en vra advies)
- D: Oukei, wat was ek nou besig om te sê?

- N: Hoe dit nie nou ...
- D: O! Hulle ervaring in die verlede met die spesiale klas ... Kyk ek ken mos nou nie die geskiedenis so *great* nie maar dit wat ek al gehoor het, was dat daai spesiale klas het eintlik gekom, omdat 'n skoolhoof wat hier was, se eie kind was Downsindroom. En toe wou hy 'n klas skep sodat sy kind en kinders soortgelyk geakkommodeer kan word. Want baie ouers het die perspektief dat skole soos X en X<sup>13</sup> is sleg. Wat intendeel eintlik glad nie so is nie. Maar dit is maar nou net ... hulle voel die kinders leer nie regtig daar nie en dan raak hulle dommer as wat hulle is, of *whatever*, maar in elk geval ...
- N: Maar dit is die persepsie ...
- D: Ja, jy hoor wat ek sê, so ... dan't hulle gevoel ten minste kan ons sê my kind gaan X toe, en kry goeie onderrig ... daai tipe van ding ... maar in elk geval ... maar daai klas het klomp kopsere veroorsaak vir die skoolhoof en die admin-gedeelte en ... ek dink ... met hulle hele ervaring van dit was dit net chaos. En hulle kan dit net nie indink om dit weer te probeer nie ... verstaan ... en dat dit nou so moet wees dat daai kind *actually* in die gewone klas moet wees. En wat vir my hartseer eintlik is, maar ek neem aan dis ons Afrikaanse kultuur wat ... bietjie sleg is in daai opsigte, maar daar's byvoorbeeld nou 'n kind in een van my Graad 1-klasse, wat baie swak is, maar hy's nie swak genoeg vir 'n spesiale skool nie, maar hy het nou gedragsprobleme as gevolg van die feit dat hy mos nou sukkel ...
- N: Ja en nie kan nie ...
- D: En hy sukkel om te praat en *whatever else*, so ... die kinders is nou al bietjie meer gewoond, maar soos in die eerste kwartaal het daar klomp ouers van die ander kinders by die juffrou gekla oor die kind, en gevra maar "Hoekom is hy in XXXXXXXX? Moet hy nie eerder by 'n spesiale skool wees nie?" Hulle voel hulle kinders word afgeknou en geboelie en ... hulle onderrig word benadeel ... So ons het eintlik 'n groot groep ouers wat nie baie ... hoe kan mens sê ... toeganklik of ... aanvaarbaar is teenoor kinders met sulke gestremdhede nie, hulle voel hulle kinders word benadeel.
- N: Ja, so hulle voel hulle het nou hulle kind in hierdie goeie skool ingeskryf en hier moet goeie onderrig plaasvind en hulle kinders moet geleenthede hê?
- D: Ja ... en nou word dit half onderdruk deur 'swak' kinders of gestremde kinders ...
- N: Maar eintlik aan die einde van die dag, was hierdie skool slegs 'n voldiensskool, omdat daar 'n eenheid was, en dit was eintlik net die visie en missie van een hoof ...
- D: *Exactly* ...
- N: So die visie en die missie van inklusiwiteit word nie eintlik gedeel nie.

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<sup>13</sup> Names of two schools for children with intellectual disabilities

- D: Nee, en hulle was nie *inclusive* nie. Hulle was glad nie deel van die res van die skool nie ... uhm ... en dis wat een van die ander menere ook vir my nou gesê het. Hulle was op hulle eie eiland, so hulle het nie eens saam pouse gehou met die ander kinders nie. Hulle het nie gegaan vir rekenaar en vir sport soos wat die ideaal vir ons sê nie. En al wat hulle saam gehou het, was saal. Dis al wat hulle ook by was. En dan het hulle nie eens tussen die ander kinders nie, hulle het op hulle eie gesit in 'n groepie ... verstaan ... So eintlik was hulle nooit deel van die skool nie.
- N: Nee, hulle het net eintlik 'n gebou in die skool gehuur ...
- D: Ja, en niemand het eens geweet wat in haar klas aangaan nie. So hy sê self hy weet nie eens wat sy vir hulle geleer het, of watse program sy gevolg het, of ... Hulle was glad nie geïntegreer in die groter prentjie nie ... en ... dit is vir my baie ... sleg. En ek voel nog steeds ... ek voel daar moet ... ek het nou die dag vir die onderwysers gesê ... ek voel daar moet 'n manier wees hoe ons dit kan maak werk. Waar die ouers moet kan sien, jis nou kry my kind ander tipe opvoeding, maar wat baie meer van waarde is. Verstaan, waar kom *compassion* in ... waar kom “Ek verstaan jou situasie, kom ek help jou” of ... verstaan ... waar kom aanvaarding? Want ek bedoel as jy buite in die wêreld gaan moet jy *anyway* te doen hê met mense wat gestremd is blind is en ... *whatever* als ... Wat van daai ou wat by die WKOD ook werk wat ook in 'n rolstoel is of *whatever* ... Verstaan, jy moet saam met daai mense werk ...
- N: Ja ... dit is nie ... jy doen nie jou kind 'n guns ... ja ...
- D: Om hom daar te hou en niemand is niks meer fout. Dis hoekom hierdie ook vir my so belangrik is, want ek probeer vir hulle laat verstaan ... Ons almal is verskillend, en ons almal het verskillende behoeftes, maar jy't ook verskillende talente ... verstaan. En ons moet op 'n manier kan *uitfigure* ... ek weet net nie hoe nie ... ek is nog nie by daai punt nie.



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## APPENDIX D

# School Culture

Context  
climate + culture ①  
values + attitudes

44 N: Ja so hierdie is wat jy sê dit is. So gemaak skielike  
45 verandering, dit kry ons baie. Omgee vir kolegas, ons  
46 kinders, prestasies, geslote, orde, goed georganiseer,  
47 aanvaar almal is uniek. Ok, kan ek al hierdie ... ok,  
48 samewerking, onafhanklik, outoriteit ... en as jy moet sê  
49 hoe pas jy hier in. Hoe pas jy by die skool in, sou jy sê?

