UNIVERSITY *of the*
WESTERN CAPE

THE ROLE OF THE SCHOOL-BASED SUPPORT TEAM (SBST) IN TWO PRIMARY SCHOOLS IN THE CAPE METROPOLE

By CAROLINE AGULHAS
Student Number: 2637643

A thesis submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of MASTERS OF EDUCATION (M. Ed)

In the Faculty of Education, in the Department of Educational Psychology at the University of the Western Cape

SUPERVISOR: Professor T. MOODLEY

DECLARATION

I, Caroline Agulhas, Student Number**: 2637643**, declare that the thesis entitled *The role of the School-Based Support Teams in providing support at two primary schools in the Cape Metropole* is my own work and that all the sources I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by complete references.

C. AGULHAS

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SIGNATURE DATE

PROFESSOR T. MOODLEY (SUPERVISOR)

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SIGNATURE DATE

DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to my late mom and dad, Abraham and Doreen Meyer.
I AM BECAUSE YOU WERE.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

It is with much gratitude that I wish to acknowledge the following people:

- I thank **GOD** for His grace and mercy and for giving me courage, endurance and strength to complete this journey. He has been faithful. I never would have made it without MY HEAVENLY FATHER.

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ABSTRACT

The primary South African policy document on Inclusive Education, Education White Paper 6 (EWP 6) (DoE, 2001), states that all children can learn, and they should be supported and assured of equal and equitable education. EWP 6 further states that all educational systems should be transformed to accommodate all learners in mainstream schools and proposes the establishment of support teams at school level. The main function of the School-based Support Teams (SBSTs) in all schools is to assist teachers to effectively provide support to all learners experiencing learning barriers.

This qualitative research study explored the role of the School-based support team (SBST) in two primary schools in the Cape Metropole. Purposive sampling was used and the sample size was nine participants. Data was collected via questionnaires and focus group interviews. Under investigation was the knowledge and skills of the SBST members, the level of training of these team members and the support provided by the District-based Support Team (DBST).

Data was collected by using semi–structured questionnaires and focus-group interviews. The data was analysed and categorised according to a Thematic Analysis (TA) method. The study's findings indicate that both SBST teams perceived that they were functioning well and had a good understanding of inclusive education and how it ought to be implemented. However, medical model conceptions were still evident in the responses of some participants. The study also found that the SBSTs mostly functioned in line with EWP 6 policy guidelines and supported learners, teachers and parents. However, one of the schools engaged more with parents, the community and non-governmental organisations, than to the other; thus, suggesting that inclusive education was implemented to a greater extent in that school when compared to the other. Challenges reported included: inadequate teacher (including SBST members) knowledge and skills to effectively address barriers to learning, inadequate specialist support, heavy demands on the SBST members amidst all their other functions at school, the laborious administration involved in sourcing support for learners with barriers, unsatisfactory parental involvement in their children's schooling, inadequate support from the district-based support team and insufficient material and human resources in effectively implementing inclusive education at one of the schools.

CONTENT

LIST OF ACRONYMS

APA	American Psychiatric Association
CSTL	Care and support for Teaching am\nd Learning
DBE	Department of Basic Education
DoE	Department of Education
DBST	District Based Support Team
EFA	Education for All
EWP 6	Education White Paper 6
FSS	Full-Service School
HODs	Head of Departments
IE	Inclusive Education
ISP	Individualised Support Programme
LoLT	Language of Learning and Teaching
LSTs	Learning Support Teachers
NGOs	Non-Governmental Organisations
SBST	School Based Support Teams (SBST)
SMT	School Management Team
SNA	Special Needs Assessment
SNE	Special Needs Education
SSRCS	Special Schools as Resource Centers
SIAS	Screening, Identification, Assessment Strategy
TA	Thematic Analysis
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation
WCED	Western Cape Education Department

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CHAPTER 1
OVERVIEW OF THE STUDY

1.1 INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

On 27 April 1994 South Africa held its first non-racial, democratic elections and the newly-elected government set out to eradicate the discriminatory policies of the previous regime and their system of apartheid. The democratically elected government introduced new policies in all spheres of society, and set out to inaugurate a society that was built on democratic values such as equality, liberty, human rights and social justice.

A new historical era for all South Africans; and most importantly for school education (Grades 1-12), was set in motion. The new, democratic government had the gigantic task of uniting 18 different education departments under the auspices of one National Education Department (DoE, 2009). According to the DoE (2009) this extreme act was taken to rebuild a divided nation, promote the country's new Constitution (1996) and establish and promote a national identity.

The provision of equal rights to all citizens is one of the key commitments of the Constitution. According to Section 9 (3) of the Constitution of the Republic South Africa (1996:1247): "The state may not unfairly discriminate directly or indirectly against anyone on one or more grounds including race, gender, sex, pregnancy, marital status, ethnic or social origin, colour, sexual orientation, age, disability, religion, conscience, belief, culture, language and birth."

Muthukrishna and Schoeman (2000) assert that this key commitment brought about educational policies that supported the principles articulated in the Constitution which include, education as a basic human right, equity and redress, the right of choice, quality education for all, curriculum entitlement, and the rights of parents.

Lomofsky and Lazarus (2001) posit that the previous apartheid government of South Africa enforced separate education for the different race groups in the general education system prior to 1994. This prompted discriminatory practices that marginalised the majority from access to quality education and resulted in the duplication of functions, responsibilities and services and vast disparities in per capita

funding between the different education departments. Each department of education had a dual system where learners with special educational needs were placed in special schools, and the ostensible “normal learners” in mainstream schools. Not all learners with special educational needs were accommodated or made provision for by the 18 educational departments of education. The black communities were severely marginalised and thus many were ‘mainstreamed by default’ (Lomofsky & Lazarus, 2001; Stofile, 2008).

Education White Paper 6: Special Needs Education (EWP 6) was approved by Cabinet in 2001 and published in the same year. The Department of Education (DoE) then set out to implement EWP 6 (DoE, 2001). EWP 6 delineates how the educational system should be transformed to accommodate diverse learning needs and establish a caring and humane society (DoE, 2001). The government's intervention strategy that aimed to ensure that learners who experience barriers to learning and development had access to quality education is also outlined in this policy. It presented a vision which recognised the Constitutional rights of all South African children to non-discriminatory, quality education and human dignity. Inclusive education is described in EWP 6 as acknowledging “that all children and youth can learn and need support” (DoE, 2001:6). Francis and Muthukrishna (2004) assert that EWP 6 proposes the need for change in the general education system to ensure that learners experiencing barriers to learning can be identified early, and that appropriate support is provided to these learners. Internationally, an important step towards inclusion in education and schooling was the Salamanca Statement which emanated from World Conference on Special Needs Education, held in Salamanca, Spain in 1994. According to the Salamanca Statement:

> Schools should accommodate all children regardless of their physical, intellectual, social, emotional, linguistic or other conditions. This should include disabled and gifted children, street and working children from remote or nomadic populations, children from linguistic, ethnic or cultural minorities and children from other disadvantaged or marginalised areas or groups (UNESCO, 1994:6).

According to EWP 6 (DoE, 2001), three specific levels of support are needed for learners who experience barriers to learning, namely,

a) The provincial and national Departments of Education should develop knowledge and skills to understand and confront the challenges involved in addressing barriers to learning and should actively encourage participation for the purpose of effective teaching and learning;
b) The purpose of the District Based Support Team (DBST) is to integrate all relevant support providers in the School-Based Support Team (SBST) and should assess and facilitate the utilisation of community resources in addressing local needs and
c) It is the responsibility of the SBSTs to identify and initiate support within schools.

According to Gaffney (2015) SBSTs consist of a small group of regular members, sometimes including the principal of the school. The SBSTshould primarily be comprised of teachers in the school, but the team may also include parents, learners and other community members (Engelbrecht & Green, 2011). This team should provide support through extended consultation on possible classroom strategies. The team may also become a hub for case management, referrals and resource decisions (DoE, 2009). According to Lomofsky and Lazarus (2001), it is the responsibility of SBST members to work collaboratively to address and reduce barriers to learning and development within their schools.

1.2 MOTIVATION FOR THE STUDY

I am interested in the experiences of SBST members with regard to their roles in schools as an important tier of support within the IE framework of schooling in South Africa.

Various and far reaching changes, however well intentioned, may have had the unintended consequence of overwhelming schools and teachers in their accountability of implementing a new and progressive educational system, capable of meeting all learners' diverse and unique needs. This transformation included the revolutionary restructuring of the provincial departments of education and the review of the Revised National Curriculum Statements to the Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statements (DBE, 2012). All these changes were made in an attempt by the DBE to promote improved quality in education. The numerous curriculum changes may have impacted negatively on all learners, but especially on those who experienced barriers to learning

(Mnuguni, 2017). According to the DoE (1997) one of the gravest barriers to learning and development was the inflexible nature of the curriculum and this prevented it from meeting the diverse needs of learners. When learners are unable to access the curriculum, successful learning cannot take place.

As a member of the SBST at my previous school from 1991 to 2007, I experienced first-hand the many organisational problems and difficulties relating to the restructuring process. These included curriculum policy changes and the participation in newly established support structures. In my daily interactions with my friends, who are mainly teachers, parents and my colleagues, I have come to realise that there are many differences and inconsistencies in the ways schools implemented EWP 6.

In January 2008, I was appointed as a Head of Department at a former Model-C school. Naidoo (2005) asserts that a Model C school is a state-aided school run by the principal and management committee who also had the power to appoint teachers, decide on admission policies and set fees. I represented the School Management Team (SMT) on the SBST and part of my responsibilities was to support teachers in the implementation of the curriculum and several educational policies, including the Inclusive Education Policy. I have experienced first-hand that there are many similarities and differences in the functioning of the SBST in a previously-disadvantaged school, and in an ex-Model C school. In my personal experience with all colleagues and other teachers, I have come to realise that my colleagues at both schools where I have taught felt that they were not equipped, trained or supported to include all learners, regardless of their learning barriers. The two above-mentioned teams certainly experienced the same frustrations with the Policy on Screening, Identification, Assessment and Support (SIAS) (DBE, 2014) to benefit learners, the actual functioning of support structures and their own feelings of inadequacy with regard to their abilities, knowledge and skills. This experience piqued my interest in understanding other teachers' perceptions and experiences of the implementation of IE. I was even more intrigued by research reports that asserted that inclusion had been comparatively successful in some schools, and less so in others. According to some of these reports, the implementation process eventually ended in successes, but also in failures. (DoE, 2002; Makoelle, 2012; Ngcobo & Muthukrishna, 2011; Stofile, 2008).

1.3 THE RESEARCH PROBLEM

IE has progressively been implemented in line with polices such as EWP 6 and SIAS (DoE, 2001; DBE, 2014). Yet research suggests that there is a gap between policy and practice. According to Donohue and Bornman (2014) EWP 6 is not specific or detailed enough as it only provides broad guidelines. These strategies do not provide comprehensive direction on how to effectively implement the policy in practice. I therefore decided to focus my study on exploring the experiences of SBSTs at two different schools with two different socio-political histories. Hopefully, this study provides an accurate and a deeper understanding of the functions of SBSTs and enhances knowledge with regards to the practice of IE.

I wished to investigate the experiences of the teachers and the team members in the above-mentioned two schools as there may have been similarities and differences in the barriers to learning that their learners have experienced or the challenges and successes that the SBST members of the different institutions may have experienced. I endeavoured to compare the challenges they faced with regards to their intended roles according to SIAS and their experiences thereof. Under investigation was how they experienced working within the inclusive framework, and their experiences of collaboration with other components in the system. I also compared and contrasted their available economic and human resources, and the knowledge, skills and motivational commitment of these human resources.

According to the DoE (1997; 2001; 2005), the key barriers to learning found in the education system include: attitudes of the teachers, learners and other relevant stakeholders, socio-economic conditions, inflexible curriculum, language skills and communication, inaccessible and unsafe environments, lack of parental recognition and involvement, inappropriate and inadequate provision of support services, disability and the lack of human resource development strategies. This included but was not limited to the investigation of their challenges and successes in implementation of IE.

Research questions:

My study attempted to answer the following research questions:

- What does inclusive education (IE) mean to members of the SBST?
- What are their roles and how do they implement IE in their schools?
- What challenges do they experience in implementing IE?
- What successes have they achieved in implementing IE?

1.4 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Bronfenbrenner's eco-systemic framework was adopted in order to understand the different aspects that influence the implementation of IE in mainstream primary schools (Geldenhuys & Wevers, 2013). How learners develop is influenced by various features and this ecological model seeks to explain the systemic influences on a learner's development. The development of a learner revolves around composite, everyday activities which involves many kinds of change, for example, changing from an exclusive to an Inclusive Education system (Malahlela, 2017). Bronfenbrenner identified five sub-systems, namely, the *microsystem* (environment), the *mesosystem* (two or more settings in which the learner interacts), the *exosystem* (environment in which the learner is not an active participant, but is affected by what occurring in the setting), the *macrosystem* (belief systems, policies, ideology, etc.) and the *chronosystem* (changes that occur over time in any one of the systems). (UKEssays, 2018).

1.5 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

1.5.1 Research paradigm

My research was aimed at determining the functioning of the SBST of two schools in the Cape Town metropole. For the purpose of this study, I adopted the interpretive/constructivist paradigm. The interpretive paradigm is also known as the constructivism paradigm because it explains what the individual understands. Two people can interpret events differently and the interpretive approach provides an

explanation for this. This paradigm is used by researchers who want to make meaning of human behaviour and who want to understand the different opinions of people (Kivunja & Kuyini, 2017). A detailed description of the paradigm used in my study is presented in Chapter 3.

1.5.2 Research approach

In order to understand the various experiences, and the challenges (if any) faced by the SBSTs in the implementation of IE, I adopted the qualitative approach. In this qualitative research I investigated how the participants interpret and find meaning in their experiences in order to understand their social reality. (Mohajan, 2018). The qualitative approach utilises different data collection methods such as interviews, diaries, journals, classroom observations and immersions as well as open-ended questionnaires (Zohrabi, 2013). The qualitative approach investigates and seeks to provide an explanation for the contextual behaviour of a particular social phenomenon, that is, the SBSTs under investigation in this study (Mohajan, 2018). Chapter 3 provides a detailed description of the research approach used in this study.

1.5.3 Research design

A phenomenological research design and methodology was used to realise the purpose of this study based on the literature review. According to Creswell (2013) phenomenology is an approach to qualitative research that focuses on the commonality of a lived experience within a specific group. The primary goal of the phenomenological approach is to ultimately arrive at a more insightful understanding of the nature of a particular phenomenon (Creswell, 2013). Chapter 3 provides a detailed description of the research design used in my study.

1.6 DATA COLLECTION METHODS

The research population in this study were all SBST members of the two teams under investigation. Purposive sampling, which is a method that belongs to the category of non-probability sampling techniques was used to develop the sample for this research. According Freeman, de Marrais, Preissle, Roulsont, and St. Pierre (2007) in this method, sample members are selected according to their relationships, knowledge and

expertise of a research subject. All the participants or interviewees in this study were members of the SBSTs at two schools in the Cape Town Metropole as follows: (1) the members of the SBST of a previously-disadvantaged school and (2) the members of the SBST of an ex-Model C school.

Questionnaires and focus group interviews were used to collect data in this study. The interviews took place in venues identified by the management team of the respective schools. Interviews are widely used in qualitative studies since they have the potential of eliciting rich information from participants (Patton, 2002). In order to triangulate and also to add richness and depth to the research inquiry (Heale & Forbes, 2013), a semi-structured questionnaire was designed and the members of the SBST were asked to complete it.

A pilot study was conducted prior to data collection, to determine the feasibility of the items in the data collection instruments and to identify any logistical or conceptual challenges. These challenges were addressed prior to the actual study. The researcher was able to use the outcome of the pilot study to streamline the research, as the study design can be changed easily according to the researcher's specific goals (Nakazawa, (2012). A detailed description of the data collection measures adopted in this study is presented in Chapter 3.

1.7 DATA ANALYSIS

The qualitative data was analysed using Thematic Analysis (TA). According to Braun and Clarke (2012), TA is an increasingly popular method of qualitative data analysis and is used to systematically identify, organise and offer insight into patterns of meaning (themes) across a dataset. This allows the researcher to see and succeed in understanding common or shared meanings and experiences. It is thus not the focus of TA to identify unique and unusual meanings and experiences found only within a single data item. TA is a way of identifying what is common to the way a topic is talked or written about, and of making sense of those commonalities. (Braun & Clarke, 2012)

As the researcher I familiarised myself with the data by reading and re-reading the data and listening to audio-recorded data (Braun & Clarke, 2006). According to Braun and

Clarke (2006), coding is not simply a method of data reduction but an analytic process. Systematic and rigorous coding builds solid foundations for theme identification. Coding the data is where the interpretive analysis of the data takes place, by writing notes on the texts to identify the collated data. Chapter 3 includes a detailed description of the data analysis methods adopted in this study.

1.8 TRUSTWORTHINESS OF THE DATA

Lincoln and Guba (1985) state that trustworthiness of a study is essential to assessing the significance of the research enquiry and necessitates establishing:

- Dependability – proving that the results are reconcilable, reliable and consistent
- Credibility – showing that the results are plausible and that the participants (to some extent) have credence in the findings
- Transferability – evidence that the findings are applicable in other contexts
- Confirmability – to what extent the results of a study are influenced by the participants and not researcher prejudice; a degree of impartiality on the part of the researcher

I used a series of techniques as described by Lincoln and Guba (1985) that can be used to conduct qualitative research. These techniques included establishing credibility, prolonged engagement, persistent observation, triangulation, peer debriefing, member-checking as well as techniques advised for establishing transferability, dependability, confirmability, triangulation and reflexivity. How trustworthiness of the data in this study was achieved, is presented in Chapter 3.