School Culture  
values

leadership

56 dinge wat gebeur en dit is onse doelstellings vorentoe.  
57 Maar wat hier plaasvind is die mense is baie, hoe sal 'n  
58 mens sê ... hulle is niet eintlik oop vir verandering nie.  
59 Hulle glo en dit waarin hulle glo. Hierdie mense kom oor  
60 'n tydperk van hoeveel jaar al. Dis 'n ou skool. Dis oor 'n  
61 honderd jaar. Baie van die mense is hulle eerste skool  
62 wat hulle by die skool gehou het... [onderbreek 00:08:34]  
63 N: En hulle is nou nog hier?  
64 D: Hulle is nou nog hier. Selfs my skoolhoof is van sy  
65 skoolloopbaan hier begin en hy't die hoof geraak van die  
66 skool. Verstaan jy? So hulle is gevestig in hulle idees en  
67 ... so is baie moeilik om 'n deurbraak te maak met mense

School culture  
- historicity  
- "ou"  
- rules + division of  
labour determined by  
history + context  
attitudes

113 wees, né. Groepsverband, en die onderwysers sit elke  
114 liewe dag, vyf dae 'n week, ses ure per dag met daai  
115 leerders in hulle klasse en hulle kan nie 'n verskil maak in  
116 die kinders wat sukkel se lewe nie. En alhoewel hulle vyf

School culture + prominent  
pedagogies (Why not?)  
attitudes

180 D: Die onderwysers gaan eerstens sê die rol van die leer  
181 ondersteuning onderwyser is om daai leerders wat  
182 sukkel, wat leer probleme het en die kinders wat hulle nie  
183 kan bereik nie, moet ons kan bereik want ons moet vir  
184 hulle help. Ons moet vir hulle op 'n punt bring waar  
185 hulle kan leer, lees, skryf en al die ...dinge  
186 N: So half "back to basics" ... en deur onttrekking?  
187 D: Ja.

Teacher expectations  
- Sukkel  
- leerprobleme  
- wat hulle nie kan  
bereik nie  
LST Teacher expectations

← may cause  
contradiction  
between School +  
WCED expectation  
(Role of LST)

250 D: Nee dit is nie. Dis 'n heeltemal bruin gemeenskap met 'n  
251 Afrikaanse taal maar die skool is besig om te verander.  
252 Die jaar het ons glad 'n Afrikaanse Graad 1 nie. Ons  
253 ander Graad is almal een in Afrikaans en drie Engels.  
254 Een Afrikaans en drie Engels is nou 'n heeltemal 'n  
255 omgeswaai van heeltemal Afrikaans af na een

context

## School culture - Role distribution

398 \* dit die werk van die onderwyser om daai kind te  
399 akkommodeer.  
400 N: Ja, dit is, ek voel daai is die groot  
401 leemte...uh...eienaarskap?  
402 D: Daar kom die probleem in want die onderwysers bly  
403 sê hulle is nie opgelei om met sulke kinders te werk  
404 nie. Hulle weet nie. Hulle is nie opgelei om met 'n  
405 outistiese kind te werk nie. Hulle is nie opgelei in dit nie,

Role distribution  
- School culture

Role of teacher  
say they are not  
trained  
Lack of Agency +  
School culture.

406 maar aan die anderkant maak hulle ook nie moeite om  
407 hulleself ... te verryk nie.

509 N: En maar dit kom ook van bo af? "It's got to come down,"  
510 iemand bo moet sê "sorry julle dis hoe dit moet wees."  
511 D: Ja, en dit kom nie ...  
512 N: Dit kom nie van bo af nie? Ja en dit is die ...  
513 [onderbreking 00:34:18]  
514 net gevoel ek wil daar wees vir kinders soos dit wat nie vir  
515 hulleself kan help nie. En nou die onderwyser is 'n  
516 grootmens en hulle het die mag in die hand. As 'n  
517 onderwyser besluit het, kyk vir jou skryf ek vandag af,  
518 ek het nie lus vir jou nie, jy verstaan nie, en die nie,  
519 dan gaan hy vir jou afskryf. En daai kind het geen  
520 regte nie.

School culture  
leadership  
m

historical context  
"historical context"  
child has no rights,  
adults "mag"



# LST (+1) and outsider

154 D: Om terug te kom na hulle toe en hulle kom net dit afdwing.  
155 En ek voel daar word nie, onse stem word nie eintlik  
156 gehoor nie. Want elke vergadering wat ons bywoon, word  
157 daar gepraat oor werk wat ons moet doen. Dit wat ons in  
158 plek moet sit. As hulle hier kom dan moet dit ... daar word  
159 nie 'n stem gegee vir ons wat in die klas is om te sê jy.  
160 dit is hoe ons voel. Dit is vir ons onmoontlik om dit te  
161 doen. Dit is vir ons bonatuurlik om dit te doen en dit. Dan  
162 ons het nie 'n stem nie en ek voel dit is nie reg nie. Ek  
163 voel ons moet 'n stem het en ons moet kan praat om  
164 hierdie ding te laat werk. As jy vir my vra voel ek leer  
165 ondersteuning werk nie in die ware sin van die woord  
166 soos wat dit moet werk nie.

expectations

LST voice

\* Geen stem gegee

(moet een hê, maar moet gegee word.

Both systems want LST to exert power in other sys but neither gives them the space, me voice to do so.

450 D: Internet hier te hê. Maar my hande is afgekap. Onse  
451 internet stelsel is van so 'n aard ingesit, die, wat noem 'n  
452 mens die ding wat hier in ...

LST hands cut off

506 Vrydag. Eintlik is sulke stremmende faktore wat jy nie  
507 kan verby kom wat maak dat jy voel jy net nie kan  
508 funksioneer soos wat dit moet funksioneer nie.

barriers - time can't function

530 D: Dit maak dit oneindig, en ek kan maar praat, niemand  
537 steur vir hulle daaraan nie.  
538 N: Ja, so dit moet van bo af kom?

LST outsider "insignificant" ?

698 met hulle werk en as ek 'n keuse gehad het sou ek wil  
699 voortgaan met hulpbron klas waar daai kindertjies  
700 bymekaar is want hulle word soos 'n familietjie. En

inclusive edu as NO "barrier" ?

491 D: Hulle wil ook nie werksinkels bywoon, ok sekere  
492 werksinkels soos mos verpligtend moet hulle bywoon,  
493 maar as ons vergaderings reël en ek moet vir hulle iets  
494 oordra, dit moet in die tydperk wees vir wanneer die skool  
495 uitgaan tot drie uur toe.  
496 N: So jy het net twintig minute.