1.9 RESEARCH ETHICS

I requested permission to conduct the research study from the University of the Western Cape's (UWC's) Research Ethics Committee. Permission to conduct the research in the two schools was requested from the Western Cape Education Department (WCED). I also acquired permission from the principals of the identified schools to conduct the research at their institutions. A detailed description of the ethical considerations and measures taken in this study is included in Chapter 3.

1.10 CONCLUSION

This chapter provided the background to the thesis, the aim of the study, the research questions and the summary of the research methods used in the study. The next chapter focuses on the literature relevant to the study.

CHAPTER 2
LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 INTRODUCTION AND ORIENTATION TO THE CHAPTER

This chapter discusses and analyses the literature relevant to the study which is primarily about support structures within an Inclusive Education (IE) context internationally, and at school level in South Africa, with specific reference to School Based Support Teams (SBSTs) and the types of learning support provided in schools. The current study focuses on the role of the School-based support team (SBST) in two primary schools in the Cape Metropole within an inclusive education context and Bronfenbrenner's ecological framework which is the theoretical framework adopted for this study. SBSTs in South African public schools are support structures in line with IE policy which underpins basic education in South Africa (DoE, 2001). I will therefore firstly provide a brief overview of IE.

2.2 INCLUSIVE EDUCATION

2.2.1 What is inclusive education?

Nel, Tlale, Engelbrecht and Nel (2016) posit that, due to the varied contexts of countries, schools, classrooms and learners, it is a complicated process to provide a generalised or global definition of inclusive education, inclusive teaching and inclusive classrooms. The DoE (1997) defines IE as a learning environment that fosters the academic and professional development of all learners, irrespective of ethnicity, race, class, gender, disability, religion, culture, sexual orientation, learning styles and language.

According to UNESCO, IE suggests that all children can learn together in the same school. This necessitates reaching out to all learners and the removal of all barriers to learning that could limit their participation and achievement. One of the main causes of exclusion is disability, however, there are also other physical, social, attitudinal and institutional barriers to IE (UNESCO, 2017). Maguvhe (2015) asserts that IE is a human right and a democratic way of understanding values and forming beliefs which celebrates the inherent differences among people. In addition to this, IE is a concept that includes the consideration of human rights, equity issues and social justice, as well

as of a socio-political model of education and a social model of disability. IE also incorporates the process of school transformation and focuses on children's right to access education (Hornby, 2015). IE is when all students, irrespective of any challenges they may have, are placed in age-appropriate general education classes in their own neighbourhood schools. Here they should receive support, interventions, and quality education would enable them to achieve success in the core curriculum (Maguvhe, 2015).

According to Lebona (2015) IE is concerned with comprehensive education and equality and entails more than special needs and disabilities. Loreman, Deppeler and Harvey (2005) assert that inclusive education cannot be implemented successfully when learners with special educational needs are separated from their peers. All mainstream schools and classrooms need to adapt and change to meet the diverse needs of all children (Loreman et al., 2005). Mittler (2006) argues that inclusion invites us to celebrate learner diversity arising from gender, nationality, race, language, socio-economic background, cultural origin and level of educational achievement or ability. This researcher further states that the focus of IE is on the adaptation of support systems available in the classroom and on overcoming barriers in the education system that prevent it from meeting the full range of learning needs.

Mitchell (2015) posits that IE ensures the inclusion and support of all learners with special educational needs and is not limited to the accommodation of learners with disabilities. According to Swart and Pettipher (2016), inclusion recognises that the education system and schools specifically, are affected by economic, social and political influences and do not function in isolation. Haug (2017) opines that the values associated with inclusion have links to interactionist ideology and revolve around democratisation, participation, fellowship, benefit, equal access, quality, equity and justice.

2.2.2 Inclusive education - historical background

According to du Plessis (2013), inclusion has been recommended since the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in 1948 and has been reflected over time in a number of key United Nations (UN) declarations and conventions.

These include:

- The 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights which guarantees the right to compulsory, basic education for all children;
- The 1989 UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, which guarantees the right to receive education without any form of discrimination;
- The 1990 World Declaration on Education for All (Jomtien Declaration) which set the goal to meet the basic learning needs of all children, youth, and adults, thus ensuring Education for All (EFA);
- The 1993 UN Standard Rule on Equalisation of Opportunities for Persons with Disabilities which states that education should be provided in "an integrated school setting" as well as in the "general school setting" and furthermore guarantees the equal rights of all children, youth and adults with disabilities to education;
- The 1994 Salamanca Statement and Framework of Action on Special Needs Education which necessitates accommodation of all children in school irrespective of their social, intellectual, physical, emotional, linguistic or other conditions;
- The 2000 World Education Forum Framework for Action in Dakar, EFA and Millennium Development Goals which specifies that all children should have access to free and compulsory primary education by no later than 2015;
- The 2001 EFA Flagship on the Right to Education for Persons with Disabilities: Towards Inclusion and
- The 2005 UN Disability Convention which promotes the rights of persons with disabilities and the mainstreaming of disability in development.

Education as a basic human right was reaffirmed in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child in 1989. Fundamental to this convention was the right for every child to have access to primary education. The World Declaration on EFA adopted in Jomtien, Thailand in 1990 set out an overall vision for IE. According to their vision, IE is “universalising access to education for all children, youth and adults, and promoting equity” (UNESCO, 2004:3). The Jomtien Conference also stressed the commitment to provide child-centred teaching and learning where individual differences are

acknowledged and it promoted the idea of holistic learning environments. Furthermore, the UN Standard Rules on the Equalisation of Opportunities for Persons with Disabilities (1993) and the Salamanca Statement (1994) further emphasised the rights of children to enjoy access to education. Of the policies mentioned above, the most fundamental policy is the Salamanca Statement which will be discussed in more detail below.

Nde (2017) states that The Salamanca Statement and Framework of Action on Special Needs Education (1994) is an important document which endorses IE and provides recommendations for governments and stakeholders that seek to establish IE systems. According to Florian (2019), The Salamanca Statement (1994) was the first to globally challenge the discriminatory, commonly held idea that learners with special educational needs should not be accommodated in mainstream schools or general education systems. This resulted in the introduction of a rights-based approach to the education of children with disabilities. The Salamanca Statement (1994) further states that every child has a fundamental right to education, and that it is important to acknowledge the diverse and unique abilities, interests, characteristics and learning needs of each learner in the educational practice. This statement further recognises that all learners experiencing barriers to learning and development must have access to mainstream schools and that these schools would be required to accommodate them and meet their pedagogical needs (UNESCO, 1994).

At the World Education Forum (Dakar, Senegal, 2000), this principle of IE was reiterated. The goal of the World Education Forum and, in turn, the Dakar Framework (2000) was to achieve 'Education for All' (EFA) by 2015. EFA would be achieved when all nations upheld their responsibility to initiate or change public education systems so that they are accessible to, and meet the needs of individuals with disabilities (UNESCO, 2007:1). The purpose of inclusion was further supported by the UN Standard Rules on the Equalisation of Opportunities for Persons with Disabilities (UNESCO, 2004) and advocated for the participation and equality for all.

2.2.3 Inclusive education models of disability

Rulwa-Mnatwana (2014) posits that IE is based on the social model or human rights model which emphasises that all learners must be included in one education system,

irrespective of their dissimilarities. Three different models of disability can be ascribed to different concepts of equality, namely, the human rights model which can be connected to transformative equality; the social model with substantive equality and thirdly, the medical model which has a close similarity to formal equality. Next, I will discuss the medical model of disability (which does not align with IE philosophy and principles) and the social model and the human rights model of IE.

2.2.3.1 The medical model

The medical model is the antithesis of IE and precedes IE. This model dominated education provision and support prior to the introduction of IE. It is based on the view that all learning difficulties are the result of a disease or some organic disorder. This model presumes that a complete examination of biological, physical, or neurological disorders should first be done before intervention can take place in academic settings. The medical model of disability does not consider external factors such as the environmental context as a potential barrier, but holds the view that the problem is within the child. It focuses on the child's condition and attempts to find a way of treating the child to fit in with his environment (Massoumeha & Leila, 2012).

Johnstone (2012:6) avers that "the medical model of interpretation of disability projects a dualism which tends to categorise the able-bodied as somehow 'better' or superior to people with disabilities". Swart and Pettipher (2011) posit that, according to the medical model, learning difficulties are explained exclusively with regard to the impairment within the child. They assert that the medical model does not look at what the person needs but rather at what is wrong with the person. This creates low expectations and leads to people losing their independence, choice and control over their own lives. Learners' disabilities or differences are isolated and the origin of the difference is looked for within the learner. According to the medical model, these disabilities, inabilities and differences should be diagnosed and treated by medical and other treatments, even if these impairments or differences do not cause pain or illness (Swart & Pettipher, 2011).

Similarly, Degener (2016) posits that the medical model of disability views disability as an anomaly from health status, and as an impairment that needs to be treated, cured or at least rehabilitated. The exclusion of people with disabilities from society is regarded as an individual problem and the reasons for exclusion are seen in the impairment. Disability, according to the medical model, remains the exclusive domain of medical

disciplines such as special education teachers, rehabilitation experts, nurses and doctors. According to Du Plessis (2013), a shift from the medical deficit model resulted in addressing the imbalances of the past and granted all learners the right to basic education.

2.2.3.2 The social model

Donohue and Bornman (2014) posit that IE involves a radically different way of thinking about the genesis of learning and learning difficulties and the comprehensive rebuilding of the education system. Hausiku (2017) asserts that there was a paradigm shift that led to the social and ecological theoretical model due to criticism of the medical deficit model. The shift necessitated a move away from diagnosis and cure to a focus on removing the stumbling blocks which cause societal barriers. This model focuses on the involvement of all individuals in communities who are living with disabilities, and presupposes adjusting the environment, curricula, teaching methods, attitudes and behaviour to meet the needs of all learners (EWP 6, DoE, 2001). According to Donohue and Bornman (2014) the social model has its roots in the human rights paradigm, arguing for inclusion and the removal of all barriers that hinder the full participation of individuals with disabilities.

2.2.3.3 Human rights model

According to Grynova and Kalinichenko (2018) the right to education for people with special educational needs is enshrined in the South African Constitution. Section 10 of the South African Constitution (Republic of South Africa, Act No. 108 of 1996) states that everyone has the right to human dignity and respect. Ngcobo and Muthukrishna (2011) assert that IE in South Africa is framed within a human rights discourse. The human rights approach to education is interested in the role of education in securing people's rights in education and rights through education. According to these authors, these rights include the "enactment of negative rights such as protection from abuse, as well as positive rights such as celebration and nurturing of learner creativity, use of local languages in schools, learner participation in democratic structures and debate" (Tikly & Barrett, 2011:5).

Degener (2017) avers that, while the social model helps people to understand the underlying social factors that shape our understanding of disability, the human rights

model moves beyond explanation, offering a theoretical framework for disability policy that emphasises the human dignity of people with disabilities (PWDs). The human rights model is an improvement on the social model of disability and recommends the acknowledgement of the rights of learners. Both models focus on the importance of recognising and respecting human rights, however, the social model of disability identifies the contributing factors that lead to the violation of disabled children's rights (Degener, 2014). Lawson and Beckett (2020) assert that the human rights model builds upon and complements the social model.

The social and human rights models are both valuable tools that scholars, disability activists or anyone striving to achieve inclusion, participation, equality, dignity and quality of life for disabled people need in their toolbox. The selection of the best tool for the task is important. It is essential to create equal opportunities for all learners to achieve success, because the inclusion of learners with special education needs or learning barriers in mainstream classes is part of the goals of the universal human rights movement (Du Plessis, 2013).

Lawson and Beckett (2020) posit that the social model of disability and human rights model of disability facilitate the defiance of disabled individuals against discriminatory and repressive political and social systems. These two models have much in common and operate together in certain ways, but they also function uniquely; in accordance with the main variances of the models. Basically, the social model is a model of disability and the human rights model is a model of disability policy, therefore the focus and subject-matter of each model is clearly different (Lawson & Beckett, 2020).

2.2.4 International perspectives on IE systems and the nature of support provided

Rulwa-Mnatwana (2014) avers that IE emerged as a global movement that challenges exclusionary, unjust and discriminatory practices to ensure that all learners are afforded equal opportunities. According to Lebona (2015) the implementation of an IE policy challenged all countries to ensure the provision of quality education for all learners, including those with special needs. Dalton, Lyner-Cleophas, Ferguson and McKenzie (2019) assert that acquiring knowledge of inclusive learning and actually implementing

IE policies and strategies, are critical for the successful provision of education for all learners in the most 'normal' environment. It is important to recognise that teachers' and policymakers' personal and professional perception of inclusion may differ considerably depending on where and who they are. What follows is a summary of inclusion in a few countries, policies about the formal support structures within the IE contexts and findings on how effective this support is.

The Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) (2011), asserts that Sweden is regarded as the country that has one of the most "inclusive" educational systems in the world. Hausiku (2017) asserts that Sweden's curriculum promotes education for all children regardless of gender, class or ethnic group, background, experiences, language and knowledge. Sweden also has the same national curriculum in schools for all learners between the ages of 6 to 16 to increase their mental capacity. This researcher further posits that it is the responsibility of the head teachers in Swedish schools to ensure that the programmes in schools are focused on achieving national goals. The head teachers must also ensure that those learners in need of special support receive remedial teaching.

Göransson, Lindqvist, Möllås, Almqvist and Nilholm (2017) report that there are two teacher professional support groups that monitor inclusive practices throughout Sweden's schooling system. One group is known as Special Need Educators (SNEs) and has advanced qualifications in special educational needs (SEN). Another group, known as general Support Teachers (SuTs) has different teacher training and educational knowledge, and some training in special educational needs. Göransson et al. (2017) posit that SNE and SuTs groups agree that the occupational support provided to learners by SNEs is characterised by consultation and supervision, developmental work at organisational or group level, assessment and documentation, and screening of individual pupils and groups of pupils. The SuTs' occupational support is characterised by teaching or supervising individual learners or groups of learners to a high or a very high degree. There is good collaboration between the SuTs and SNEs as one group extends the duties of the other.

Mbengwa (2010) asserts that teachers in European countries are offered support in the form of training sessions, information, the selection of teaching materials as well as the

elaboration of IEPs. (refer to Table 2.1). Support is provided by specialist teachers in regular schools, and external educational services (Meijer, Soriano & Watkins, 2003).

Table 2.1: Different forms of educational support to class teachers in European countries (Meijer et al., 2003).

Country	Type of professional service support
Austria	Both learners identified with specific disabilities and their class teachers are supported by either specialist teachers from special schools or from visiting professionals. The organisation and planning of educational interventions are shared by both classroom and specialist teachers, working as a team. to support learners.
Belgium	Services, including information, advice and support are provided to class teachers by specialist teachers from special schools and from Centres for Pupil Guidance. Remedial teachers located at schools mainly support pupils presenting short-term difficulties. They also provide direct support to class teachers and the school, co-ordinating specific support initiatives.
Cyprus	Support is provided by specialist teachers either on a part-time or full-time basis in schools. Additional services are provided by professionals such as speech therapists, who have specific time allocated to different schools. Central services, external to schools, including SEN co-coordinators, inspectors, psychologists or health and social services, also provide support.
Czech Republic	Support is provided to class teachers, learners and their parents by specialist teachers and other professionals, such as psychologists. Pedagogical and other support is provided through advice centres or special educational centres depending on the learner's specific needs. These service providers lead the individual educational plan (IEP) process in collaboration with the class teacher, parents and the learner as may be appropriate.
Denmark	Learners and their class teachers are supported by specialist teachers located at schools. Where the learner needs regular support in more than one subject, group teaching is encouraged. Mainstream schools may also be supported by centralised specialist pedagogical and other service providers to provide additional support to learners.
England and Wales	Comprehensive support is provided to all schools as stipulated in legislation, including through a dedicated special educational needs (SEN) coordinator (DfES, 2001) who supports colleagues, monitors pupils' progress, oversees all service provision and liaises with parents and external agencies. Additional support may be provided by colleagues from other schools and external agencies, including specialist support services from the education and health departments and other Local Education Agency (LEA) personnel. Visiting professionals work with teachers to enable skills transfer for the development of teaching strategies within the school as a whole.
Finland	Support is provided by a designated specialist teacher working as part of the school staff. Support to class teachers and learners can also be provided by a school social worker, school nurse or counseling teacher. An individual educational programme to be implemented in the mainstream school is developed by a pupil welfare team involving the pupil, their parents, all teachers and other experts. A 'pupil support group' involving the principal and all professionals is also in place to monitor service provision and progress.
Ireland	There are different options for delivering support in all schools, including through a dedicated staff member who works as a specialist or resource teacher or a remedial teacher whose main role is to work with learners experiencing difficulties in reading and mathematics. Teachers from the Visiting Teacher Service (Department of Education) who work with individual pupils, their parents and advise teachers on methodology, teaching approaches, resources and programmes, is another option for support. The Psychological Service of the Department of Education and Science focuses on learners with emotional and behavioural problems and learning difficulties and provides assessment and advisory services to mainstream schools.

Hossain (2012) argues that the United States of America (USA) has been successful in providing free and appropriate public education to all learners regardless of their disability status because of a range of comprehensive legislation. He further opines that the implementation of IE in the USA and its sustainability is making a significant change in the lives of children with barriers to learning.

According to Dalton, Lyner-Cleophas, Ferguson and McKenzie (2019) in the USA IE is understood as educating learners with varied needs and abilities together in general classroom settings with the support and services necessary to ensure that every learner achieves optimally. Dalton et al. (2019) further posit that the US government approved the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (NCLB, 2002) to assure academic success within an atmosphere of inclusiveness. The US Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act (IDEA) of 2004 called for school districts to accommodate learners in the least restrictive environment (LRE) suitable for their individual needs. An Individualised Education Programme (IEP) must be developed for the learners once it has been determined that the learner has a disability, and needs special education and related services. This written programme is designed to provide special education and specific services according to with the learner's disability-needs. (Dalton et al., 2019).

Hayes and Bulat (2017) posit that a multidisciplinary team involving the learner, parents, teachers, administrators, and other relevant support staff and service providers is required to address learners' educational needs and should all be involved in the development of IEPs. This process ensures the identification of individual needs, placement, learning goals, related services of learners with disabilities, required classroom accommodations and the appropriate teaching strategies. Van Ingen, Allsop, Broughton, Simsek, Albritton and White (2018) assert that this IEP is the outcome and is used as a guideline for the Multidisciplinary Team (MDT) on how to proceed to provide the most suitable intervention tailored to the needs of an individual child. To ensure that due process is followed, the parent is part of the MDT and will work collaboratively with the team. Each professional in a multidisciplinary approach aims to meet the needs of the learner with Special Educational Needs (SEN). Learners with SEN may receive support from an occupational therapist, a speech therapist, a school counsellor, a general education teacher and a special education teacher. These

professionals each have a unique knowledge base that is comparatively independent of the others and they offer concurrent but fairly independent help (Van Ingen et al., 2018).

With regard to IE in the Australian context, Anderson and Boyle (2015) state that action taken to make the Australian education system more inclusive seems to have had limited success, and that there appears to be a 'significant gap' between proposed IE and what is really happening in schools. These researchers further posit that the public education system is responsible for a diverse learner population, therefore, each of the eight educational jurisdictions responsible for the schools within their borders, have developed policies and increased funding levels in the name of IE (Anderson & Boyle, 2015).

There is still no comprehensive definition for IE in Australia, although it has been a part of the Australian educational discourse for more than twenty years (Anderson & Boyle, 2015). Forlin (2001) asserts that each state and territory therefore defines its own educational policy for learners with special needs which can include learners with a sensory, emotional, intellectual, physical need or learning difficulties, gifted or talented learners, socially disadvantaged learners or learners whose first language is not English. A continuum of services is provided by all jurisdictions to cater for the needs of these learners (Forlin, 2001). Learners with special educational needs and those with disabilities are presently increasingly registered in community mainstream schools. A specialist support teacher may withdraw these learners for parts of the school day, to receive intensive intervention support. This option is usually determined by the school, that is, the school has to ascertain whether it is able to accommodate a learner before offering a mainstream placement (Anderson & Boyle, 2015).

Westwood and Graham (2003) posit that in South Australia, support services are provided to schools through the employment of school-based special education teachers and peripatetic (teachers who work in more than one school) support teachers, including state-wide visiting-teacher services for learners with weakened or compromised vision or hearing. In regular schools, further special assistance is frequently provided by School Service Officers (SSOs); paraprofessionals who perform the role of classroom assistants, who work under the guidance of the teacher. Internal support systems, such as peer tutoring and learning assistance programmes (LAP)

using volunteer helpers to assist some individual students with problems in literacy, numeracy or social skills, are also implemented by many schools.

The National Curriculum for Basic Education in Namibia (Ministry of Education [MoE], 2010:38) defines IE as “ensuring that the physical and social environments are conducive to all learners and that all the necessary teaching and learning aids are in place”. Namibia currently has three educational placement options, namely, inclusive schools, resource schools and learning support classes or resource units within mainstream schools. Special schools were renamed resource schools when the Sector Policy and other IE policies were formulated. The Sector Policy states that all children should, as far as possible, be educated in their neighbourhood schools and in the least-restrictive education setting (MoE, 2013).

Hausiku (2017) asserts that in Namibia, The Ministry has disseminated the policy of IE to the schools through regional offices. A counsellor to support the learners with learning barriers is available at each school, but it remains the responsibility of the teachers to transform classrooms in order to accommodate the learning needs of learners with disabilities. According to Ekandjo (2018) teachers are expected to use differentiated teaching methods when supporting learners with special educational needs in their classes. The learners should have full access to the educational programmes in the school and they should be encouraged to participate in these programmes. Ekandjo (2018) asserts that while the majority of the schools in Namibia do practice inclusion and support within their classroom, they only deal with learners with mild to moderate special needs, for example, learners with a behavioural disorder, Dyslexia, Attention Deficit Disorder (ADD), dyscalculia, and so on. Learners with severe learning disabilities such as emotionally challenged learners and with physical disabilities such as learners who are blind or deaf or who have other disabilities are educated in special schools which are remote and found in different parts of the country. The most common method used during the teaching and learning process in Namibian schools is the learner-centred approach (Kasanda, Lubben, Gaoseb, Kandjeo-Marenga, Kapenda, & Campbell, 2005). This approach is perceived as vital for the inclusion of all learners (with or without special educational needs), as it focuses on what the learner already knows and can do individually, and later be assisted by the teacher to acquire new knowledge (Ekandjo, 2018).

With regard to IE in Botswana, Rampana (2015) asserts that the Government of Botswana's Report of the National Commission on Education (1993) summarises the development of Special Education provision and states that, as far as possible, learners with SEN should be integrated into mainstream schools to prepare them for social inclusion. If the needs of learners with more severe learning problems or disabilities cannot be met within the country, they should be taught in special units attached to ordinary schools, or catered for abroad. Rampana (2015) states that, in Botswana, the School Intervention Team (SIT) are staff representatives who in an orderly and efficient manner provide support to learners with barriers for the purpose of increasing their learning potential. Rampana (2015) further posits that the SIT must collaborate to identify the strengths and needs of a learner, act strategically and determine how they successfully impact the learner in the classroom. This team is similar to the SBST in South Africa. The Revised National Policy for Education (RNPE 92(b), Government of Botswana, 1994) states that each school should have a senior teacher "responsible for the handicapped children in each school" and who is responsible for the coordination of a SIT. The RNPE 95 states that components of special needs education should form part of the pre-service or in-service training of all teachers. SIT recommends instructional strategies, provides support and monitors the development of learners. It is the responsibility of the team to refer complicated cases to the Central Resource Centre (CRC) in Tlokweng for thorough assessment and support. According to Mrstik (2017) the CRC is an agency staffed by educational psychologists, located in Tlokweng in the south of the country, next to the South African border. The educational psychologists are expected to assess learners all over the country who are suspected to have a variety of disabilities. Mrstik (2017) further asserts that only six educational psychologists are allotted for the whole country, thus it is not surprising that it can take up to a year for a student to be assessed. This researcher posits that, after a student is assessed and diagnosed with a disability by the CRC, a report is sent to the student's school, and an IEP can be developed. Much like other nations, students with disabilities in Botswana need an IEP to receive special education services. During their pre-service training, special education teachers learn to write an IEP in their teacher education programmes.

Rampana (2015) reports that the Intervention-Based Assessment and an Instructional Consultation Team in Botswana focuses more on parental involvement or home-school partnerships for achieving the schooling outcomes for students who have been identified as having academic, behavioural or social difficulties. In Botswana, the SIT is said to comprise the “Senior Teacher humanities, Senior Teacher guidance and counselling, Heads of Departments, Pastoral, Languages teachers, Mathematics teachers, ordinary teachers, additional members (as needed), class/subject teacher, parent, rehabilitation officer, social worker, Chief, nurse and student representative where applicable” Rampana (2015).

2.3 INCLUSIVE EDUCATION IN SOUTH AFRICA

Mfuthwana and Dreyer (2018) postulate that IE in South Africa is based on social justice and is closely associated with building a new democracy by abolishing the practice of exclusion in education. According to Dreyer (2017) it is recognised that IE has its roots in the discourse on disability and the rationalisation for the inclusion of learners with disabilities in mainstream education. These researchers further posit that the perception of IE in South Africa led to a more comprehensive definition. This definition included learners with disabilities as well as learners who were ostracised on the basis of race, language, or culture (DoE, 2001). This comprehensive understanding of IE acknowledges that both extrinsic and intrinsic systemic barriers can lead to exclusion (Mfuthwana & Dreyer, 2018).

Murungi (2015) posits that the shift to IE in South Africa was a part of the radical change from the previously discriminatory education system of the apartheid era to a democratic, diverse and socioe-conomically emancipated society, and the reconceptualisation of special education. Donohue and Bornman (2014) assert that an adaptable curriculum and support system needed to be introduced before a desegregated and integrated education system could be implemented. The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa includes the Bill of Rights, which establishes that all South Africans, regardless of race, gender, sexual orientation, disability, religion, culture or language, will have access to basic education and to educational institutions (Republic of South Africa, 1996). The adoption of the South African Constitution legally ensured the basic human rights of its entire population and subsequently influenced educational policies (Murungi, 2015).

Donohue and Bornman (2014) argue that EWP 6 (DoE, 2001:10) outlined the government's new policies for a single, united education system for all learners, including those with disabilities, in the hope that IE would provide "…a cornerstone of an integrated and caring society". Engelbrecht, Nel, Nel and Tlale (2015) argue that a main viewpoint of EWP 6 is that IE adds up to respecting and recognising learner diversity, empowering teachers with the ability to address an extensive variety of learning needs by concentrating on teaching and learning activities that will be in the best interest of all learners who experience barriers to learning. According to these researchers, EWP 6 declared that the education system must transform to support the full spectrum of barriers to development and learning. These include needs caused by extrinsic systemic barriers, including an inflexible curriculum, inadequately trained teachers, problems with language and communication and socio-economic factors, as well as barriers caused by intrinsic medical/organic causes (e.g. chronic illness, disabilities).

Notwithstanding a firm declaration on the socially-constructed description of variation and subsequent external circumstantial barriers, EWP 6 still relied on a medical approach when support for various learning barriers was proposed (Engelbrecht et al., 2015). A continuation of support is advocated for learners with learning barriers that differentiate between learners with low-intensive support needs, receiving assistance in mainstream schools, learners with modest support needs, who are to be supported in full-service schools and learners who require high-intensive educational support, who continue to be supported in special schools that will also serve as resource centres for contiguous mainstream schools (DoE, 2001; Engelbrecht & Van Deventer, 2013). This is still considered to be a medical model approach as the problem is seen within the ability of the child. The teachers should adapt and provide a differentiated approach to learning. The focus of EWP 6 was on removing barriers to learning, and providing support to all learners in need. Another important IE policy document was published by the Department of Basic Education [DBE] in 2014 in an attempt to provide more guidance about how children are supported within a South African basic education system which is underpinned by IE. This policy is briefly discussed below.

2.3.1 Policy on screening, identification, assessment and support (SIAS)

The DBE developed a Policy on Screening, Identification, Assessment and Support (SIAS) (DBE, 2014) to provide more clarity with regards to the implementation of EWP 6 and to assist teachers with the implementation of IE. SIAS (DBE, 2014) is based on the practicalisation of the vision contained in EWP 6. According to the DBE (2014) the purpose of SIAS is to provide a policy framework for the standardisation of the procedures to identify, assess and provide programmes for all learners who require additional support to enhance their participation and inclusion in school. It is further explained that the main focus of SIAS is to manage and support teaching and learning processes for learners who experience barriers to learning within the framework of the National Curriculum Statement Grades R –12 (DBE, 2014).

According to the DBE (2014), the introduction of this policy will allow (as far as possible) many children who experience barriers to learning, and those who have a physical disability, to exercise their right to basic education, and to gain access the necessary support in their community schools. SIAS defines learning barriers as "difficulties that arise within the education system as a whole, the learning site and/ or within the learner him/ herself which prevent access to learning and development for learners" (DBE, 2014: vii). It is the responsibility of the DBE to guarantee that learners with physical disabilities are integrated into mainstream, special or full-service schools and that learners with other barriers to learning, such as autistic spectrum disorders, deficit disorder with or without hyperactivity, dyslexia, severe allergies, specific learning barriers and behavioural disorders, are also accommodated and provided for in the mainstream schools.

According to DBE (2014) SIAS aims to respond to the needs of all learners in our country, especially those who are at risk and most likely to be excluded. The South African government's IE plan addresses the specific problems of learners with learning barriers by creating a three-tiered system (see Figure 2.1) that matches educational support with a learner's level of learning barriers. According to Inclusive education (n.d.),

> Learners who require low-intensive support are to receive such support in ordinary schools, those requiring moderate support are to receive such support in full-

service schools, and those requiring high-intensive support are to receive such support in special schools. At the crux of the plan is the creation of multi-level support teams—at the school level, district level, and special school level (primarily to serve as resource centers)—to provide support in curriculum, assessment and instruction in educating learners with disabilities (Inclusive Education, n.d., p.8).

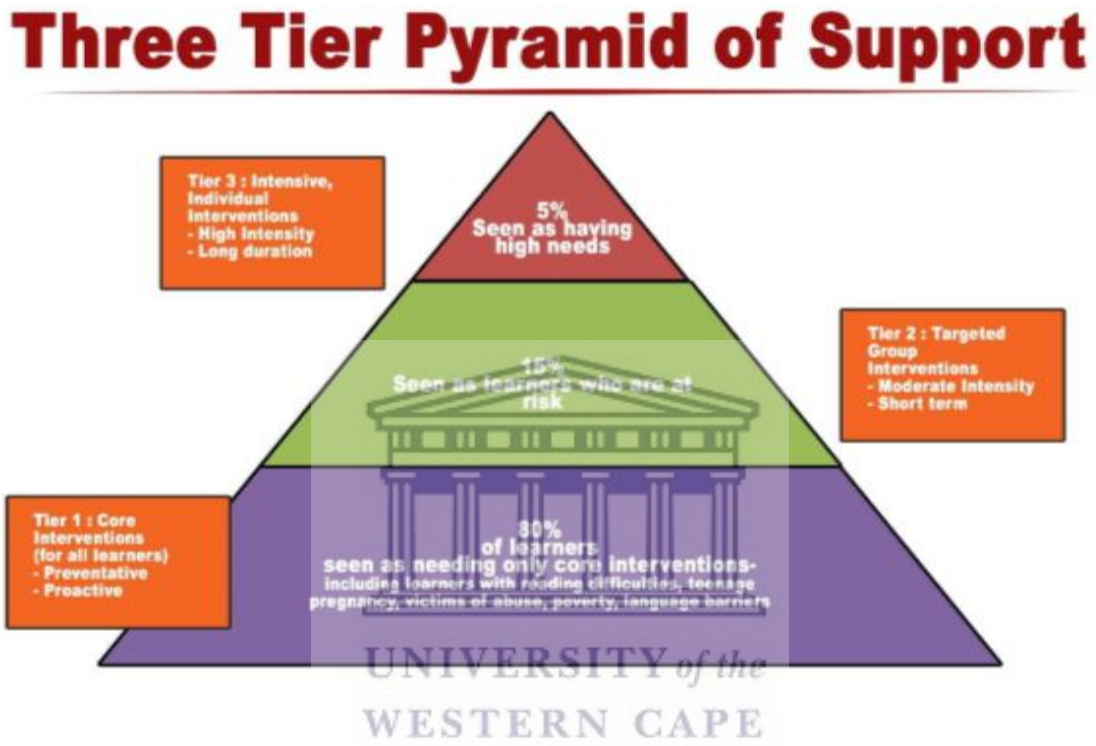

Figure 2.1 The three-tier pyramid of support (DBE, 2015)

The argument for providing support services at low, moderate and high levels indicates that, if 80% of the learner population can receive more preventative support, the number of learners who will be referred to special education sites can be contained, and the goal of IE attained. Specialised support can be provided or facilitated at a low, moderate or high level by the following role players (DBE, 2014), as depicted in the continuum of service provision to respond to diverse needs in schools in Figure 2.2, below.