IE barrier forced to tell helps

school culture

LST outsider

908 kinders in daai halfuur kan ek meer verrig as wat ek met  
909 daai vyftien kinders wat helfte "moderate" en helfte "high"  
910 is. Ek bereik rêrig nie eers een van daai twee in daai  
911 vyftien minute nie want ek sukkel so met die wat nou nie  
912 hier kan verstaan nie, dat daai wat wel kan verstaan moet  
913 op hulle eie aangaan.

hopeless does not function

934 N: Sou jy sê die onderwysers is oop vir so iets?  
935 D: Die onderwysers is nie regtig oop vir so iets nie. Want  
936 in die begin van die jaar word ons verplig om binne in die  
937 Graad 1 klasse in te werk. Maar die oomblik as jy daar  
938 inkom dan is daar 'n ander atmosfeer. Want die  
939 onderwysers voel jy kom kyk hoe hulle werk. Jy kyk as  
940 hulle voorberei, jy kyk het hulle hulpmiddels. Jy kyk hoe  
941 hulle ... hulle voel jy kyk nou vir hom aan. Hulle is nie  
942 heeltemal gemaklik met iemand binne in die klas nie. So  
943 ek het altyd vir hulle gesê as ek daar inkom "uffrou ek is  
944 niks te doen met jou as administratiewe werk nie, of jy  
945 voorberei is, of jy onvoorberei nie" daarvoor het hulle

School culture LST as outsider "intruder" - watching what teacher does

LST "intruder" watching

Lack of Relational Agency in Schools

1040 taal probleme. Die kinders kan nie verstaan nie. So dis  
1041 'n groot probleem. Hoe los jy dit op? Daar's nie 'n  
1042 oplossing nie. Daar's nie 'n oplossing nie. Hulle kom nou  
1043 met dit, nou moet jy nou die kinders onttrek. Hou jou  
1044 woordjies en almal en goed ... die probleem is nie dit nie.

LST +1

cannot function

21

1101 D: Nee, jy kan nie so min kinders ... waaroor gaan dit oor  
1102 die getal of oor die hoeveelheid kinders ek kan help.  
1103 Want op die oomblik word almal gehelp. Almal word  
1104 gehelp deur hiernat toe kom. Maar wat bereik ek? Ek  
1105 bereik niks want dis te veel kinders. Dis te veel kinders.

Statistics - nie prakties uitvoerbaar not

LST +1 function



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## APPENDIX E

### STELLENBOSCH UNIVERSITY CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH

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XXXXXX 2019

Dear colleague

My name is Estelle Swart and I am a lecturer and researcher in the Faculty of Education. Charine de Ridder is a Master's student in Educational Psychology and busy with her research thesis. We would like to invite you to participate in a research project entitled ***Collaboration in inclusive education: learning support teachers' perspectives and practices***. You are approached as a possible participant because you are a learning support teacher with experience of inclusion and collaboration in the context of a full-service school. Your experiences are unique and may provide further knowledge and understanding into collaborative practices.

Please take some time to read the information presented here, which will explain the details of this project. You are welcome to ask us any questions about any part of this project that you do not fully understand. It is very important that you clearly understand what this research entails and how you could be involved. Also, your participation is **entirely voluntary** and you are free to decline to participate. If you say no, this will not affect you negatively in any way whatsoever. You are also free to withdraw from the study at any point, even if you do agree to take part.

Our project is part of a collaborative research project funded by the National Research Foundation (South Africa) and Fonds Wetenschappelijk Onderzoek (FWO) (Flanders, Belgium). This study has been approved by the **Research Ethics Committee (Humanities) at Stellenbosch University and the Ethics Advisory Committee for Social and Human Sciences of Antwerp University**. We have also obtained permission from your school management and the Western Cape Education Department to conduct the research at your school. This will be done according to the ethical guidelines and principles of the international Declaration of Helsinki, Health Professions Council of South Africa (HPCSA), and the Medical Research Council (MRC).

#### 1. WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF THE STUDY?

Full-service schools are described as "ordinary schools that are inclusive and welcoming of all learners in terms of their cultures, policies and practices. Such schools increase participation and reduce exclusion by providing support to all learners to develop their full potential irrespective of their background, culture, abilities or disabilities, their gender or race. These schools will be strengthened and orientated to address a full range of barriers to learning in an inclusive education setting to serve as flagship schools of full inclusivity" (SIAS, 2014). As a learning support teacher at Enkululekweni Primary, a full-service school, you probably have to find answers for a range of new challenges presenting in your classroom.

The purpose of this study is to explore how learning support teachers think on their feet in addressing the needs of all learners in their classrooms and schools, and how they collaborate with others in developing the support practices referred to. We are therefore interested in how you perceive your own experiences of inclusion and collaboration in including and welcoming all learners. Our purpose as researchers is to learn from your experiences in order to develop guidelines for teacher education and practice.

## 2. WHAT WILL BE ASKED OF YOU?

If you agree to take part in this study, you will be asked to carefully read this document and ask questions for further clarity. You will then be expected to sign the consent form once you fully understand the research procedure and agree to participate. Activities will include the following:

- *Participation in individual interviews* (45-60 minutes): Follow-up interviews may be necessary. Interviews will be arranged at a convenient time and location. These interviews will be audio recorded and transcribed for analysis.
- *Reflective discussions*: You will be asked to create two opportunities for observation, demonstrating your own collaboration in practice. These opportunities will serve as context for the reflective discussions after the activity. The discussions will be brief and descriptive and will focus on your unique knowledge and experience of collaboration in these spaces.
- *Reflective notes*: Prior to and throughout the research process you will be requested to write reflective notes on your experiences of collaboration. Reflective notes could be as long or as short as is convenient to you. The reflective notes should consist of as many thoughts and feelings as possible about your experiences of collaboration in implementing inclusion in your school. These reflections will be discussed in the second individual interview.

## 3. ARE THERE ANY RISKS AND DISCOMFORTS?

You may feel slight discomfort with the fact that you are taking part in a study focussing on your experiences of collaboration in a full-service school. You may, for example, recall frustrations or negative experiences, which may cause feelings you did not expect to surface. However, effort will be made to ensure that the interview location is private with low risk for distractions. If you wish to discuss the information above, or any other discomforts you may experience, please feel free to ask questions at any stage, should you wish to discuss the information above or experience any other discomforts. Moreover, if at any time during the process you find any of the procedures uncomfortable, you are free to skip a particular question or stop entirely. Should it become necessary, a debriefing session could also be arranged with one of the project collaborators.

## 4. WHAT ARE THE POSSIBLE BENEFITS?

This study may not benefit you directly, but reflection and discussions could be a positive learning experience. The research will contribute to knowledge about teaching and support practices in full-service schools in general, and more particularly the experiences of learning support teachers' collaborative experiences and practices in dealing with the diverse needs of learners in their classrooms. The information from this study may help to improve the understanding of collaboration in inclusive education. We aim to identify ways in which collaborative practices could be developed in schools via pre-service and in-service teacher education and support.