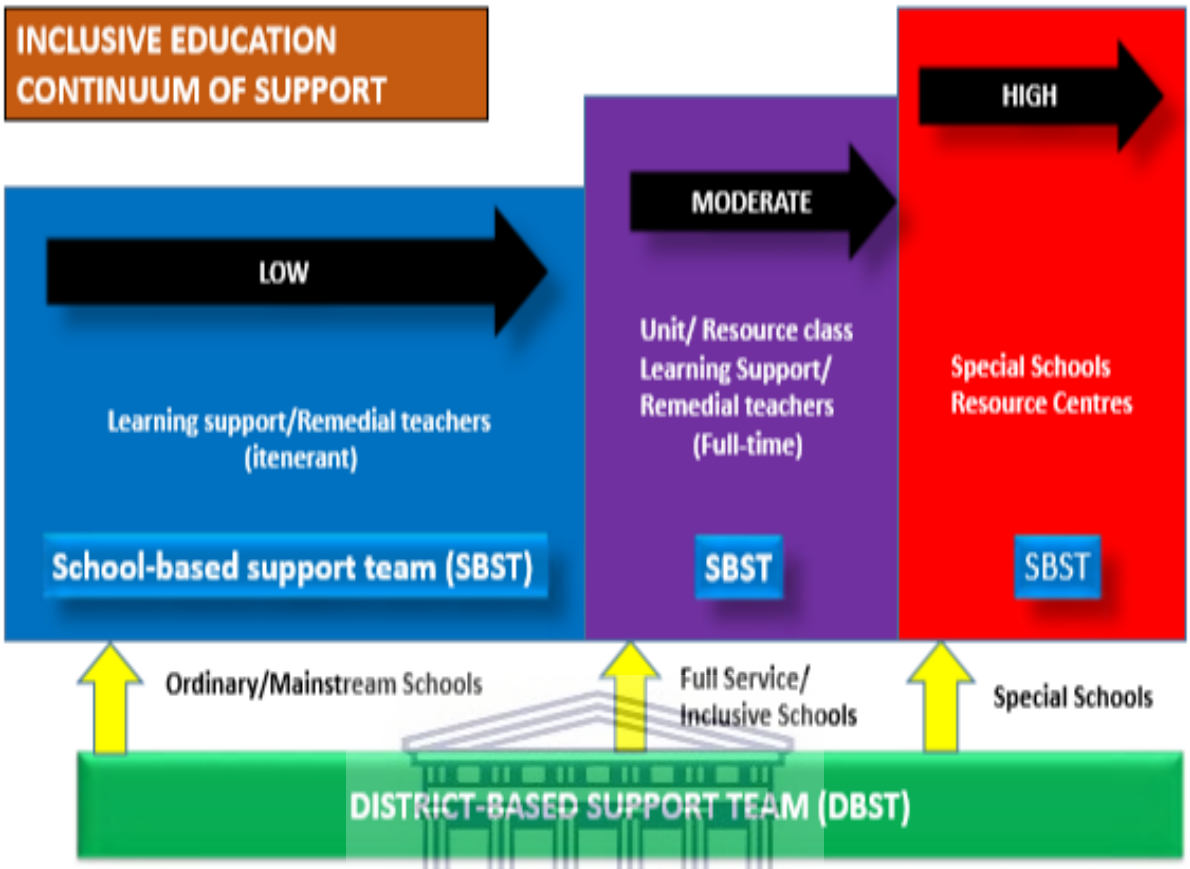

Figure 2:2 Levels of support experienced by learners (SAOU) (Le Roux, 2019)

Conway (2017) posits that one of the challenges of learner support is to determine how to offer support without continuing exclusionary and discriminatory practices. According to Swart and Pettipher (2016), IE must ensure that schools regard all learners as unique individuals with unique learning styles. They further state that schools should restructure its organisation, accommodate all learners and strive to meet their diverse needs rather than expecting the learner to adapt. Kozleski, Waitoller and Gonzalez (2016) assert that IE as a policy requires the transformation of policies, practices, tools, and ultimately, of the individuals involved. According to these authors, IE means that learners who were previously excluded and taught in special classes and schools, can now attend regular classes in full-service and mainstream schools. This, however, depends on the availability of appropriate and adequate schooling and support. Inclusion is about ensuring that all individuals (those with or without barriers to learning) are appreciated for their own uniqueness. IE is therefore not just about finding a placement for an individual in a classroom (Conway, 2017) but should foster a sense of

belonging so that all learners, staff and families experience a sense of worth (DBE, 2010).

2.3.2 Different types of schools within IE context in public education in South Africa

The formation of District-Based Support Teams (DBST), Institution-Level Based Support Teams (ILST) (also called School-based Support Teams), Full-Service Schools (FSS) as well as Special Schools as Resource Centres (SSRC) are included in the meso-system. Nel, Tlale, Engelbrecht and Nel (2016) postulate that in South Africa, support structures for learners, teachers and schools, as articulated by the several policy documents are grounded in the meso-system. These researchers further state that it is the responsibility of the DBST to deliver an interrelated and efficient support service that draws on expertise in further and higher education and local communities, targeting primary schools, designated full-service schools, special schools, specialised settings and other educational institutions (Nel et al., 2016).

SIAS (DBE, 2014) mentions three types of schools: mainstream schools, FSS and SSRC. Ordinary mainstream schools have to provide for low intensive needs for all learners. Funding for support in ordinary mainstream schools come from the school's budget.

One of the primary strategies towards inclusion located within the microsystem (see the discussion of Bronfenbrenner's theory towards the end of this chapter) is the development of Full-Service Schools (FSS). The development of FSS in the South African education system is guided by EWP 6 (DoE, 2001) and the Guidelines for Full-Service Schools published by the DBE in 2015. The National Strategy on Screening, Identification, Assessment and Support (SIAS) (DBE, 2014) reports that mainstream schools which are specifically supplied with resources to accommodate a variety of learning barriers in an inclusive education environment are known as FSS. Engelbrecht et al. (2013) posit that FSS were supposed to become models which other schools could imitate and were to be supported and equipped with the physical and human resources, necessary material and professional development of teachers to accommodate various learner needs. FSS should provide school level (site-based) support through a functioning SBST; support the transformation of adjacent schools

towards IE; cooperate with special schools serving as resource centres through the exchange of skills and knowledge; and collaborate with DBSTs (Engelbrecht et al., 2016; DoE, 2005).

According to Nel et al. (2016) FSS should have the ability to deal with a diversity of learning needs, regardless of the disability or differences in place, learning styles or social difficulties experienced. SSRC have two main responsibilities, that is, they provide an educational service to learners who require high levels of support, and the skill-set available within these schools is integrated into the DBST. This enables special schools to provide specialised professional support in curriculum, instruction and assessment to neighbouring FSS and mainstream schools (DBE, 2010). Special schools can provide resources like information, skills and technology and the exchange of knowledge. FSS can benefit from the expertise and the exchange of available resources at SSRC as this will help to ensure that FSS are better equipped to support learners with specific learning needs (Inclusive Education South Africa (IESA), 2018).

2.3.3 Inclusive Education (IE) at school level in South Africa

Maphumulo (2019) asserts that revolutionary changes have been made in South Africa to restructure the exclusionary, fragmented, unequal and authoritarian education system into a democratic, inclusive system. The establishment of EWP 6 (DoE, 2001) was thus marked by fundamental education transformation and the importance of school-based, as well as district-based support services are thus a focus of this policy. EWP 6 further emphasises that the strengthening of support services by developing strong school-based and district-based support teams, is vital to reducing barriers to learning. Specifically, a support system where a group of consultees (for example, members of the SBST) work cooperatively in support of the child is envisaged by EWP 6 (2001). Gaffney (2015) states that the benefit of this kind of application is that members may reciprocally acquire skills through shared proficiency, leading to the development and improvement of the members' knowledge and abilities to address barriers to learning. Additionally, SBSTs are necessary to provide support to both the learner and the teacher within the school

Teachers are afforded the opportunity to cooperate with each other, as well as with members of the SBST through the collaborative consultancy approach. The adavantages of this type of approach include the development of opportunities which will ultimately benefit the learner, and the sharing of ideas and expertise. Collaborative consultancy is fundamental, as the IE system aims to redress inequalities of the past, address barriers to learning and accommodate a variety of diverse learning needs (DoE, 2001). Furthermore, Moolla and Lazarus (2014) highlight the significance of an intersectoral collaboration that is interactive in process, unites diverse sectors, implement plans for common goals, and create solutions to challenges faced in schools. This kind of approach refers to the idea of consulting with professionals in different sectors to deliver quality education to learners as well as working together for a common cause. Moolla and Lazarus (2014) also emphasise the importance of working in a team because that builds a sense of belonging, and forms a network of support that can address the many challenges faced in schools. They further posit that, when different sectors collaborate, it is vital that the teamwork is distinguished by a common vision and also a shared understanding of the processes required. (Moolla & Lazarus, 2014).

2.4 TYPES OF LEARNING SUPPORT IN SCHOOLS

The National Strategy on Screening, Identification, Assessment, and Support document (DoE, 2014:8) offers the following description of support:

> Support can be defined as all activities which increase the capacity of a school to respond to diversity. Providing support to individuals is only one way of attempting to make learning contexts and lessons accessible to all learners. Support is also provided, for example, when schools review their cultures, policies and practices to determine how supportive these are of the individual educator, parent and learner needs.

Dimitrellou, Hurry and Male (2020) mention that educational support refers to the comprehensive selection of instructional methods, educational services or school resources provided to students in an attempt to help them catch up with their peers,

increase their learning progress, meet the learning standards and succeed in school. According to the DoE (2001), successful learning can only be achieved through the underpinning of diverse education support services at various levels (institutional, district, provincial, and national levels), the involvement of different role players and creating efficient and comprehensive application at the aforementioned levels. The different support structures as mentioned in South African IE polices are discussed in the section that follows.

2.4.1 School-based support teams (SBSTs)

The School Based Support Team (SBST), previously known as the Institutional Level Support Team (ILST), has the responsibility to determine the needs of the learners, teachers and of the school, and to coordinate the provision of support within the framework of the SIAS policy (DBE, 2014). When we review the implementation and provision of support and reasonable accommodations for children with support needs, the SBST is thus one of the most important structures within the schooling system (DBE, 2014). SBSTs play an important role in providing support to learners and teachers through deliberation on referrals, classroom strategies, case management and decisions regarding resources within the school with the aim of identifying and addressing barriers to learning.

SIAS recommends that the SBST consist of the following main members: a representative of the SMT, teachers involved with the teaching of the specific learner(s) who experience barriers to learning, other teachers from the school who represent different phases in education, e.g. Intermediate Phase, or who represent different subjects, e.g. language and Mathematics, or teachers who volunteer because of their interest, or staff members who have specific knowledge and skills of a particular challenge or need, non-teaching staff which may include care-taking and administrative staff (DBE, 2014). The SBST's composition and size will be dependent on the size and needs of the school. All team members will work cooperatively towards an identified, common goal, but each member of the team will perform a specific role, such as the SBST coordinator or the secretary.

According to SIAS (DBE, 2014), in addition to the core team who meet regularly to address certain challenges and concerns in the school, the following supplementary people could be invited to attend some of the SBST meetings and processes to assist with specific challenges: parents/caregivers at early childhood development (ECD) centres or at school level. The inclusion of specifically skilled and interested parents would strengthen the team. To encourage peer support, learner representatives at higher education, further education or senior levels would be an important addition to further strengthen the team. The following members would also strengthen the team: teachers from other schools, especially from FSS, specific members of special/resource schools and DBST and members of the local community who have a specific contribution to make regarding particular challenges.

2.4.1.1 Roles and responsibilities of the SBST

Inclusive Education South Africa (IESA) (2018) and the DBE (2014) state that it is the responsibility of the school principal to establish and support a SBST, and to ensure the smooth functioning of this structure. According to the SIAS policy (DBE, 2014) the roles and responsibilities of SBSTs include: providing assistance to teachers regarding support plans for learners experiencing barriers to learning; evaluating and strengthening the Individual Support Plan (ISP) through support plans developed by teachers, gathering any required or additional information, providing guidance and support in respect of programmes, additional strategies, resources and services. Additionally, the SBST must request support and assistance (where necessary) from the DBST to improve ISPs or support the DBST's recommendation for a learner to be placed in a specialised setting. Moolla and Lazarus (2014:5) posit that "defining roles and clarifying how these are operationalised to achieve goals within a system is crucial for successful collaboration. Role definition generates clarity regarding what each individual role player is able to contribute by way of skill and expertise". The functioning of the SBST is guided by the following role-players and processes:

- **The Coordinator of the SBST**

The coordinator of the team should have the competence to arrange meetings, encourage the active participation of all members in the meetings, ensure that goals set

are achieved, and that time frames are adhered to. Additionally, the coordinator should guarantee that all team members understand their roles and ensure collaboration with sectors, such as welfare departments and non-governmental organisations (NGO's), to create staff development sessions, where teachers conduct meetings regarding intervention strategies (DBE, 2014).

- **Referring teacher**

According to SAIS (DBE, 2014) the process should be applied by the referring teacher and all who are directly involved with the learner on a daily basis. To guarantee that the support strategies specified in the ISP is effectively executed, parents or caregivers must establish a collaborative relationship with the teacher. The participation of the parent or caregiver in the SIAS process is compulsory. The support process must be managed the teacher who must accept the role of the case manager. Information gained from extrinsic assessments should not be central in decision-making around support, but should serve to enhance the perception of the interventions needed. A referring teacher only attends SBST meetings to discuss matters pertaining to the support required by a learner(s) in his/her class, so the referring teacher is not a permanent member of SBST. If the learning support provided by the teacher does not adequately improve the academic performance of the learner, it is the main function of the referring teacher to refer learners to the SBST for additional intervention strategies. The referring teacher should give regular feedback to the SBST on the progress made by the learners. If the learner does not show signs of progression, the matter should be referred to the DBST placement to special schools or for further intervention (DBE, 2014).

SIAS (DBE, 2014) further directs that certain instruments need to be completed when a teacher identifies a learner at risk and in need of support. The teacher, assuming the role of a case manager, must drive and coordinate the support process once a learner has been identified as being at risk or vulnerable through the preliminary screening process. The SIAS forms will guide the teacher, and areas in the Learner Profile marked with an asterisk will specify when the completion of the Support Needs Assessment 1 (SNA1) should commence (DBE, 2014). The completed SNA 1 must be submitted to the SBST. The report submitted by the teacher on the support provided up

to that point, as well as the influence of that support will be studied by the SBST. The SBST will invite the relevant role players to a meeting where the individual case will be discussed. The support needs of the learner will then be discussed and planned by the team, and a programme will be developed for the teacher and parents. The ISP will be monitored and evaluated regularly during implementation. A Support Needs Assessment Form 2 (SNA 2) will be completed by the team should they need additional guidance or support for learners who have not benefited enough from the teacher's intervention, and who therefore need supplementary support from the school's network of service providers and experienced, highly qualified teachers. The completed SNA 2 document is submitted to request additional support from the DBST and this referral to the DBST will follow only for a learner who has not shown sufficient improvement from the school-based support, and where extra support from the DBST was requested by the SBST (DBE, 2014). Figure 2.3 illustrates the SIAS process.

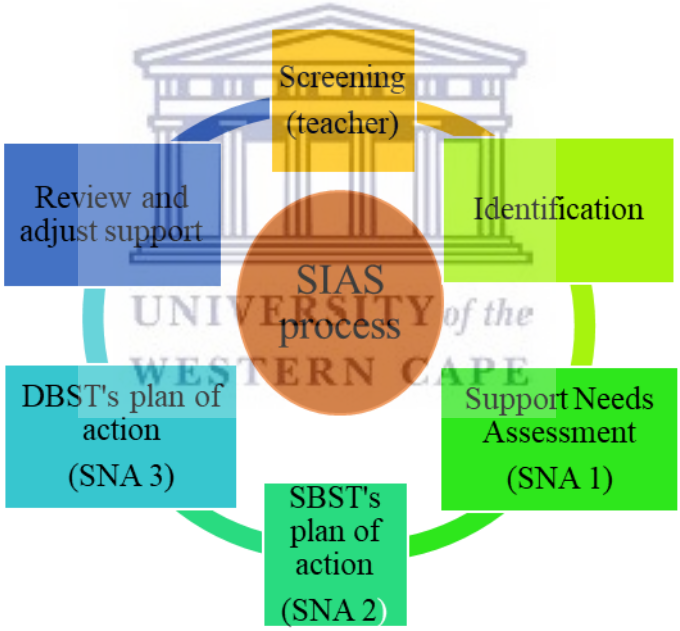

Figure 2.3 The SIAS process (Maphumulo, 2019)

- **Secretary**

Members can either rotate to be the secretary of the SBST, or an SBST member can be elected as the secretary. The secretary should take minutes of all the meetings held in order to keep accurate records, and the minutes must be kept safely for future reference (DoE, 2002).

- **Other representatives**

A representative of each phase within the school serve as members of the SBST. These selected representatives' main function is to deal with issues regarding each of the particular phases within the school. They should monitor the completion of support forms for learners in need of additional support (DoE, 2002). According to IESA (2018) additional people can serve on the SBST and significant contributions can be made by including the following people:

- The learner (where applicable)
- Their parents / caregivers
- The teachers of the particular learner(s) for whom support is being considered
- Teachers with specialised skills and knowledge in areas such as learning support, life skills/ guidance, or counselling
- Any additional members who could provide appropriate input, for example, NGO's, specialists from FSS and SSRC and members of the DBST. When individual support needs are being considered, the team should include the following participants:

The SBSTs should also collaborate with other pertinent support providers, such as health professionals and the DBSTs (DoE, 2002:11). These teams are, apart from the roles mentioned above, also responsible for concentrating on the in-service training of teachers, as well as planning emergency strategies (Nel, Engelbrecht, Nel, & Tlale. 2014)

2.4.2 District-based support teams (DBSTs)

The DBST is an integrated professional team constituted of education officials based at education district centres. Participants in this team include education support providers employed by the DBE, other government departments in the area, and other relevant experts from various community structures. The main function of the DBST is to help

educational institutions, which include higher institutions of learning, colleges, adult learning centres, schools and early childhood learning centres to recognise barriers to learning and support learners in gaining access to the curriculum (Gaffney, 2015).

SIAS (DBE, 2014) states that the DBST forms an integral part in the successful implementation of an IE support system. DBSTs are responsible for:

(i) responding to appeals for support from SBSTs;
(ii) evaluating the acceptability of appeals for additional support made by SBSTs by collecting any extra details and/or supervising appropriate assessments, conducting site visits and/or interviews;
(iii) providing direction in respect of any additional strategies, programmes, concessions, accommodations, resources and services and that will strengthen the school-based support plan and
(iv) the identification of learners for placement in specialised environments, e.g. special schools, to gain access to specialised support services attached to full-service or mainstream schools or to access high-level outreach assistance (DoE, 2014:21).

2.4.3 Previous research on school-based support teams (SBSTs)

International studies focusing on the effectiveness of the support being provided via IE have been conducted and will be discussed below.

Maciver, Hunter, Adamson, Grayson, Forsyth and McLeod (2018) conducted a study in Edinburgh, Scotland which aimed to explain the support strategies and approaches commonly used by teachers and other education staff to support learners. Participants in this study were subject teachers, senior management (head teacher), special school teachers, support for learners (special education teachers), learning assistants, school librarians and a range of other professionals, including non-school-based staff (non-school-based health staff, visiting teachers, and specialist services staff). Physical, developmental, behavioural, and other learning disorders account for a substantial proportion of learners with additional needs in Scotland, therefore children with disabilities were selected as participants in the study. These researchers found that activities to support learners were not new, unusual or extraordinary. Participants found it demanding to emphatically and succinctly communicate their actions. They often

considered the complicated and subtle changes they were making merely as “normal” practice. This study identified support strategies and practices that target multiple factors and found that the areas highlighted and often discussed were social and emotional issues; problems with literacy and numeracy; communication and speech issues; problems with organisation; physical or motor difficulties; problems with attention and concentration and mental health concerns.