## 5. HOW WILL MY INFORMATION, CONFIDENTIALITY AND IDENTITY BE PROTECTED?

Any information you share with us during this study that could possibly identify you as a participant will be protected. Confidentiality will be maintained and your identity and any mention to other people's identities will be maintained with the use of pseudonyms. Information acquired in connection with this research will only be disclosed with your permission or as required by law. Transcriptions of interviews, as well as audio recordings of interviews, will only be accessed by the researchers and securely stored after completion of the research study. Hard copies of transcripts will be stored in a locked cabinet. The digital data will be stored safely on a password protected computer. Project data will be stored for five years and then destroyed.

The information collected will be presented as part of a Master's research project for Stellenbosch University. Also, the results of the larger project may be submitted for publication in peer reviewed journals. In both instances you will not be identified in any way.

## 6. PARTICIPATION AND WITHDRAWAL

As explained before, you can choose whether to be in this study or not. You may also refuse to answer any questions you are uncomfortable with and still remain in the study. You are free to

withdraw from participation in this study at any time. Should you withdraw, there will be no penalty, and any data that has been compiled will be destroyed and omitted from the study.

## **7. RESEARCHERS' CONTACT INFORMATION**

If you have any questions or concerns about this study, please feel free to contact me, Estelle Swart, at [XXXXXXXX](#), or Charine de Ridder, at XXXXXXXX.

**RIGHTS OF RESEARCH PARTICIPANTS:** You may withdraw your consent at any time and discontinue participation without penalty. You are not waiving any legal claims, rights, or remedies because of your participation in this research study. If you have questions regarding your rights as a research participant, contact Ms Maléne Fouché [mfouche@sun.ac.za; 021 808 4622] at the Division for Research Development.

You have the right to receive a copy of the Information and Consent form.

**If you are willing to participate in this study, please sign the attached Declaration of Consent and hand it to the researcher.**



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## APPENDIX F

### DECLARATION BY PARTICIPANT

By signing below, I ..... agree to take part in a research study entitled *Collaboration in inclusive education: learning support teachers' perspectives and practices*, conducted by Charine de Ridder.

I declare that:

- I have read the above information, which is written in a language that I am comfortable with.
- I have had a chance to ask questions and all my questions have been adequately answered.
- I understand that taking part in this study is voluntary and I have not been pressurised to take part.
- I may choose to leave the study at any time and will not be penalised or prejudiced in any way.
- I may be asked to leave the study before it has been completed, should the researcher feel it is in my best interests, or should I not follow the study plan, as agreed to.
- All issues related to privacy and the confidentiality and use of the information I provide have been explained to my satisfaction.

Signed on    /    / 2019

.....

**Signature of participant**

<b>SIGNATURE OF RESEARCHER</b>
--------------------------------

I declare that I have explained the information provided in this document to \_\_\_\_\_.  
[He/she] was encouraged and given ample time to ask me any questions. This conversation was conducted in English.

.....

**Signature of researcher**

/ / 2019

**Date**

**APPENDIX G****NOTICE OF APPROVAL**

## REC Humanities New Application Form

20 February 2018

Project number: 6248

Project Title: Collaboration in inclusive education: teachers' perspectives and practices

Dear Prof Regina Swart

Your REC Humanities New Application Form submitted on 30 January 2018 was reviewed and approved by the REC: Humanities.

Please note the following for your approved submission:

**Ethics approval period:**

Protocol approval date (Humanities)	Protocol expiration date (Humanities)
20 February 2018	19 February 2021

**GENERAL COMMENTS:**

Please take note of the General Investigator Responsibilities attached to this letter. You may commence with your research after complying fully with these guidelines.

**If the researcher deviates in any way from the proposal approved by the REC: Humanities, the researcher must notify the REC of these changes.**

Please use your SU project number (6248) on any documents or correspondence with the REC concerning your project.

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.

**FOR CONTINUATION OF PROJECTS AFTER REC APPROVAL PERIOD**

Please note that a progress report should be submitted to the Research Ethics Committee: Humanities before the approval period has expired if a continuation of ethics approval is required. The Committee will then consider the continuation of the project for a further year (if necessary)

**Included Documents:**

Document Type	File Name	Date	Version
Research Protocol/Proposal	13 NRF FWO Funding application Submission	30/01/2018	Submission
Recruitment material	3 Letter to principal	30/01/2018	1
Data collection tool	4 Semi structured interview guide principal	30/01/2018	1
Data collection tool	5 Semi structured interview guide 1 teachers	30/01/2018	1
Data collection tool	6 Reflective discussion1 and 2 teachers	30/01/2018	1
Data collection tool	7 Semi structured interview guide 2 teachers	30/01/2018	1
Data collection tool	6 Reflective discussion1 and 2 teachers	30/01/2018	1
Proof of permission	11 Permission [REDACTED] Inclusive Primary School	30/01/2018	1
Proof of permission	12 Permission [REDACTED] 2018	30/01/2018	1
Proof of permission	WCED Research form	30/01/2018	1
Default	14 Chair DESC	30/01/2018	1
Default	Letter REC Request to expedite application E Swart	30/01/2018	1

Research Protocol/Proposal	10 Workplan FWO_NRF	30/01/2018	1
Data collection tool	8 Reflective diary teachers	30/01/2018	1
Informed Consent Form	1 Consent form teachers	30/01/2018	1
Informed Consent Form	2 Consent form non participants during observation	30/01/2018	1
Informed Consent Form	9 Consent form principal	30/01/2018	1

If you have any questions or need further help, please contact the REC office at [cgraham@sun.ac.za](mailto:cgraham@sun.ac.za).

Sincerely,

Clarissa Graham

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

*National Health Research Ethics Committee (NHREC) registration number: REC-050411-032.*  
*The Research Ethics Committee: Humanities complies with the SA National Health Act No.61 2003 as it pertains to health research. In addition, this committee abides by the ethical norms and principles for research established by the Declaration of Helsinki (2013) and the Department of Health Guidelines for Ethical Research: Principles Structures and Processes (2<sup>nd</sup> Ed.) 2015. Annually a number of projects may be selected randomly for an external audit.*





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## APPENDIX H

### Original quotations

**P1:** So ons is nuwe poste wat geskep is en hier ingesit het, so ons word nie so maklik aanvaar in die skoolopset nie. En jy word gesien as 'n buitestaander. Jy is figuurlik hier maar jy's nie rêrig 'n deel van die skoolopset nie. (P1: 68-72)

**P4:** Hulle het vergadering vir beplanning, maar ek weet nie eens wanneer dit is eintlik nie, verstaan jy. (P4: 1426-1428)

**P3:** Moet die ELSEN<sup>14</sup> uitskuif. So nou op die einde dan kry ons die stoorkamers. (P3: 1113 -1114)

**P3:** Die kind en die skool *community* [moet] jy as ELSEN jy jou deel maak daarvan. So dan, dan lei dit tot goeie verhoudinge wat van die ander ELSSENS nie het nie. (P3: 1412-1415)

**P4:** Niemand het eens geweet wat in haar klas aangaan nie. So hy sê self hy weet nie eens wat sy vir hulle geleer het, of watse program sy gevolg het, of ... Hulle was glad nie geïntegreer in die groter prentjie nie. (P4: 272-275)

**P1:** ... as jy nie 'n sterk persoonlikheid het nie dan gaan jy nie oorleef in 'n skool soos hierdie skool nie. (P1: 53-55)

Jy moet jouself deel maak. (P1: 73)

**P4:** Vandat ek hier gekom het, het dit vir my gevoel asof daai spesiale klas kinders net 'n groot admin vir die skool was. (P4: 207-209)

---

<sup>14</sup> Education for Learners with Special Educational Needs

Al wat hulle saam gehou het, was saal. En dan was hulle nie eens tussen die ander kinders nie ... So eintlik was hulle nooit deel van die skool nie. (P4: 267-270)

**P1:** En kleurlingonderwysers en Afrikaans. Dit was die skool. Die skool het nou so verander dat hy is besig om heeltemal te verengels. (P1: 243-245)

Onse gemeenskap se kinders gaan nie hier skool nie. (P1: 234)

**P1:** By die skool word verwag dat ek die leerders help. Al die kinders met leerprobleme, leerstoornisse of leerhindernisse. (P1: 87- 89)

Hulle voel net as 'n kind geïdentifiseer is as 'n kind met 'n leerprobleem en die goed, dan is dit uit hulle hande uit. Verstaan jy? Dit is hoe hulle voel. Dit is uit hulle hande uit. Dit is "learning support" se probleem. (P1: 1235-1239)

**P1:** ... aan die begin van die jaar word ons verplig om binne in die Graad 1-klasse in te werk. Maar die oomblik as jy daar inkom dan is daar 'n ander atmosfeer. Want die onderwyser voel jy kom kyk hoe hulle werk. Jy kyk is hulle voorbereid, jy kyk het hulle hulpmiddels. Jy kyk hoe hulle ... hulle voel jy kyk nou vir hulle aan. (P1: 936-938)

**P4:** ... ek voel dat ... jy wel 'n baie belangrike adviserende rol speel. En dat onderwysers moet kan voel dat as hulle nie weet wat om te doen nie, moet hulle na jou toe kan kom en vir jou sê "Die kind doen dit en dit en dit ... ek het nou al dit en dit en dit probeer. Dit werk nie, kan jy my help?" Maar ek voel daar moet eintlik meer ruimte wees vir ons, as ons daai rol moet vul, om ... ek wil amper sê, meer oop periodes te hê, dat mens kan gaan insit in die klas. (P4: 1377-1385)

**P4:** ... die feit dat ek hier geplaas word deur die distrik, voel vir my asof ... hulle [die skool] kan nie eintlik vir my iets sê nie. Verstaan ... want ek kom van die distrik af. Verstaan, so ... ek wil amper sê alhoewel mens nog steeds posvlak 1 is, voel dit vir my ... jy's ten minste nog steeds so half 'n stappie voor, want jy's van buite af. (P4: 1561-1567)

**P1:** My rooster werk nooit uit nie. In die week [is] vir ons 'n boodskap gestuur, asseblief die onderwysers kla hulle wil weet hoeveel keer die kinders getrek word, want dit is ... dit word nie op 'n gereelde manier gedoen nie. Ek wil nie op 'n gereelde

manier want ek, as ek nou kom en ek haal 'n groepie, die halfuur is nog nie eens verby nie dan het ek nog nie eens iets rêrig gedoen nie want ek probeer nog net verduidelik en dan moet ek eers die klankies uitpak en ons weer sorteer ... Dan is die halfuur verby. Is verby. Nou voel ek, ek het dan nog niks gedoen nie. Dan gaan ek maar nog aan want ek wil iets gedoen het met die kinders. Nou gaan jy aan en dan neem ek maar die kinders en dan gaan haal ek maar net ander, maak nie saak wat die rooster sê nie. Die rooster is daar want dit moet daar wees. (P1: 1408-1425)

**P1:** Ons mag nie kinders sien sonder SNA's nie. Maar as ons moet wag vir daai SNA's dan gaan dit die einde van die jaar word. (P1: 1187-1189)

**P1:** Man dit is heeltemal net 'n klomp ekstra werk vir die mense. So ek moet maar dit dryf. (P1: 1211-1212)

Dit lyk vir my of ek nou meer in beheer is van die SIAS, ek moet sorg dat daai SIAS-dokumente by die onderwysers uitkom. Ek moet sorg dat hulle SNA's doen ... (P1: 1183-1187)

**P2:** I must assist the teacher. SIAS, they don't know how to refer you see. (P2: 499-500)

You're actually a SIAS socialist as well because that is the referral. (P2: 891-893)

**P3:** Ek word gesien as SIAS. (P3: 1298-1300)

**P4:** Ek [dryf dit]. (P4: 2124)

**P4:** Ek het letterlik net 'n dokument wat hulle vir my ge-*email* het en gesê het "Dit is die kontrak vir die onderwyserassistent, en dit is die *job description*". So ek het net 'n dokument gekry. En ek het maar daardeur gelees. En van daar af my ... my afleidings gemaak, en toe's ek net soos, "Oukei, hier gaat ons". Verstaan, ek weet eintlik nie eens ... niemand het met my kom sit en praat daaroor nie. Ek weet in elk geval nie hoe ek haar moet *manage* nie. Ek *manage* haar maar soos wat ek dink. Verstaan. (P4: 1929-1936)

Kyk die Dinsdag toe sy hier aangekom het, toe't ek haar hele dag met haar spandeer. Ek het haar die skool gewys, ek het vir haar verduidelik hoe werk alles,

waar teken jy in, waar teken jy uit. Hier's die kombuis, hiesô's dit. Hier's jou diensstaat, kom ons gaan gou deur dit. Wat verstaan jy nie? En waar staan dit in my *job description*? Verstaan, ek is nie 'n HR nie. (P4: 1961-1967)

**P1:** ... dat ons die kinders mos nou onttrek en nou bietjie hier kom sit want dan kry hulle [onderwysers] dan mos nou darem so bietjie van 'n breek om eerlikwaar te wees. (P1: 206-208)