According to Donnelly, Blanchard and Samei (2016) nationally and internationally, policies support the development and implementation of individual education planning (IEP) for inclusion (Individuals with Disabilities Education Act [IDEA], US DoE 2004; Department of Education and Science [DES], 2017). The DES (2017) officially instructed the initiation of the process of individual planning for learners, although IEPs are not compulsory in the Republic of Ireland [RoI]. This directive states that learners’ support plans should be developed collaboratively and “should include clear, measurable learning targets, and specify the resources and interventions that will be used to address student needs” (DES 2017:21). It is important that these plans are used by teachers as an educational tool and assessment of these plans is an important element of devising, implementing and reviewing these support plans (King, Ní Bhroin & Prunty, 2018), irrespective of the challenges teachers may face to ‘cover’ the curriculum.

A study conducted by Ní Bhroin and King (2020) explored the effect of professional development associated with the IEP process on teachers’ perception and implementation in the RoI. The study investigated teachers’ collaborative practices in the IEP process. The data revealed special education teachers (SET) in the RoI can access professional development that is funded by the state through an award-bearing model provided by universities. IE remains a disputed concept, without a universally agreed definition. Its implementation is continually met with challenges and varies significantly within and across countries. In Ireland, these challenges include a lack of teacher efficacy, inadequate access to teacher education, and a lack of cooperative practice to support individual learning within curriculum planning and teaching (King, Ní Bhroin & Prunty, 2018). In addition to the challenge of varying school policies on inclusion, many teachers feel they lack the understanding, knowledge and skills to

create inclusive learning environments for learners with SEN (Brennan, King & Traverse, 2019).

Once a learner is identified or diagnosed as having a SEN, teachers may feel inadequately prepared to meet the needs of such a learner, although they often adapt strategies when working with different groups of children (Florian, 2014). Supporting a learner identified with a SEN, marks the learner as being different and can aggravate the particular impairment or specific difficulty. Contrarily, IE attends to the unique differences of learners during whole-class teaching in ways that avoid ostracism and also involves the use of specialist knowledge to inform teaching approaches (Florian, 2014). King, Ní Bhroin and Prunty (2018) conducted a study to explore the impact of professional development related to the individual education plan (IEP) process on teachers' understanding and practices in the Republic of Ireland (RoI). These researchers found that at school level, it was evident that the IEP was functioning as a pedagogical tool to bring about learner involvement and learning, and reflecting the teachers' provision of applicable learning for their learners. Regard for democratic principles was evident because the development, implementation and evaluation of the IEPs were based on joint decision-making. The contribution of all adults involved in the IEP process is acknowledged and appreciated, but it remains the responsibility of the special education teacher to address the individualised learning goals. A lack of appreciation of the importance of cooperation between the adults involved may thus be reflected (King, Ní Bhroin & Prunty, 2018).

Mbengwa (2010) asserts that Botswana has advanced considerably in teacher training and IE and that, in spite of certain limitations, teacher preparation for IE provision of Education Support Services (ESS) in that country appears to be comparatively progressive. The fact that teachers are allowed to do courses in special education during pre- and in-service teacher training is an example of this progress. There is also evidence that some learners experiencing barriers to learning and development receive support in mainstream schools, where possible, being assisted to access the general curriculum. This researcher further posits that parents are provided with support that equip them to develop strategies to accept their children's conditions, as well as with knowledge and skills to support their children at home. There does, however, seem to be various factors that hamper the effective implementation of IE and provision of ESS

in the country. Nevertheless, it is important to recognise the Botswana's efforts to mitigate those challenges (Mbengwa, 2010).

In South Africa, substantial research on IE has been conducted but only a few of the research studies have focused on SBSTs. The researcher felt that more knowledge and understanding concerning this topic is required, which gave rise to this research study. The findings of some South African studies about SBSTs are presented below.

Stofile, Raymond and Moletsane (2013) aver that the success of any public policy, including IE policy, depends on the capability to execute it. These authors further argue that teachers are likely to feel less confident about their ability to effectively include learners with diverse needs, if they are not equipped with the necessary skills and knowledge. Their confidence in supporting other teachers will also be affected. The current study also found that teachers did not receive training in inclusive and special education while others felt that the basic education system is failing to provide them with the necessary support to perform their duties and functions and this resulted in some teachers feeling frustrated and incompetent.

A study that was conducted by Masango (2013) investigated the roles of the principal and the SBST in supporting teachers with the implementation of IE practices in their classes. Masango asserted that some teachers do not understand the content of EWP 6 and how to implement it at school level and they were left to struggle because their supervisors at school were also not empowered in this area. According to Mfuthwana and Dreyer (2018) it is logical that for IE to be successfully implemented, teachers must be sufficiently trained, and they need continuous support. Their study was conducted in two schools, both situated in informal settlements classified as no-fees paying schools in the Tshwane South District of Gauteng. The study revealed that the schools did not have systems in place for the implementation of IE in terms of the policy set out in EWP 6 (DoE, 2001).

Rulwa-Mnatwana (2014) investigated the SBSTs' understandings and experiences of IE in a study conducted in two schools in Khayelitsha in the Western Cape. The study found that most teachers have different experiences of IE. The SBSTs in her study mentioned that they could make a difference in schools if continuing professional

development and appropriate support were provided, and if the challenges that they experienced were addressed. She opined that the SBST members lacked expertise in learning support and counselling, and needed the guidance and support of trained experts. Rulwa-Mnatwana (2014) further found that policy seemed to assume that SBSTs were sufficiently trained to address the complicated social problems that the learners and teachers in South Africa experience. She posits that SBSTs were ordinary teachers who did not receive training in the moral philosophy and procedures of addressing sensitive psychosocial issues, and it was thus not surprising that SBST members were sometimes traumatised and felt overwhelmed when they had to address these sensitive cases. Her study concluded that, if the SBST was vital in the implementation of IE in South Africa, schools and the DBE need to revisit these roles and develop a Human Resource Development Strategy to empower teachers with the knowledge and skills necessary to fulfill these roles (Rulwa-Mnatwana, 2014).

Gaffney (2015) conducted research which aimed to explore SBSTs' experiences of providing support to their schools. Five government primary schools from the Johannesburg East District participated in the research and the study found that SBSTs' experiences of providing support within their schools were positive. These SBSTs however, indicated that they would like more parental involvement to improve learner motivation with regard to learning, as well as to provide learners who experience barriers to learning further support. They also mentioned that more support and involvement from their DBSTs would improve the learner referral process. Gaffney (2015) concluded that SBSTs, working in collaboration with learners, teachers, parents, other professionals and community members could help to empower individuals to take their rightful place within society.

In addition, Fourie (2017) researched the school based collaborative support networks in fostering IE in selected South African schools. Her study highlighted the crucial role played by teams of teachers, working together on the ground in schools to support all teachers, learners, and parents in the community. Fourie stated that when teachers collaborate and engage with many role players in establishing ties in the community, they build their social capital and thus create multiple opportunities to mobilise resources for addressing barriers to learning, and allowing teachers to support learners with special needs more effectively.

The above studies highlight that, within the IE framework, the establishment of SBSTs has value, but that the SBSTs efficacy in providing support requires further investigation.

2.5 INCLUSIVE EDUCATION (IE) AND BRONFENBRENNER'S ECOLOGICAL FRAMEWORK: THE STUDY'S THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

According to Anderson and Boyle (2014) IE does not happen in the boundaries of educational institutions. They posit that IE is a social construct and depends on the interrelation between various factors and people, and therefore research on IE and its practice should be regarded in this way. According to Anderson and Boyle (2014) creating environments that advance and support IEpractices for all learners, is complicated. They further posit that the learner is influenced and impacted by each of the environments or systems within the ecology of IE.

Bronfenbrenner's eco-systemic framework was adopted as the theoretical framework for this study in an attempt to understand aspects that influence the implementation of IE in mainstream primary schools in South Africa (Geldenhuys & Wevers, 2013). Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Theory (1979) states that children are generally enmeshed in different ecosystems which necessarily link with and impact each other in all aspects of the children's lives. These ecological systems range from the familiar home ecological system to the larger school system, and then to the broadest system which includes society and culture. Bronfenbrenner (1979:3) describes the person's environment as a "set of nested structures" [micro, meso, exo, macro and chrono-structures] where each of these structures influence the development of the learner (see Figure 2.4).

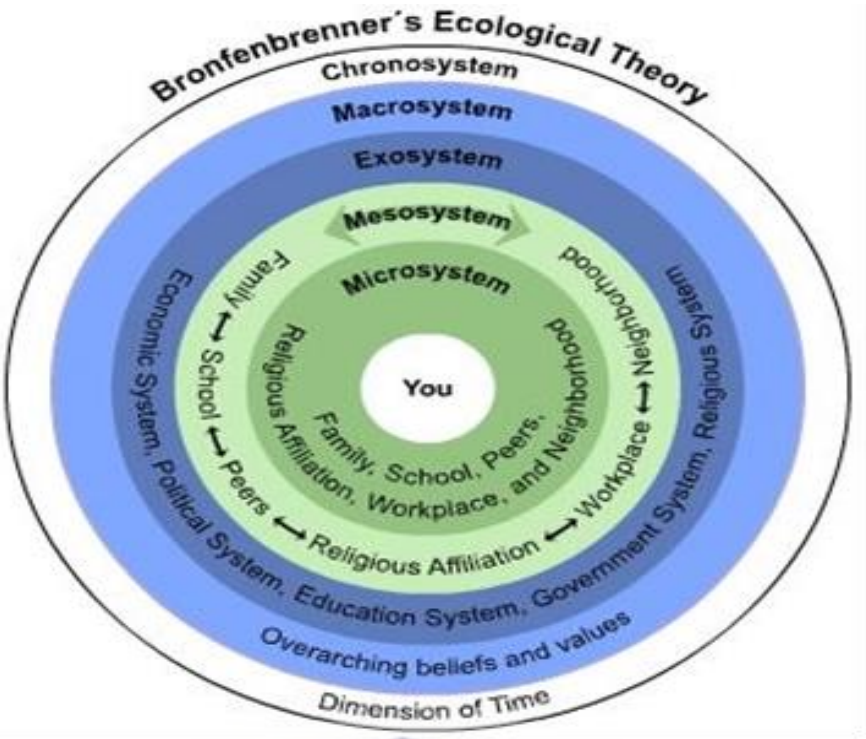

Figure 2.4: Urie Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Theory (Bronfenbrenner, 1979:9)

Swart and Pettipher (2016) posit that Bronfenbrenner's bio-ecological systems model, is often used in IE discourse as a method to understand the layers of interrelations and interactions which influence the lives of learners as illustrated in Figure 2.4. According to Donald, Lazarus and Lolwana (2009) the essence of using Bronfenbrenner's systemic theory is to show how individuals and groups at various levels of the above-mentioned social system are dynamically linked in interdependence and interacting relationships.

The multifaceted, contextualist model of human development is investigated by Bronfenbrenner's theory. Bronfenbrenner also acknowledged the psychological, physical, biological, social and cultural layers which impact on an individual's development and the interaction between development and these systems (Donald, Lazarus & Lolwana, 2009). In this study, the DBE relates to the macro system; the provincial education department related to the exo system; the districts are the meso system and the micro system is where the schools (SBST) are located.

I will commence discussing the micro-system, the first level of Bronfenbrenner's theory.

2.5.1 The Bronfenbrenner ecological model: Micro-system

Anderson and Boyle (2014) assert that the microsystem is the immediate surroundings in which the learner is exposed to formal and informal learning, as well as the general aspects of schooling. This involves their teachers, physical spaces, classroom cultures and routines, peers, curriculum and pedagogy and resourcing (Anderson & Boyle, 2014). According to Berns (2012) the microsystem can be described as the innermost structure where the earliest impact on the learner is the interaction between the family, peers, childcare and school. Bronfenbrenner (1995) describes these relationships as bi-directional as the adults influence the development of the learner and vice versa. Bronfenbrenner further asserts that, if learners are not supported by adults like teachers or other support personnel at this early stage, they are already at a disadvantage. Therefore, support for both teachers and learners should start in this central structure. In addition, the development of the learner is also affected when the adult – the guardian and teacher – is not supported by colleagues and other professionals in his or her attempts to support learners experiencing barriers to learning. The first part of a learner's microsystem is thus his home environment and this includes his interactions with his parents and siblings. The school is also part of the learner's microsystem, and this includes his school interactions with his teacher/s and the other learners in his class. This is the most influential level of the ecological systems theory (Bronfenbrenner, 1995). Swart and Pettipher (2016) state that a supportive microsystem plays a role in an individual's sense of belonging.

2.5.2 The Bronfenbrenner ecological model: Meso-system

The mesosystem includes the interconnections between two or more environments in which the growing person actively engages. With regard to learners, this refers to connection between environments such as the home, peer group, school and the neighbourhood (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). According to Anderson and Boyle (2014) this system recognises that there are not just connections and relationships happening between the systems, but also between the factors within each of the systems. The interconnections of the components of the microsystem such as the school, home, siblings, family and learner development are the functions of the meso-system. Effective interaction between these micro-systems impacts on the ability of learners to achieve their optimal learning potential and is thus vital. Support is thus essential in the

mesosystem, as the mutual relationships between the aforementioned role-players contribute to the optimal development of the child. The micro- and meso-systems are situated in the exo-system (Nel, et al., 2016; Berns, 2012).

2.5.3 The Bronfenbrenner ecological model: Exo-system

Geldenhuys and Wevers (2013) posit that the exo-system refers to one or more settings in which events occur that affect, or are affected by, what happens in the setting containing the learner, but the learner is not involved in it as an active participant (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). This includes decisions that have a bearing on the person but in which they have no participation in the decision-making process. Examples of such settings are school policies that were created by school governing bodies (SGBs) to provide for the learning needs of learners. This structure comprises role-players such as the extended family, the neighbourhood, the parents' work environments and mass media (Nel, et al., 2016; Berns, 2012). These factors do not directly affect the learner, but can play a crucial role in the successful functioning of the aforementioned support structures.

2.5.4 The Bronfenbrenner ecological model: Macro-system

The macrosystem incorporates the cultural world encompassing learners together with any underlying belief systems and consists of cultural values, customs, laws, political ideology, the economic system and national policies including, for example, EWP 6 (Bronfenbrenner, 1979; DoE, 2001; Geldenhuys & Wevers, 2013). The macro-system is not context-based but the outer structure informing the micro-, meso- and exo structures. According to Bronfenbrenner (1979) public policy, for example, EWP 6, consequently impacts the development and behaviour of the learner because it determines particular properties of the other three systems happening in everyday life.

2.5.5 The Bronfenbrenner ecological model: Chronosystem

The chronosystem is the final level of Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory. According to Geldenhuys and Wevers (2013) the changes that occur over a period of time in any one of the systems is represented in the chronosystem. All the experiences endured by a person during his or her lifetime, including major life transitions,

environmental events and historical events comprise this system. According to Bronfenbrenner (1979) the chronosystem adds the dimension of time, which demonstrates the influence of both change and consistency in the child's surroundings. This system may include tremendous societal changes such as economic cycles and wars, as well as a change in address, family structure or parents' employment status. Each of these systems work to influence each other, but also to impact and be impacted by the child. Several systems can impact the child simultaneously but systems do change to new ones (Geldenhuys & Wevers, 2013).

The chronosystem includes time-related changes in ecological systems or even in individuals, which produces new conditions influencing development (Berns, 2012). The dimension of time is surrounded in this system, because it is connected to the surroundings of the child. In order to successfully provide support, it is essential that support structures take note of learners' and teachers' changing needs because children react differently to environmental changes (Nel, et al., 2016; Paquette & Ryan, 2001).

Many changes have taken place in the education system in South Africa over the years since the end of apartheid, i.e. the implementation of policies to enforce IE such as the EWP6 (DoE, 2001), the Guidelines for Inclusive Learning Programmes (DBE, 2010), the SIAS (DBE, 2014) and others that affect learners and teachers in need of additional support.

The meso-system comprises the support structures for South African schools, teachers and learners as formulated by the various policy documents referred to above. The inception of DBSTs, Institution-Level Based Support Teams (ILST) (also called SBSTs), FSS as well as SSRC is included in this system. It is the responsibility of the DBST "to provide a coordinated professional support service that draws on expertise in further and higher education and local communities, targeting special schools and specialised settings, designated full-service and other primary schools and educational institutions" (DoE, 2014:8).

The first level of support for learners and teachers in a school is the SBST, previously known as the ILST. Its main functions are to arrange support services within the school by acknowledging and addressing barriers to learning (DoE, 2001). Included in this

team are members of the school management team (SMT), teachers, members of the DBST, volunteers and other roleplayers from the community (such as health professionals, other governmental departments and NGOs). Furthermore, EWP 6 (DoE, 2001) seeks to transform the school setting to be responsive to the needs of its learners. For this to be achieved, EWP 6 foresees a school environment that acknowledges individual differences, adapts to the needs of learners by using flexible teaching and assessment methods, implements a flexible curriculum, and organises resources to support diversity. In EWP 6 the focus is on building a learner's strengths rather than focusing on their weaknesses. A three-tier support system that includes: a) The SBST, b) The DBST, and c) the provincial and national Departments of Education is recommended by EWP 6 (DoE, 2001).