**P4:** Waar ons nou *obviously* geleer het ... dit is nie noodwendig dat jy so is nie, jy het *actually* een of ander probleem en jy kort eintlik maar net aanpassings, dan kan jy dit *actually* ook doen. (P4: 334-337)

Eers wanneer ekke die dokumentasie nodig het dan word die ISP gedoen. Waar die ISP moet eintlik al die eerste stap wees. (P4: 631-632)

**P1:** Die onderwysers gaan eerstens sê die rol van die leerondersteuningonderwyser is om daai leerders wat sukkel, wat leerprobleme het en die kinders wat hulle nie kan bereik nie, moet ons kan bereik want ons moet vir hulle help. Ons moet vir hulle op 'n punt bring waar hulle kan leer, lees, skryf en al die ... dinge. (P1: 180-185)

**P1:** Hulle voel almal daai, want dis mos 'n hewige dokument (SIAS). En daar's sterk punte en daar's swak punte wat die kind doen en dis dit en dis dit en hulle voel hulle vul al hierdie goed in en dan word, vir die kinders wat swak is, en word die kinders getoets want hulle is mos nou swak en die goed, dan gaan die toets daarin ... die kind bly nog steeds in die klas. (P1: 1218-1224)

Dan wil hulle by my weet waarvoor vul hulle almal die goed in want niks gebeur met die kind nie. Die kind sit nog steeds in die klas. (P1:1226-1227)

**P1:** Sodra die kind hier kom en hy kom in die klaskamers en die onderwysers kan nie daai kind hanteer nie, hulle weet nie hoe om [met] die kind te werk nie, dan beteken dit ek moet die sielkundige laat inkom. (P1: 361-364)

Die onderwyser voel die kind hou vir hulle terug. (P1: 860)

**P3:** En my rol is om te fasiliteer en te *support* en dan ook uhm te sorg, te help sorg die skool dat die opleiding daar ... die *skills* ge-*develop* word en ... verstaan jy ... en om die onderwyser se rol te soort van *extend*. (P3: 434-438)

**P4:** ... die vlak van bevoegdheid ... van die leerondersteuner speel hier 'n groot rol, want jy moet weet wanneer moet ek help, wanneer moet ek nie help nie. En uhm ... nie almal beskik oor daai vermoë nie. (P4: 1397-1400)

**P3:** Mense het haar nie eintlik so ge-*embrace* nie want hulle het gevoel dat sy nie doen haar *job* wat sy *supposed* [was] om te gedoen het nie. (P3: 1876-1879)

**P1:** ... skool word daar verwag dat ek die kinders help. Al die kinders met leerprobleme of leerstoornisse of leerhindernisse. (P1: 87-89)

**P2:** We will discuss the learners and then they can come here. (P2: 113-114)  
That they can't read. They can't write. (P2: 126)

**P3:** As jy kyk na onse *job* se *roles* en *responsibilities* dan sê die *roles* en *responsibilities*, ons moet *workshops* *conduct*. Ons moet *demonstration lessons* gee. Ons moet *desperate cases* *share*, ons moet *coordinate* en *support* en *development* of *optimal functioning of the SBST*. Ons moet *advocate* vir *implementation of policy* ...

**P4:** ... jy wel 'n baie belangrike adviserende rol speel. En dat onderwysers moet kan voel dat as hulle nie weet wat om te doen nie, moet hulle na jou toe kan kom en vir jou sê "Die kind doen dit en dit en dit ... ek het nou al dit en dit en dit probeer. Dit werk nie, kan jy my help?" Maar ek voel daar moet eintlik meer ruimte wees vir ons, as ons daai rol moet vul, om ... ek wil amper sê, meer oop periodes te hê, dat mens kan gaan insit in die klas ... (P4: 1378-1385)

My uitdaging is om hulle ... is ... ek sal sê is hoofsaaklik om die hoofstroomklas se onderwyser se siening te verander, sodat hulle bereid sal wees om met daai kinders te werk. En ... te verstaan ... watse ... dat dit meer gaan oor die kind, as oor die kurrikulum. Want hulle fokus is so op kurrikulum en hulle fokus is so op akademiese prestasie, dat die KIND gaan verlore. Verstaan, en dat ... dat mens hulle siening kan verander na ... probeer by die kind uitkom en hulle manier van klasgee. (P4: 1316-1324)

**P1:** ... ons moet 'n stem [hê] ... (P1: 163)

Ons moet die hele tyd aanvaar, en aanvaar, en aanvaar en aanvaar maar ons het nie 'n stem om te praat, dit werk nie, nie dit nie. Goed word net heeltyd op ons af neergesit, en neergesit. (P1: 1031-1034)

Niemand wil veg of baklei vir ons op grondvlak nie. (P: 1128-1129)

**P4:** Wat vir my ideaal sou gewees het, is as ekke met die HOD kon praat, en die HOD gaan sê vir hulle. (P4: 2048-2050)

Ek kan hulle nie aanspreek nie. (P4: 2544)

**P3:** Ek probeer dinge vir hulle vergemaklik. (P3: 1349 – 1350)

**P1:** “Ek weet nie wat om met die kinders te doen wat sukkel in my klas nie. Het jy nie vir my ... miskien ... hulpbronne, aktiwiteite en sulke goed nie?” Wat hulle eintlik meer van my verwag, is om vir hulle inligting en afdrucke in werk te gee wat hulle kan gebruik as intervensie en die goed. Want intervensie is 'n ander groot probleem. (P1: 195-203)

**P1:** ... onderwysers is nie skaam om te vra nie. As hulle hulp nodig het of as hulle hulpmiddels nodig het nie. Maar hulle is soms baie traag wanneer dit kom by werkswinkels of wanneer ek inligting wil oordra of, jy weet, want hulle hou nie van naskool bly nie en sulke goed. (P1: 215-216)

**P3:** ... kyk ons nuwe *approach* is nou om 'n ... ons stel ons *workshops* in gemeenskap oop. (P3: 294-296)

**P4:** ... een persoon is verantwoordelik vir die wiskunde en een persoon is verantwoordelik vir die taal. (P4: 365-366)

Een persoon doen dit op hulle tyd en *pass it along* ... as dit klaar is. Verstaan? So daar is nie eintlik 'n geleentheid vir my om êrens in te sit, om te sê: “O oukei, maar doen dit so, doen dit so, of doen dit so nie ...” (P4: 1431-1435)

**P1:** Ja rêrig, ons werk verby mekaar. Ons werk verby mekaar ... (P1: 1073-1074)

As daar kinders is wat sielkundige behoeftes het dan moet ons maar die sielkundige inroep en hy kom toets maar en doen sy ding. Dis mos maar basies waarom dit gaan. (P1: 1478-1480)

**P3:** Daar's vooruitgang uhm *technological-wise* het ... is die skool nou op daai wat die skool vir elke onderwyser in die klas 'n *screen-TV* of 'n *interactive* bord gesit het. (P3: 442-444)

Daai was alles deur *collaboration* met besighede. (P3: 448-449)

**P3:** ... wanneer ek nou kan gaan vir *collaborative teaching* want dit het gewerk by 'n ander juffrou, maar daai juffrou wou nie eintlik nie ... sy was altyd te slim. (P3: 1665-1667)

**P4:** [Wil hulle hê julle moet in hulle klas inkom?] Glad nie. GLAD NIE. (P4: 1834-1835)

**P1:** Die onderwysers is nie regtig oop vir so iets nie. (P1: 935)

**P1:** ... nou verplig hulle vir jou *moderate to high*, en hulle verplig jou om met 'n groep van tien tot vyftien kinders te werk terwyl die onderwysers reeds met tien tot vyftien kinders in hulle groepe werk en hulle kry niks reg nie. (P1: 867-871)

**P1:** Sodra die kind hier kom en hy kom in die klaskamers en die onderwysers kan nie daai kind hanteer nie, hulle weet nie hoe om met die kind te werk nie dan beteken dit ek moet die sielkundige laat inkom. Die kind word getoets en daar word daar gesê oukei die kind het nie die vermoë om in 'n hoofstroomklas te sit nie want sy IK is mos nou laag en sy IK is dit. Dit weet ons want hy is mos nou hier. Sy IK is laag nou's die toetse daar, daar moet aansoek gedoen word vir X. Hy kan nie in 'n hoofstroom wees nie. Ek sit met honderd verslae daar van kinders want dis mos 'n voldiens ... wat se IK so laag is dat hulle gaan net nie normaal kan funksioneer in 'n hoofstroomklas nie. Hulle kan nie, maar daar is nie plek in die spesiale skool nie. So wat gebeur met daai verslae wat die sielkundiges doen? Ek moet dit op lêer sit. Dit is waar dit gaan, want daar was nie plek vir hom in 'n spesiale skool nou kom hy hier, nou moet ek aansoek doen vir hom vir plek in spesiale skool. (P1: 361-379)

**P4:** Of die kind kom na my toe, of is op medikasie, of die kind moet verwys word vir terapie. Of 'n evaluasie. Dit is die drie opsies. Daar is nie 'n ander opsie nie. As daai drie opsies klaar uitgewerk is, dan is hulle volgende vraag: "Oukei watse plasing? Waar kan die kind geplaas word?" So dit gaan weer uit. (P4: 2154-2159)

Baie van die onderwysers sê hulle wil nie vir die ouers laat voel ... dat hulle doen oefening of terapeutiese goed in die klas nie, of selfs by my nie. Want dan gaan hulle nie die kind terapeut toe vat nie. Want dan voel hulle die kind kry mos nou klaar in die klas, so hoekom moet hulle 'n ekstra R100 gaan betaal om die kind by 'n spraakterapeut of arbeidsterapeut te kry? (P4: 1762-1768)

**P4:** Ek voel ook daar moet meer sessies wees, waar jy kan saam met hulle sit met lesbeplanning. En saam met hulle sit en sê: "O ek sien die aktiwiteit wat julle wil doen, maar kom ons maak dit so en so ... maak hierdie 'n aktiwiteit, 'n speletjie, en maak hierdie ding so 'n groepaktiwiteit en differensieer hier bietjie deur dit te"... Verstaan, dat mens saam met hulle werk. (P4: 1403-1409)

Die ander probleem, nie hulle almal [onderwysers] kom na my toe nie. Want ek sal sê, laat weet my wanneer jy 'n tydjie het dan sal ek saam met jou sit om dit ... En dan kom hulle net nooit terug na my toe nie. (P4: 2111-2114)

**P1:** Wat anders kan ons in plek sit om ons leerders te akkommodeer? (P1: 1499-1500)

**P1:** So dan word, hoe sê 'n mens, 'n algemene ondersteuning gegee. Hulle voel dit en jy moet nou algemene gee. Wat ek voel ek wil direk met die kind se probleem werk. P(1, 995-998)

**P1:** Nou kom hulle hier, dan vertel ek vir hulle van die maan wat nou daar skyn dan gee ek nou my eie woorde. Die maan skyn in die nag en die son skyn in die dag en die son is warm met eie hoëfrekwensie-woorde wat ek nou gee. Die kind kan nie daai baasraak nie, ek sukkel. Nou kom hy hier met ander woorde, hy kan ook nie dit baasraak nie, hy sukkel. So wat doen daai kind? Hy voer net heeltemal 'n sukkelbestaan en hy raak net niks, niks nie. Hoe sal hy raak, hy kry dit nie ook onder die knie nie. (P1: 1004-1012)



Nie een van die twee kry hy onder die knie nie. En as daai juffrou vir my sê juffrou ons is besig met die bladsy, van die bladsy tot daar en dit is die hoofwoord, die kind kan nie die woorde lees of spel nie, ons skryf Vrydag 'n speltoetsie oor die woorde, dan kan ek mos nou daai woorde vat en ons sit hier en ons kan dit opbreek, ons kan dit bou ons kan dit, dit, ons kan 'n sinnetjie maak om te verstaan wat, as daai kind teruggaan in die werk in dan is hy alweer by daai kinders ... (P1: 1014-1022)

**P3:** Daai kind word Graad R nou al geïdentifiseer en ek het *meetings* met hulle partykeer om vir hulle net so bietjie ... dan vra juffrou X my, "X kan jy seblief net by die Graad R praat om vir hulle te kyk hoe vêr is hulle met die kurrikulum", dan gaan ek met die *intervensie* dan gaan praat ek met die Graad 1 en 2 en ... kyk juffrou X het Graad 1 en 2 en 3. En ons sien dat daai is want hulle wil hê ons moet die Graad R's nou al begin om daai kinders te identifiseer. (P3: 1229-1237)

**P1:** Jy moet jouself oplei. Jy kan nie wag vir opleiding nie. (P1: 1225-1226)

So jy moet bereid wees om, as die ding nie werk nie om iets anders te probeer. (P1: 1401-1402)

**P3:** As ELSEN self werk jy nie meer soos jy gewerk het voorheen nie en jy is ook nie meer so effektief soos jy voorheen gewees het nie. Jy moet nou meer kreatief wees, jou ander *resources* ook gebruik [om] daai resultate te kry. (P3: 1172-1176)