In order to provide efficacious support to both teachers and learners within the education system, the three levels of support envisaged are required to cooperate with one another. In light of the above, it is apparent that there is a need for the SBST, the DBST and the provincial and national Departments of Education to share expertise, knowledge and skills. The recommended three-tier support system is multi-faceted and suggests that IE can be achieved through the cooperation of all three of the teams listed above, and not by one team only (DoE, 2001).

Moolla and Lazarus (2014) assert that, in order for schools to be effectively supported and empowered to perform their function of delivering quality education, collaboration within the sector of school development is essential. Donohue and Bornman (2014) posit that different social groupings in South Africa have varying objectives concerning the needs of learners with disabilities based on their beliefs and what they consider to be best practices. This is as a result of the country's unique history of apartheid, poverty and diversity in ethnicity and language; complications that compound the difficulties of implementing IE. Engelbrecht et al., (2013) postulate that it has become progressively apparent that what happens in mainstream classrooms is crucial; and that it is not sufficient to only offer learners with disabilities and special educational needs access to these classrooms. These researchers mention that the levels of acceptance of learners with learning barriers by both teachers and their peers, and specifically how all learners can participate meaningfully in the various learning activities, is of the utmost importance.

2.5.6 The Bronfenbrenner ecological model: Proximal processes

According to Smit, Preston and Hay (2020) the inclusive approach is consistent with a systemic and developmental approach to understanding problems and planning action. Bronfenbrenner's bio-ecological process-person-context-time (PPCT) model (Bronfenbrenner & Morris 1998) provides a comprehensive framework reflecting both the systemic and developmental dimensions, making this model useful for the classification of phenomena related to the person-context interaction.

Bronfenbrenner referred to the forms of interaction in an individual's immediate environment as proximal processes (Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 1998). This researcher placed great emphasis on proximal processes and called them "the engines of development" (Bronfenbrenner & Evans, 2000, p. 118). Bronfenbrenner further asserted that development takes place as a result of processes consisting of complex, reciprocal interactions among the persons, objects, and symbols in the immediate environment.

Proximal processes involve not only relationships among people but also relations between people and the objects and symbols with which they come into contact;
Proximal processes are effective interactions that take place regularly and over an extended period of time. Parent–child activities, teacher–child interactions, and instruction and participation in educational activities are examples of proximal processes.

According to Taylor and Gebre (2016) assert that in teacher–student relations, proximal processes may involve instructional time and the creation of relations that promote learning and competency. Proximal processes are vital experiences and represent the space where learners and teachers interact to move learning forward. Swart and Pettipher (2016) posit that proximal processes extend to multifaceted relationships and interactions between the individual's personal and interpersonal processes, other individuals, objects or symbols. These proximal processes occur in the immediate environment and relate mostly to the *micro* environment.

2.6 CONCLUSION

Developments in inclusion and IE, together with their influence on the implementation of policy have been reviewed in this chapter. The role and function of the of the SBST as proposed in EWP 6 (DoE, 2001) has been considered.

The Screening Identification Assessing and Support (SIAS) policy seeks to strengthen EWP 6 (DoE, 2001) and aims to respond to the needs of all learners in our country, particularly those who are at risk of being ignored or ostracised. This policy recognises the need to address learning barriers through efficacious support structures such as the SBST and is thus fundamental to this research. This study aimed to research experiences of the support provided by SBST's within their schools. This research was conducted for the purpose of proposing possible intervention strategies and procedures that can aid in supporting South African learners and teachers. This study which promotes the expansion of the concept from medical diagnosis to a more holistic acknowledgement of the extent of barriers to learning, is framed within Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems model. This model clearly defines the vital importance of supporting learners in overcoming learning barriers through the active participation in mainstream education, and in society at large. The research methodology used in the current study is discussed in the next chapter.

CHAPTER THREE
RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

3.1 INTRODUCTION AND AIM OF THE STUDY

In this chapter an overview of the research methodology for the study is provided. The methodological orientation, as well as the different data collection methods and techniques used in the study are discussed. The procedures I followed during field work and how I analysed the data are explained. Details of the research design are also discussed. A description of the participants and the data collection and data analysis processes is provided. I indicate how I attempted to ensure trustworthiness in the collection and analysis of the data presented. I also discuss the ethical considerations related to the study.

The aim of the study, as explained in Chapter 1, was to determine the role of the SBSTs in providing support at two primary schools in the Cape Metropole. This study was conducted to answer the following research questions that frame the focus of my investigation:

- What does IE mean to members of the SBST?
- What are their roles and how do they implement IE in their schools?
- What challenges do they experience in implementing IE?
- What successes have they achieved in implementing IE?

This study therefore explored SBSTs' experiences of the support that they provide within their schools.

3.2 RESEARCH PARADIGM

3.2.1 Introduction

Antwi and Kasim (2015) assert that the term paradigm originated from the Greek word 'paradeigma' which means pattern. This term was first used by Kuhn (1962) to indicate a conceptual framework shared by a community of scientists which supplied them with an appropriate model for investigating and solving problems. Kuhn (1962:32) defines a paradigm as: "an integrated cluster of substantive concepts, variables and problems

attached with corresponding methodological approaches and tools…" This researcher also posits that the term paradigm refers to a research culture with a set of values, beliefs and suppositions that a community of researchers has in common with regard to the nature and conduct of research (Kuhn, 1977). Similarly, Willis (2007) explains that a paradigm is a world view, belief system or framework that guides practice and research. A paradigm therefore implies a system of scientific and academic ideas, values and assumptions or pattern structure and framework (Olsen, Lodwick & Dunlop, 1992). Antwi and Kasim (2015) states that a paradigm is simply an approach to thinking about and doing research.

According to Terre Blanche and Kelly (1999) epistemology, methodology and ontology are the three major dimensions of the research process. The nature of the reality to be studied is identified by ontology. Epistemology identifies the nature of the relationship between what can be known and the researcher and the practical way in which the researcher goes about doing the research is specified by methodology (Terre Blanche & Kelly, 1999). A research paradigm is a comprehensive system of inter-connected practice and thinking that describes the nature of the investigation together with these three facets. Similarly, Willis (2007) posits that, philosophically, a paradigm encompasses a view of the nature of reality - whether it is internal or external to the knower (ontology); a connected view of the kind of knowledge that can be created and standards for defending it (epistemology); and a disciplined approach to creating that knowledge (methodology) (Terre Blanche & Kelly, 1999).

Taylor and Medina (2013) state that there are several major paradigms that govern the inquiries of educational researchers into the policies and practices of education. Each paradigm carries related theories of professional development, teaching and learning (or didactics), curriculum and assessment, etc. According to Lund (2012) research paradigms include paradigms such as positivism, post-positivism, critical theory, and interpretivism. Next, I briefly discuss the interpretivist paradigm as my paradigm of choice in guiding the study and provide reasons for this choice.

3.2.2 The interpretivist paradigm

The interpretivist paradigm is rooted in the fact that the processes used to clarify knowledge connected to human and social sciences cannot be similar to its usage in

physical sciences. This is because individuals commit acts based on their understanding of their world, while the world does not (Pham, 2018). Similarly, Cohen, Morrison and Wyse, (2010) claim that interpretivism's main belief is that research must be observed from inside through the direct experience of the people, and can never be objectively observed from the outside. These researchers further assert that constant, relevant connections that can be recognised in the study of natural science cannot be made in the classroom where learners and teachers construct meaning. Therefore, the role of the scientist in the interpretivist paradigm is to, "understand, explain, and demystify social reality through the eyes of different participants" (Cohen et al, 2011:10). According to Creswell (2007) interpretivists adopt a relativist ontology in which a single phenomenon may have various clarifications rather than a truth that can be determined by a measurement process. From the interpretive viewpoint, researchers achieve a better understanding of the experience and its complexity in its special environment, rather than attempting to generalise the base of understanding for the whole population (Pham, 2018; Creswell, 2007).

According to Thanh and Thanh (2015), in the search for answers, the researcher who follows the interpretive paradigm applies those experiences to construct meaning and give his interpretation of the gathered data. Interpretivists believe an understanding of the context in which the research is conducted is critical to the interpretation of data. According to Terre Blanche and Kelly (1999) a researcher needs to remain close to the data and to interpret it from a position of a clear understanding for the research to be successful. Miller and Glassner posit that interpretivist researchers make use of the technique of in-depth interviewing to gain a better understanding of the many lived experiences (subjective truths) which people hold as their realities and repudiate the belief that there is only one truth. They further posit that interpretive research focuses on the "meanings that people attribute to their experiences and social worlds" (Miller & Glassner, 2011:133). However, Hammersley (2013:26) emphasises that, since multiple interpretations of human relationships are developed, interpretivist researchers should try to understand "the diverse ways of seeing and experiencing the world through different contexts and cultures" and try to avoid the bias of studying the events and people with their own interpretations. According to Merriam (1998) researchers in this paradigm seek to understand rather than explain. Since my study was located in the

interpretivist paradigm, a few advantages and disadvantages related to this paradigm are discussed next.

3.2.2.1 Advantages of employing an interpretivist paradigm in research

Pham (2018) states that the first advantage of using the interpretivist paradigm is that, with the diverse views emanating from investigating phenomena, interpretivist researchers do not only describe objects, humans or events, but also deeply understand them in the social context. This type of research can also be conducted in natural settings using methodologies such as ethnography, grounded theory, case study or life history to understand the research participants and to eventually supply credible knowledge with regard to the goals of the investigation (Gemeda, 2010; Pham, 2018). Another advantage is supporting main methods of data collection such as interactive interviews which gives the researcher the opportunity to prompt and investigate things that they cannot see. Researchers are also allowed to delve into an interviewee's prejudices, values, perceptions, views, perspectives, feelings and thoughts. The collected data will give researchers a better understanding to inform further action (Pham, 2018).

Dudovskiy (2016) states that qualitative research areas such as cross-cultural differences in organisations, leadership and analysis of factors impacting leadership, issues of ethics, can be studied in a great level of depth through the adoption of interpretivism. Dudovski avers that unprocessed information gathered through interpretivist studies might be connected with a high level of plausibility, as data in this kind of research is inclined to be honest and trustworthy (Dudovskiy, 2016).

The interpretivist paradigm also has a few disadvantages, in spite of the aforementioned main strengths.

3.2.2.2 Disadvantages of employing an interpretivist paradigm in research

According to Cohen, Manion and Marison and Wyse (2011), one of the limitations of employing the interpretivist paradigm in research is that the interpretivists pursue a deeper understanding and knowledge of phenomena within difficult circumstances, rather than generalise these results to other people and other contexts. Therefore, the

findings of studies located in this paradigm lack the benefit of generalisation to similar samples and/or populations that is possible with positivist approaches to research. However, the purpose of the study was not to make generalisations about the functioning of SBSTs in most or all schools. Rather, it sought to provide an in-depth understanding of how SBST members experience their roles at the two specific schools that participated in the study.

Another limitation of interpretivism is that its ontological view tends to be subjective rather than objective (Mack, 2010). Therefore, research outcomes are undeniably affected by the researcher's cultural preference, own belief system, own interpretation and ways of thinking which may lead to researcher bias. In the current study, I as the researcher, was very aware of researcher bias as I am a teacher and a member of a SBST. I therefore tried to counter any potential bias by continuously taking cognisance of the principles of trustworthiness as described later in this chapter. During the interviews, for example, I was keenly aware of not asking leading questions or sharing my prior knowledge about the study focus so that I did not influence the responses of the participants (Mack, 2010).

Another critique of interpretivism is its noticeable lack of addressing the ideological and political impact on social reality and knowledge. This paradigm does not focus on the problems related to the empowerment of individuals and societies, but rather targets the understanding of current phenomena (Mack, 2010). This conceptual outlook completely disregards the concerns of agency and power, which are facets of our community. This particular limitation has probably led to the role of critical inquiry in further strengthening the viability of research. However, in this study, I investigated the roles and responsibilities of the members of the SBSTs and what support they received in this regard (Pham, 2018; Mack, 2010). Next, I provide an argument supporting my choice of paradigm.

3.2.3 Choice of paradigm for my study

My research was to determine the functioning of the SBSTs at two schools in the Cape Metropole. The aim was to understand the experiences of SBST members from individual participants' points of view, that is, their subjective experiences as SBST

members. An interpretivist paradigm was therefore chosen. This paradigm allowed me to explore the participants' subjective experiences of the phenomenon under investigation. Interpretive research is more subjective than objective. Willis (2007:110) echoes my reasons for the choice of paradigm to guide the current study by arguing that the goal of interpretivism is to value subjectivity, and "interpretivists eschew the idea that objective research on human behaviour is possible". Similarly, to van Thiel (2014), the interpretivist paradigm is also known as the constructivist paradigm because it explains what the individual understands. She posits that two people can interpret events differently and the interpretive approach provides an explanation for this. Van Thiel (2014) further states that this paradigm is used by researchers who want to make meaning of human behaviour and who want to understand the different opinions of people.

Researchers are of the opinion that qualitative methods are mainly used in the interpretivist paradigm (Glesne & Peshkin, 1992; Silverman, 2000; McQueen, 2002; Thomas, 2003; Willis, 2007; Nind &Todd, 2011). Attempting to give a detailed explanation for the use of the qualitative method in the interpretive paradigm, McQueen (2002) avers that interpretivist researchers look for methods that allow them to thoroughly understand the relationship of people to their environment, and the role those people play in establishing the community they are a part of.

In this study, semi-structured interviews and semi-structured-questionnaires were used. McNamara (1999) posits that interviews are especially useful pursuing comprehensive knowledge about a topic, as well as for revealing the story behind a participant's experiences. Interviews may be useful to further investigate the participants' responses, for example, after they have completed questionnaires, researcher scan their response and develop follow-up questions with individual participants. (McNamara, 1999). The data collection methods used in this study were therefore aligned to the interpretivist paradigm guiding this study. I will discuss the research approach used in the study is the following section.

3.3 RESEARCH APPROACH: QUALITATIVE APPROACH

The two major research approaches in research are qualitative, that is, an approach mostly associated with the social sciences, and quantitative, usually associated with natural sciences. A third approach which is used mostly in social sciences, and specifically in educational research, and which blends the characteristics of both paradigms, is the mixed methods approach (Khaldi, 2017). A qualitative research approach suited the purpose of this study which was to explore the roles and responsibilities of the SBST in two schools in the Western Cape by gathering information from the members of the different teams; by means of questionnaires and interviews. Qualitative research is defined by Yates, Partridge and Bruce (2012) as an approach that explores disparities in people's experiences of their world. According to Thanh and Thanh (2015) there is a connection between the qualitative methodology and the interpretivist paradigm as one is a data collection method and the other a methodological approach. I therefore chose the aforementioned research paradigm and research approach for the current study. Thanh and Thanh (2015) further assert that researchers use the interpretivist paradigm and qualitative methods do not rely on numbers or statistics, but rather seek experiences and perceptions of individuals for their data to reveal reality.

According to Merriam (1994), the ontological and epistemological presuppositions supporting qualitative studies are that knowledge is constructed through participants' social interconnection with their reality. Since the ways in which participants interconnect with their social worlds differ, their constructed realities will reflect these differences (Merriam, 1994). According to Newby (2010) it is clear that the nature of quantitative enquiry is different from qualitative enquiry and this difference is reflected in the character of the data (a concern with values) and also the methods used to analyse such data. Qualitative approaches are explanatory and engrossed with why and how things happen the way they do. These approaches draw on interpretation and insight and allow researchers to draw on their personal responses to evidence. Qualitative research approaches use methods that are different from those used in quantitative designs (Newby, 2010).

Creswell (1997) states that in using qualitative methodologies for inquiry into a social or human problem, the researcher conducts the study in a natural setting, analyses

words, builds a holistic, complex picture, and reports detailed views of participants. Qualitative designs are methodical and efficient and accentuate gathering of data on natural phenomena (McMillan & Schumacher, 2006). According to Newby (2010) qualitative research deals much more with the processes that drives behaviour, and the experiences of life.

Qualitative research focuses on the perception of how people choose to live their lives, the significance of their experiences and their sentiments about their condition (Newby, 2010). Creswell (2013) states that qualitative research can also be described as an effective model that occurs in a natural setting that enables the researcher to develop a level of detail from being highly involved in the actual experiences. According to Henning (2005) the researcher can tell the story from the point of view of the participants and does not act as an expert who passes judgement on the phenomenon. Qualitative research is rooted in the notion that knowledge is generally circulated amongst a community of knowers, each having an individually created reality (Gitchel & Mpofu, 2012). The current study is descriptive as I endeavoured to capture the perceptions and experiences of members of two SBSTs.

As a researcher I worked within the interpretivist paradigm and qualitative approach in this study as I wanted to understand the world of the participants (Cohen and Manion, 1994) through gaining insight into their beliefs, backgrounds and experiences (Creswell, 2003; Yanow & Schwartz-Shea, 2011). Thomas (2003:6) maintains that qualitative methods are usually supported by interpretivists, because the interpretive paradigm "portrays a world in which reality is socially constructed, complex, and ever changing…" Interpretivist researchers search for systems that allow them to obtain an in depth awareness of the interconnection of human beings to their environment, and the role they play in constructing their community (McQueen, 2002).

There are, however, advantages and disadvantages in the use of the qualitative approach.