**P1:** Ek kan maar praat, niemand steur vir hulle daaraan nie. (P1: 537-538)

**P1:** Jy moet bereid wees as die ding nie werk nie om iets anders te probeer. (P1: 1401-1402)

**P3:** So jy moet nou meer uhm ... jou visie moet nou insluit om maniere te vind wat kreatief is om daai kinders se potensiaal effektief te ontwikkel. (P3: 1133-1134)

**P4:** Ek gaan nou tyd vat om my deur my aksies te *validate*. (P4: 1588)

**P1:** Nou die dag se SBST *meeting* toe ek die mense so luister, toe dink ek by myself, "Gaan ek ooit dit regkry?" (P1: 2418-2419)

**P1:** Daar word verwys, van die OBOS<sup>15</sup> af, gaan na X toe, X is 'n voldiensskool. Want die kinders sukkel in gewone skole want waar die onderwysers nie vir hulle kan help nie en wat ook al nie, dan doen hulle mos nou buitekant toe aansoek na spesiale skole, dan kry hulle nie plek by spesiale skole nie en dan moet hulle na 'n voldiensskool toe gaan. (P1: 333-339)

**P1:** Die onderwysers weet dat dit 'n voldiensskool is maar ek dink nie hulle weet regtig hoe 'n voldiensskool moet funksioneer nie en soos ek sê hulle is stram vir verandering. In 'n voldiensskool ... al wat ons skool 'n voldiensskool maak op die oomblik is ons aanvaar enige leerder. Ons kan hulle nie wegwys nie. (P1: 291-296)

**P4:** Hier's van ons onderwysers wat nie eens weet wat 'n voldiensskool is nie. Die skool adverteer homself ook nie as 'n voldiensskool nie. (P4: 179-181)

Hierdie kinders [voorheen in hulpbronklasse] moet eintlik nou in hoofstroom geakkommodeer word, voel ek dat die skool self sien nie kans daarvoor nie. En die ouers weet nie dat die kinders eintlik in hoofstroom geakkommodeer moet word nie, maar as hulle gaan weet, dan gaan hulle hulle kinders inskryf. (P4 195-199)

**P4:** En ons is nie gereed daarvoor nie. (P1: 201)

**P4:** Verstaan, en dat ... dat mens hulle siening kan verander na ... probeer by die kind uitkom en hulle manier van klasgee. Ek het nou die dag op my rug geval ... omtrent ... toe ek hoor dat hier's klomp klasse in Grondslagfase wat glad nie in groepe werk nie. Doen net klassikaal ... soos hoe is dit moontlik jy net klassikaal kan onderrig gee? Dis mos nie moontlik nie. Dan kan ... dis onmoontlik dat jou ... elke liewe kind in jou klas presies dieselfde leer en dat jy so arrogant is om te dink dat ... daai een sessie wat jy nou gehad met jou hele klas, almal bereik het. (P4, 1323-1332).

**P4:** Dan het ons ... ons het 'n hele paar kinders ... uhm ... wat noem mens dit ... *mildly cognitively impaired* as ek dit so kan ... Wat nog hier rondhang, wat mos nou nie plek gekry het by spesiale skole nie ... So, uhm ... ons het 'n hele paar van hulle, maar hulle moet mos nou eintlik geakkommodeer word in die skool. Meeste van hulle

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<sup>15</sup> OBOS stands for "Onderwys Bestuur en Ondersteuning Sentrum".

kom na my toe, maar dit is *obviously* nie genoeg nie. Uhm, en ek voel hulle *float* eintlik maar net. (P4: 1677-1683)

**P1:** Die kind word eerste in die skool geplaas voordat die skool reg is vir die kind. En dis die groot probleem. 'n Groot probleem! (P1: 729-731)

**P4:** Want X het 'n wonderlike uitslag gekry vir hulle sistemiese toetse en hulle was nou die dag by die OBOS, om 'n *presentation* te gaan gee oor hoe doen jy die sistemiese toetse, of hoe kry jy jou kinders gereed vir die sistemiese toetse ... Dan's ek soos, "Waarmee is ons nou eintlik besig hierso?" En van daai kinders is by my, en ek weet vir 'n feit hulle kan nie daai goed, as jy dit ... as jy net ietsie gaan verander, dan gaan hulle nie weet wat om te doen nie. (P4: 451-458)

**P1:** *Its got to come down.* Iemand van bo moet sê: "Sorry julle, dit is hoe dit moet wees." (P1: 509-510)

**P4:** Ek moet nou nog net die ... die skoolhoof ook *on board* kry en ek's ... Dis nie dat hy ... dat hy nie positief is teenoor SBST nie. Hy weet net nie wat daar aangaan nie. (P4: 2593-2595)

Hy ... hy ... alles is maar net reg. "Gaan maar net aan, juffrou." (P4: 2597)

**P1:** Maar nou op 'n Dinsdag en op 'n Woensdag is dit mos SBST maar dit is ook die twee dae wat sportafrigting en sportwedstryde en goed, en mense is ingedeel by sport en goed, dan vra die mense vir jou, waar moet hulle daar wees? Want as sport stilstaan dan is daar weer 'n probleem. (P1: 1340-1345)

**P4:** Die siening oor die SBST, en die siening oor leerondersteuning ... hy [adjunkhoof] maak dit 'n prioriteit. (P4: 2587-2589)

**P4:** Ons het eintlik 'n groot groep ouers wat nie baie ... hoe kan mens sê ... toeganklik of ... aanvaarbaar is teenoor kinders met sulke gestremdhede nie, hulle voel hulle kinders word benadeel. (P4: 246-249)

**P4:** En dat ek nuut by die skool is, met so baie onderwysers wat al jare lank hier is. Verstaan? So ek dink hulle voel, nee maar, hulle weet hoe dinge werk hier, en hulle's nou al jare lank hier. Ek kan nie nou net inkom en sê nie. (P4: 1574-1577)

Ek sal sê die ouer mense beïnvloed die jonger mense. Want die ouer mense is in hoofposisies ... (P4: 1334-1336)

En hulle sê vir die ander hoe dit gedoen word. En nou daai een is jonk en nou *obviously* bietjie *insecure* en voel hulle moet hulle plek vind. So hulle wil mos inpas en saam met die groep werk. (P4: 1338-1341)

**P1:** En die onderwysers is 'n grootmens en het die mag in die hand. As 'n onderwyser besluit het, kyk vir jou skryf ek vandag af, ek het nie lus vir jou nie, jy verstaan nie, en die nie, dan gaan hy vir jou afskryf. En daai kind het geen regte nie. (P1: 686-690)