3.3.1 Advantages of the qualitative research

Using qualitative research approaches and methods has some benefits. According to Denzin (1989) a qualitative research approach produces the thick (detailed) explanation of participants' experiences, opinions and feelings; and clarify the meanings of their behaviour. Secondly, some researchers aver that the qualitative research approach (interpretivism) completely acknowledges the human experience in pariticular environments. According to Denzin and Lincoln (2002) qualitative research is a multifaceted field which comprises a broader range of interpretive approaches of understanding human experiences, research methods and epistemological viewpoints. McNamara (2001) states that, from an epistemological viewpoint, an SBST cannot be separated from its context, values and culture. Data collection in qualitative research is detailed and subjective; as it invites researchers to uncover the participants' emotional experience, and to ascertain how interpretations are shaped through and in culture (Corbin & Strauss, 2008). A qualitative research design (interactive approach), consequently, has an accommodating structure as the purpose can be constantly constructed and reconstructed (Maxwell, 2012). Thus, by harnessing qualitative research methods, the relevant and comprehensive analyses of a circumstance can be produced, and consequently, the participants have adequate freedom to decide what is regular for them (Flick, 2011). The disadvantages of qualitative research approaches and methods will be discussed in the next section.

3.3.2 Disadvantages of qualitative research

Qualitative research also has disadvantages although it reveals its own strengths. Firstly, according to Silverman (2010), qualitative research approaches occassionally focus more on experiences and meanings, and omit environmental sensitivities. I took cognisance of and tried to omit this potential disadvantage throughout the current study. As the qualitative researcher, I conducted the research strategically, yet flexibly and contextually. I ensured that my decisions were not exclusively based on sound research strategy but by also consciously displaying a sensitivity to the changing contexts and situations in which the research took place (Mason, 2002).

Secondly, policy-makers regard the credibility of results using a qualitative approach as limited (Rahman, 2016). According to Dumas and Anderson (2014) qualitative research

does not provide recommendations for best practices or claim to offer "proof " of policy outcomes and is therefore seen as being less relevant for policymakers. Sallee and Flood (2012) aver that when research is called upon, stakeholders often use quantitative research methods. Policy-makers need to be guided by research findings that can be generalised and therefore more appropriate to inform policy-making, which qualitative research cannot claim. However, in line with the tenets of qualitative research, the focus of the current study was not to generalise findings to other SBSTs, but to attempt an in-depth understanding of the roles and responsibilities of the SBSTs at two schools.

The third potential disadvantage is that qualitative methods have is that they are time-consuming. A qualitative study that takes months to conduct, administer and analyse is not an option If stakeholders need to make an urgent decision (Sallee & Flood, 2012). Flick (2011) also mentions that one can generalise the results to the larger population in only a very limited way and that the analyses of the cases take a considerable amount of time. I successfully managed to complete the current study, despite the challenges with the time it took to conduct the study.

Fourthly, the interpretation and analysis of the data may be more complicated (Richards & Richards, 1994). Berg and Lune (2012:4) also stated that, “Qualitative research is a long hard road, with elusive data on one side and stringent requirements for analysis on the other”. Darlington and Scott (2003) claimed that, along with the data interpretation and analysis concerns, developing the undeveloped question into a researchable form is harder, and the refining question in qualitative research may be continuous throughout a whole study. In the current study, this potential disadvantage was mitigated by continuous discussions and input from my research supervisor.

The fifth possible disadvantage is the relatively small samples used in most qualitative studies, and are therefore limiting in generalising the findings to the whole population of the research (Harry & Lipsky, 2014). Mohajan (2018) posits that issues on anonymity and confidentiality can be problematic during the presentation of findings. He further states that, though the presence of the researcher in the data gathering process is unpreventable, it may influence and or affect the responses of the participants (Mohajan, 2018). As previously mentioned, however, the intention of the current study was not to generalise the findings. I used a pilot study, semi-structured questionnaires and focus group interviews to extract rich data from the participants in the study. I

consciously tried to avoid bias during the data collection and analysis processes. Please refer to Section 3.8 which discusses the measures I took to avoid bias. The study's research design is discussed in the following section.

3.4 RESEARCH DESIGN

McMillan and Schumacher (2006) aver that a research design merely describes how the study was conducted and summarises the methods for conducting the study, including from whom, when, and under what conditions the data was obtained. Furthermore, the research design indicates the general plan: what methods of data collection were used, how the research was set up and what happened to the subjects. According to Creswell (2013), qualitative methods can be separated into five groups, namely, ethnography, grounded theory, case study, narrative and phenomenological. I will briefly mention the first four research methods and thereafter discuss the phenomenological research design which was the design chosen for this study.

Creswell (2013) states that in ethnography, the focus is on the real-life experiences of a specific group of people in their natural surroundings over a long period; and the data is mainly gathered through interviews and observations. Grounded theory is a method of inquiry in which the researcher develops theory grounded in the perspectives of participants; and various data collection sources are used to develop the new theory. Creswell (2013) further posits that a case study is a method of inquiry in which the researcher uses a variety of data collection methods over a sustained period to conduct a comprehensive investigation about a process, a programme, an event or an activity linked to a specific group of people. When conducting narrative research, the researcher studies the lives of people by asking individual(s) to present stories about their lives. The researcher then often retells this information in the form of a narrative chronology and eventually the narrative combines perspectives from the participant's life with those of the researcher's life in a joint narrative (Creswell, 2013).

3.4.1 Phenomenological research design

Phenomenological research involves investigating how an individual interprets the meaning of an event, contrary to how the event exists beyond the perception of people. This form of research therefore endeavours to understand what a group of people felt during their experience of a phenomenon. Perspectives, perceptions and understandings are analysed, and then used to create an understanding of what it's like to experience an event (Ayers, 2017). The study of phenomenology is rooted in philosophy and has been studied throughout history in a variety of forms (Merriam, 2014; Moustakas, 1994). Phenomenologists are interested in the descriptive and analytical experience of phenomena by individuals in their everyday world; the phenomenological term for this being the "lifeworld" (Creswell, 2013). Phenomenologists are thus more interested in the first-hand explanation of a phenomenon than they are in determining why participants experience live the way they do.

Literally, phenomenology is the study of "phenomena": appearances of things, or the ways we experience things, or things as they appear in our experience, thus the meanings things have in our experience (Smit, 2018). Phenomenology is the study of systems of awareness as experienced from the individual's point of view. Phenomenological investigations differ from other methods of qualitative research in that it endeavours to gain insight into the nature of a circumstance or situation from the viewpoint of respondents who have experienced it (Christensen, Johnson & Turner, 2010). According to the Centre for Innovation in Research and Teaching (CIRT), a phenomenological study aims to set aside preconceived assumptions about human experiences, biases, feelings and responses to a particular situation. It allows the researcher to probe the perspectives, perceptions, understandings, and feelings of those people who have actually experienced or lived the phenomenon or situation of interest (CIRT, n.d).

According to Mertens (2005) phenomenological research is a method of investigation in which the researcher attempts to recognise the participants' lived human experiences with a certain circumstance as reported by participants. Mertens (2005) further posits that the basic assumption of phenomenology is that the observer establishes meaning, and therefore human perception, not external influences or objects in the material world, is at the core of the analysis. Creswell (2009) and Merriam (2009) concur that

phenomenology is a study of people's conscious experience of their life world, that is, their everyday life and social action, with the emphasis on experience and interpretation.

Creswell (2013) asserts that it is the fundamental goal of the approach to arrive at a description of the nature of the particular phenomenon. According to Lincoln and Guba (1985), a phenomenon must be studied in its natural setting because individuals take their meaning for themselves within context. With roots in philosophy, psychology and education, phenomenology attempts to extract the purest, untainted data and in some interpretations of the approach, bracketing is used by the researcher to document personal experiences with the subject to help remove him or herself from the process (Maxwell, 2013). Eddles-Hirsch (2015) posits that bracketing is the process by which the researcher intentionally puts aside any predetermined knowledge or everyday beliefs she regards might be used to explain the phenomena under investigation. This allows the researcher to listen and record the participants' description of an experience in an open and unbiased manner.

The rationale for my choice of phenomenology as the research design was that it would allow me to accomplish what I set out to accomplish with the study, namely, to understand and explore the lived experiences of a small number of research participants as the members of the SBSTs of two different schools.

3.4.2 Advantages of phenomenology

Phenomenology has strengths and limitations, as any research method has. Overall, it can provide a rich and detailed view of a human experience. However, it does depend upon the articulateness of the participant and it requires that the researcher be objective and free of bias when interpreting the data. Ayres (2019) avers that focusing research on how an event or phenomena is perceived by people, rather than simply how the phenomena exists in a space, has some value. Ayres (2019) further argues that the fact that phenomenological research can provide us with a deep and comprehensive understanding of a single phenomenon, is its biggest advantage. According to Ayres (2019), phenomenological research allows for a truly unique approach to understanding a phenomenon and the data one can receive through this

type of research is rich and impressive. Phenomenology may add to the development of new theories, changes in responses or changes in policies; as it helps to understand a lived experience and brings meaning to it. Findings may reveal misunderstandings about an experience which may elicit action; or at least challenge prejudice and indifference; as it may be a way to have the voices of the respondents heard (Ayres, 2019).

3.4.3 Disadvantages of phenomenology

In highlighting the limitations of phenomenology, Easterby-Smith, Thorpe and Lowe (1991) state that data gathering can take up a great amount of time and resources. I mitigated this disadvantage by maximising my time, asking participants to complete the questionnaires before the actual focus group interview, thus saving time. I ensured that the appointments for the focus group interviews suited all the participants and confirmed the appointments well ahead of time. I ensured that I was on time, thus not wasting the valuable time of the participants. Armstrong (2010) opines that in the phenomenological or interpretive paradigm, it is very hard to control the pace, progress and end points of the research process, and that the analysis and the interpretation of data are also more difficult. According to Lee, Sulaiman-Hill and Thompson (2014) the research participants must be able to verbalise their thoughts and feelings about the experience being studied and it may be difficult for them to express themselves due to cognition, embarrassment, language barriers, age, and other factors. To mitigate these possible challenges, as the researcher, I put the participants at ease and encouraged them to speak in the language that they could best express themselves in. I also assured the members of the SBSTs that there are no wrong or right answers and that their opinions and feelings would be valued, respected and appreciated.

Eddles-Hirsch (2015) posits that phenomenology needs making phenomenological reduction; an important component to reduce biases, researcher interpretation, assumptions and predetermined ideas about an experience or phenomenon. Phenomenology also facilitates prejudice interpretation of researchers especially when the researchers have not yet mastered the technique of data analysis such as interviews. Eddles-Hirsch (2015) further asserts that the use of bracketing throughout the interview process may further contribute to the process of gathering information from the participants' perspectives. In this study, I attempted to neutralise or bracket my

biases through full disclosure by admitting that my personal and work background could influence my interpretation of the data, because I am also a member of the SBST at the school where I teach. Sutton and Austin (2015) assert that it is easy to slip into interpreting other people's narratives from your own viewpoint, rather than that of the participant, therefore being aware of the standpoints you are taking in your own research, is one of the foundations of qualitative work. Moustakas (1994) stated that the technique of collecting data can be a big issue when there is a large sample. This was not the case in my study.

3.5 POPULATION AND SAMPLING

3.5.1 Research sites

The study was conducted at two schools, situated in the Cape Metropole, in the Western Cape. Both schools are public ordinary schools, the one, School A, is situated in a previously disadvantaged area with limited resources and School B being a former Model C school, is situated in a previously advantaged area. The Model C system started in 1992 according to Christie and McKinney (2017) where the Apartheid government took the decisive step of declaring that all public white schools would be classified as Model C schools. All schools under white education departments were re-classified as state-aided schools where white-controlled governing bodies had substantial powers over finances, admissions and property.

School A is situated in an area dominated by unemployment and a high crime-rate with a total number of learners of 1072 while School B is situated in a previously exclusively white residential affluent suburb with a total of 644 learners. I consciously chose these two schools because they are from different socio-economic backgrounds and service a diverse group of learners from different areas in the northern suburbs of the Cape Metropole. The choice of these two schools would hopefully elicit rich data about the functioning of the SBSTs in different social contexts. These schools were also chosen because I have convenient access to them and they seem to have functioning SBSTs based on reports from colleagues as well as personal communication with the principals involved. In addition, I was hopeful, that the chosen schools would be in a position to provide valuable information on teachers' experiences with regards to the

implementation of inclusive education, the functioning of the SBST at these institutions and the support provided to them by the by the DBST.

3.5.2 Sampling

Gentles, Charles, Ploeg and McKibbon (2015) define sampling in qualitative research in its broadest sense as the selection of specific data sources from which data is collected to address the research objectives. De Vos, Strydom, Fouche and Delport (2005) assert that in qualitative research, sampling transpires after clearly establishing the conditions of the study. There are different sampling methods in qualitative research and in this study, purposive sampling was used to select the participants.

3.5.2.1 Purposive sampling

Rubin and Babbie (2005:245) assert that purposive sampling is also called judgemental sampling. According to De Vos, Strydom, Fouche and Delport (2011:232) purposive sampling "is based entirely on the judgement of the researcher", in that a sample is chosen by the researcher with the belief that it contains the most characteristic, representative or typical attributes of the population. In this type of sampling, participants are selected or sought after, using selection criteria based on the research question. Purposive sampling therefore uses selection criteria that guides the researcher to select participants with the relevant characteristics and personal experiences and necessary to uncover the appropriate knowledge for the study (Merriam, 2009). Polit and Beck (2012) assert that purposive sampling is used by a researcher to subjectively select participants based on who he/she thinks will be representative of the population.

The inclusion criteria for the selection of participants in the current study was that the participants had to be current SBST members at the two schools where the study was conducted. By selecting participants who are knowledgeable about the phenomenon under investigation, it was possible to ensure the validity of the data (Rice & Ezzy, 1999; Polit & Beck, 2008). According to Freeman, de Marrais, Preissle, Roulsont and St. Pierre (2007), validity is essentially a measure of the trustworthiness of data, and it increases the confidence in the inferences made.

The SBST members who participated in this study comprised of different staff members such as the teaching staff, SBST coordinators, departmental heads and the deputy principal (see Table 3.1). All of the members of the SBSTs participated in the focus-group interviews. School A had four participants and School B had five participants. In total there were 9 participants in the focus-group interviews from the two participating schools. In addition, each of the members of the SBSTs completed and returned the questionnaires related to the topic under investigation.

Table 3.1 Sample profile

Name of school	Composition of SBST	Socio-economic background
School A	1. LSEN teacher 2. HOD: Foundation Phase 3. Grade 4 teacher: Intersen Phase 4. Grade 5 teacher	Low socio-economic status
School B	1. Head of the SBST 2. Deputy Principal 3. HOD: Foundation Phase 4. HOD: Intersen Phase 5. Class teacher	Middle to high socio-economic status

3.5.2.2 Advantages of purposive sampling

Patton (2002) avers that in qualitative research, purposive sampling is commonly used to recognise and choose information-rich cases for the most appropriate use of available resources. Individuals or groups of individuals that are experienced and knowledgeable about a phenomenon of interest are identified and selected (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011). The main objective of purposive sampling is to focus on specific features of a group of people that will subsequently allow researchers to find answers to their key guiding questions (Etikan, Musa & Alkassim, 2016). Bernard (2002) and Spradley (1979) note, in addition to knowledge and experience, the importance of availability and willingness to participate, and the ability to communicate experiences and opinions in a meaningful, eloquent, and contemplative manner. In this study all the participants were members of their school's SBST.

According to Emmel (2013) theoretical or purposive sampling strategies give central importance to recognising the ways in which researchers apply their trained judgement and make decisions in their empirical investigation. According to the Centre for Innovation in Research and Teaching (CIRT, n.d), purposive sampling ensures that proper care will be taken in selecting the sample and at times. This method is less expensive and less time-consuming (CIRT). According to Bernard (2002) purposive sampling is a non-random technique that does not need a specific number of participants or underlying theories.

Simply put, the researcher sets out to find people who can and are willing to provide the information because of their knowledge or experience of the phenomenon under study, as he decides what needs to be known (Bernard, 2002). Random studies purposefully incorporate a sample with diverse ages, backgrounds and cultures, but in purposive sampling the focus is on people with particular characteristics who will be able to effectively assist with the relevant research (Etikan, Musa & Alkassim, 2016). Therefore, the inclusion criteria guided the selection of participants in this study.

3.5.2.3 Disadvantages of purposive sampling

Sharma (2017) posits that purposive sampling can be predisposed to researcher bias because researchers are making generalised or subjective assumptions when choosing participants and it can be difficult to defend the samples.

The idea that a purposive sample has been created based on the judgement of the researcher is not a good defence when it comes to alleviating possible researcher biases, especially when compared with probability sampling techniques that are designed to reduce such biases. However, this judgmental subjective component of purposive sampling is only a major disadvantage when such judgements are ill-conceived or poorly considered; that is, where judgements have not been based on clear criteria, whether a theoretical framework, expert elicitation or some other accepted criteria.

According to Sharma (2017) it can be challenging to defend the representativeness of the sample because of the subjective and non-probability based nature of selecting people, organisations or cases in purposive sampling. Specifically, it can be difficult to convince the reader that the judgement used to select people or teams to study was suitable. Therefore, convincing the reader that research using purposive sampling achieved analytical, theoretical or logical generalisation, can also be challenging. Sharma (2017) questions whether the results and any generalisations would have been the same if different units had been selected in this study.

I, as the researcher, ensured that the judgments used to select the various individuals in the purposive sampling was appropriate for the processes used based on the sampling inclusion criteria. All the participants of this study were members of their school's SBST.

The researcher asked the participants to be honest in their response and they were more relaxed and less self-conscious because they were in the presence of colleagues and friends. The researcher allowed the participants to concur, add more detail or differ from their colleagues to ensure that the information shared was reliable and trustworthy. I sensed that the participants felt more empowered and supported in the presence of their colleagues. I ensured anonymity and confidentiality and assured them that their input was valued and appreciated. I probed when questions were answered vaguely and encouraged all participants to give their individual input, even if it meant that it was a repetition of what another participant had stated.

Pannucci and Wilkins (2010) assert that interviewer bias refers to a systematic difference between how information is obtained, recorded, or elucidated. They further posit that interviewer bias can be minimised or eliminated if the interviewer is blinded to the outcome of interest or if the outcome of interest has not yet occurred, as in a prospective trial (Pannucci & Wilkins 2010). To minimise researcher bias in this study, I asked questions in the participants' language and inquired about the implications of the participants' thoughts and reactions. I also considered all the data obtained and analysed it with a clear and 'unbiased' mind. By continually re-evaluating the impressions and responses, I ensured that pre-existing assumptions were kept at bay.

I avoided summarising what the participants had said in my own words. I interviewed participants with the explicit aim of asking about what they thought, felt and how they behaved in relation to the study's focus. This approach hopefully provided participants the opportunity to candidly share their thoughts and feelings about the study phenomenon.

3. 6 DATA COLLECTION INSTRUMENTS

The research methods that were used in this study are consistent with the qualitative approach. Semi-structured questionnaires and focus group interviews were used. The data collection instruments were informed by the theoretical framework of the study, which is IE and Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Framework (Bronfenbrenner, 1979).

The instruments were appropriate, given the study's phenomenological research design, which emphasised the need to record the subjective experiences of participants with regard to the phenomenon, the role and responsibilities of the SBSTs under investigation. Each of the data collection methods used in this study are discussed next. Figure 3.1 illustrates the data collection, analysis and writing up of findings in this study.

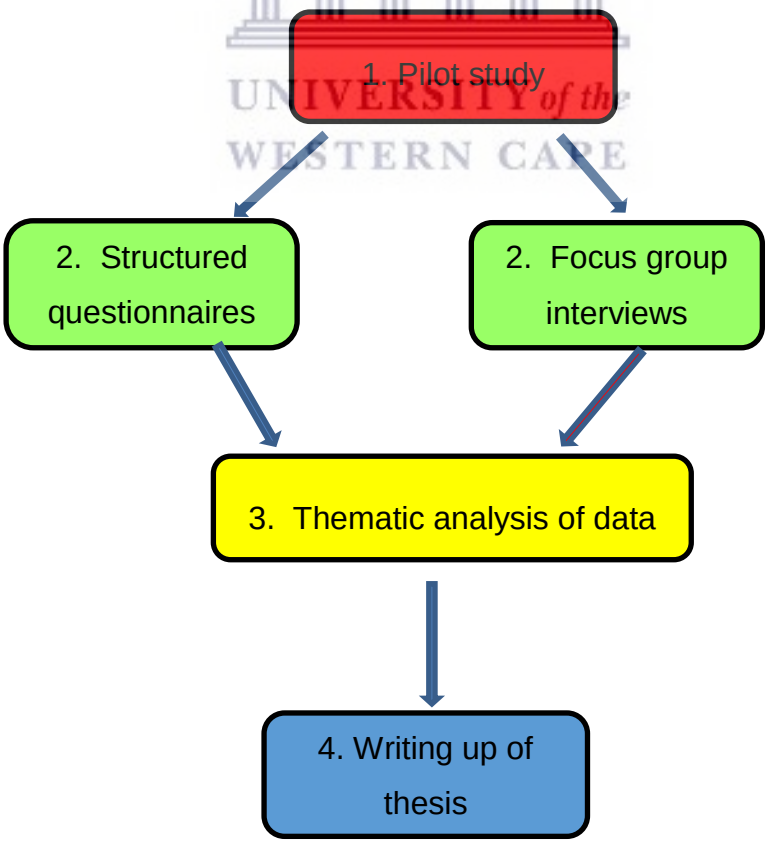

Figure 3.1: Data collection, data analysis and writing up of the findings

3.6.1 Pilot study

The data collection process of the current study began with a pilot study. Pilot studies are used as preparation for a full-scale study, regardless of the paradigm according to Tashakkori and Teddlie (2003). It is used to address potential practical issues in research procedures and trying out the questions (Van Teijlingen & Hundley, 2002). A pilot study, according to In (2017) asks whether something can be done, should the researchers proceed with it, and if so, how? He also indicates that a pilot study has a specific design feature and is usually conducted on a smaller scale than the main study. The importance of the pilot study according to him is for improvement of the quality and efficiency of the main study. The pilot study increases the researcher's experience with the study methods and provides estimates for sample size calculation (In, 2017). It would be helpful to ascertain if there are mistakes, or limitations within the interview design to make necessary adjustments to the major study (Kvale, 2007). Hassan, Schattner and Mazza (2006) contend that the use of a pilot study is one of the essential stages in a research project. The pilot study is used to determine the feasibility of the study protocol, to test recruitment and consent rate, to test the measurement instrument and to test data entry and analysis. According to de Vos et al (2011) pilot tests are moderately similar to ones that will be used in the research and are executed in convenient settings.

As the researcher in the current study, I am a member of my own school's SBST. I piloted the research instruments with members of my own school's SBST after obtaining permission from the school principal before collecting the study's data at the two identified schools. The pilot study was conducted to receive feedback so that the items of each instrument could be improved and also to refine the manner in which the research was conducted to improve the study's credibility, thereby improving the chances of successfully answering the research questions (Fawcett, Magnan & Mccarter, 2008). Another purpose of this exercise was to ascertain if there were uncertainties in the research questions. I also wanted to determine the extent to which participants could respond to the research questions. Some participants in the pilot were not comfortable in expressing themselves freely and some needed more probing questions. I had the opportunity to refine the questions and to ensure that probing questions were included in the interview guide. Prior to the commencement of the interviews, I explained the purpose of the research and the rights of participants were

also explained to them. The consent forms were completed by the participants. I then sought permission to record interviews from the participants. The interviews in the study were conducted in English. The interviews were conducted after school in a classroom and each interview lasted for about sixty to ninety minutes per SBST.

I used the information gathered to adapt the questionnaire and interview questions to give me the information that I required to answer the study's research questions**.** The pilot study also assisted in defining the research question and to assess the feasibility, reliability and validity of the study design. It assisted in assessing the proposed data analysis techniques to uncover potential problems.

3.6.2 Semi-structured questionnaires

The current study's theoretical framework guided the development of the items of the semi-structured questionnaires. McMillan and Schumacher (2006) assert that the most widely used technique for procuring information from subjects is the questionnaire. Mathers, Fox and Hunn (2007) assert that careful consideration should be given to the design of the questionnaire and the following should be taken into account: whether the questionnaire will be self-completed; the literacy level of the participants; the expected response rate and the topic and population of interest. Newby (2010) concurs that questionnaires are amongst the most popular of data gathering instruments. A questionnaire has the same questions for all participants, is relatively inexpensive, and can help to ensure anonymity (McMillan & Schumacher, 2006). Participants respond to statements or questions written for specific purposes when they complete questionnaires (McMillan & Schumacher, 2006).

According to De Vos et al (2005) if the researcher is interested in determining the extent to which participants hold a particular attitude or perspective, a regular questionnaire will probably contain as many statements as questions. Obtaining facts and opinions about a phenomenon from people who are knowledgeable in the specific topic, is the fundamental objective of a questionnaire (De Vos et al, 2005). In the case of the current study, two weeks before I started with the focus group interviews, I visited the school and requested the participants, the members of each of the SBSTs, to complete a questionnaire (see Appendix A). Each of the participants was given the questionnaire in order to gain clarity around the profile of the members of the SBST. The questionnaires

were used because it was hoped that they would provide additional information about the SBSTs, given the limited time allocated to conduct the focus group interviews. For the purpose of this study, it was considered important to get a profile of the SBSTs' composition, their knowledge of IE and the functioning of the team.

Popper (2004) posits that the advantages of questionnaires are that they are practical; large amounts of information can be collected from a large number of people in a short period of time and in a relatively cost-effective way. They can be carried out by the researcher or by any number of people with limited effect on its validity and reliability of the study. The results of the questionnaires can usually be quickly and easily quantified by either a researcher or through the use of a software package; it can be analysed more 'scientifically' and objectively than other forms of research (Popper, 2004).

According to Popper (2004), one of the disadvantages of questionnaires is that they may be inadequate to understand some forms of information and may lack validity because there is no way to tell how truthful a participant is being or how much the participant has thought about the questions being posed. It might also be that the participant may be forgetful or not thinking within the full context of the situation. Popper (2004) further states that people may read differently into each question and therefore reply based on their own interpretation of the question - i.e. what is 'good' to someone may be 'poor' to someone else, therefore there is a level of subjectivity that is not acknowledged. Jones, Baxter and Khanduja (2013) posit that telephone and personal surveys are very time and resource consuming whereas postal and electronic surveys suffer from low response rates and response bias. In order to mitigate this, I delivered the questionnaires to the schools personally before the focus group interviews took place. I also collected the questionnaires before the start of the focus group interviews.

3.6.3 Focus group interviews

According to Anderson (1990) a focus group interview is a qualitative technique for data collection. This group comprises of individuals with certain characteristics who focus discussions on a given issue or topic. In the current study the research focussed on the experiences of the SBSTs in two primary schools in the Cape Metropole of the Western Cape. Denscombe (2007) argues that a focus group consists of a small group of people that is usually between six and nine in number. This group is brought together by a trained moderator, which in this case was the researcher. Their core duty was to

explore attitudes and perceptions, feelings and ideas about a central topic. According to Maree (2007) the focus group interview has many positive outcomes, especially in alignment with the ideas of interpretivism (the paradigmatic lens of this study). Krueger and Casey (2000:4) clarify the purpose of focus groups by stating that they are set up "to understand how people think or feel about an issue, service or idea".

The use of semi-structured focus group interviews in this study assisted in eliciting information about SBSTs' shared experiences of implementing IE and their roles and responsibilities as members of the SBST. Similarly, Cohen, Mannion and Morrison (2011) support the view that focus groups yield a collective rather than individual view of the phenomenon under investigation. Each of the SBSTs participated in a semi-structured focus-group interview. The interview was guided by questions posed from a semi-structured interview schedule.

Ayres (2008) asserts that a semi-structured interview is a qualitative method of inquiry that combines a predetermined set of open-ended questions, questions that prompt further discussions, with the opportunity for the interviewer to explore particular themes or responses further. This type of interview schedule does not limit participants to a set of pre-determined questions and are used to understand how interventions work and how they could be improved. It also allows participants to discuss and raise issues that the researcher may not have considered and thus provides valuable information of the context of the participants' experience. The interview items in the current study were informed by the theoretical framework of the study which is IE and Bronfenbrenner's ecological framework (Ayres, 2008).

3.6.3.1 Advantages of focus group interviews

Focus groups should be seen as a way of bridging the gap between people and to bring about a process of sharing as well as comparing among the participants. In focus groups, participants can help each other understand the variety of others' experiences and are they are particularly useful as they attempt to understand diversity (De Vos et al, 2011). Gorman and Clayton (2005) also identify various strengths of focus group interviews. They assert that since focus group sessions require only moderate time commitment from both participants and moderator, rich qualitative data can be collected with reasonable speed. Between one and two hours are sufficient for most discussions,

depending on the number of questions and the complexity of the issues. Participants can quickly see what is being done, and almost always accept that the method is appropriate. Participants are encouraged to not merely respond to the moderator, but to interact with each other. This results in the emergence of a variety of complexities of attitudes and beliefs. The contributions of other group members in focus groups provide an opportunity for immediate feedback or explanation of one's viewpoint. They allow the researcher to consider verbal and non-verbal communication like facial expressions, gestures, and other forms body language. Focus groups also allow a researcher to explore the unexpected facets of the problem being studied (Gorman & Clayton, 2005). Bloor, Frankland, Thomas and Robin (2001) clearly stated the relevance of focus group interviews by asserting that focus groups provide access to group meanings, processes and norms. Simply put, data that is generated by using focus groups can provide information about what norms are held by the group and how these groups construct meaning.

3.6.3.2 Disadvantages of focus group interviews

Gibbs (1997) posits that one possible disadvantage in using the focus group method, is that it is considerably difficult to get participants together on time for the group session, as was the case in this study as the participants had to attend meetings or extra–curricular activities. According to Gorman and Clayton (2005), there are a number of other limitations associated with the focus group interview. They state that a few forthright participants may influence or intimidate other members in the group discussion. Some participants may conform to the responses of other participants even though they may not agree, because of the nature of group conversation. It may sometimes be challenging for the researcher to find the group with the required attributes. However, with regard to the current study, this disadvantage was not experienced since purposive sampling ensured that participants were appropriately selected. If the moderator is not skilled in managing the group interaction, the success of the focus group is affected. Patton (2001) explains that participants often have aspects or information they might wish to explain or question, and often, these specific areas contain rich information. This motivated me as the researcher in the current study, to incorporate a final or closing question, at the end of the questionnaire, which provided enough time for the participants to add anything that they had not mentioned

during the interview. It can be time- consuming to collect data, therefore in the current study, one hour was the time limit to minimise fatigue for both interviewer and interviewees.

In the current study the key challenge that I as the researcher experienced during the focus group interviews was that every participant wanted to share and participate; they interjected while another participant was responding during the research sessions. I mitigated this challenge by asking every participant to respect the speaker and to voice their opinion and respond to the question separately; irrespective if they felt that their answer was the same as the previous participant. Participants were encouraged throughout to speak out and to share their views, as their opinions were confidential and would remain anonymous. I probed further when I felt that the question was not answered fully. The voice recordings obtained from the focus group interviews were transcribed verbatim.

The focus group interviews took place at the two schools in the venues identified by the principals of the schools and lasted approximately 60 – 90 minutes. I visited School A at the end of the school-day during their SBST meeting time. The SBST had arranged that no discussions of learners would take place during that time, and that they would accommodate me to conduct the focus group interview. I conducted the focus group interview of School B before the school day started. The members of the SMT were excused from the morning briefing and the assembly that followed. This was the only time the members could meet because they had a very full extra-mural programme, and needed their SBST meeting time for the discussion of the referred learners.

I again explained the background of the research, as well as the ethical considerations relating to participation to the participants. The participants were very comfortable and spoke frankly about their experiences because I was transparent, and did not adopt an expert position with them.

According to Lindlof and Taylor (2002) it is the responsibility of the researcher to put participants at ease at the start of the interview. In this study, affinity was achieved by initiating ‘easy-to-answer’ questions (Patton, 2001). The focus group interview schedule therefore, started with demographic questions, and continued with difficult questions, as

the participants became more comfortable. In addition, rapport was created at the beginning of the interview, by reassuring the participants that there were no correct or incorrect answers. This is customary of a non-directive questionnaire format, which circumvents steering the respondent into a narrative that they believe the researcher wishes to discover (Lindlof & Taylor, 2002; Welman & Kruger, 2002).

Generally, the SBSTs were asked to give their views on IE in relation to their schools. They were specifically asked to provide information about their functioning as a team, as well as on the support they provide within their schools. In addition, they were asked to provide information on the support that they receive from other role-players in their school, such as the parents, as well as the support that they receive from the DBST and the community in which the school is situated. The focus-group interview was designed to explore and obtain information about the support systems that are available to the school, as well as the perceived successes and challenges faced by the SBSTs. All participants in the focus group were encouraged to speak and all responses were recorded on an audiotape recorder. The participants were allowed to speak freely about the phenomenon in question (Mouton & Marais, 1991).

As the researcher, I conducted both the focus-group interviews. The interviews were conducted in English which enabled me to transcribe the interviews precisely, without having to translate the interviews. Where the participants communicated in a language other than English, the information was translated during the transcription stage. To ensure that the data would be globally accessible, I translated the interview responses into English. Using semi-structured interviews, enabled me to follow specifically fascinating exchanges that developed in the interview. The topic of the research meant that it was easy for the participants, members of the SBSTs, to be fully open and transparent about their experiences, thus the interviews were conversational in nature. I sensed that the participants were comfortable with, and trusted each other as team members and did no screening or filtering of the information they provided. I showed interest in their responses and encouraged elaboration. Neuman (2000) asserts that an interview can be compared to a conversational exchange under the guidance and supervision of the interviewer. An interview is filled with pleasantries, stories and deviations which are recorded. He further states that during interviews open-ended

questions are used, probes are frequent and the interviewer and participants jointly control the pace and direction of the interview (Neuman, 2000).

All the participants were treated with respect during the interviews (Mouton & Marais, 1991). It was easy for me to identify with the participants' responses and I made a conscious effort not to impose my own views on the participants. As a result of my similar professional background as the participants, it was easy for me to establish rapport with the participants. I was able to create a comfortable and safe environment where the participants could construct the meaning of their experiences without feeling that they were being judged.

3.7 DATA ANALYSIS

Data analysis is central to credible qualitative research. According to Maguire and Delahunt (2017) the qualitative researcher is often described as the research instrument. This pertains to their ability to describe, understand and interpret experiences and perceptions, which is vital to uncover meaning in particular circumstances and contexts This study used thematic analysis in analysing the study's data.

Thematic analysis, according to Braun and Clarke (2006) is the process of identifying themes or patterns within qualitative data. This process provides the researcher with skills that are useful for conducting many other kinds of analysis and should be the first qualitative method that the researcher should learn. Braun and Clarke (2006) also mention that an additional benefit, from the perspective of teaching and learning, is that it is a method and not a methodology. This means that it is not tied to a particular epistemological or theoretical perspective, unlike numerous qualitative methodologies. Therefore, it makes this a very adaptable method, and an advantage given the diversity of work in learning and teaching. According to Busch et al. *(*2012) this method of data analysis allows researchers to focus on the relationships of words and concepts and the presence of meanings in order to make inferences about the messages. Nowell, Norris,

White, and Moules (2017) argue that thematic analysis is a qualitative research method that can be widely used across a variety of epistemologies and research questions.

Braun and Clarke (2006) differentiate between semantic and latent themes when conducting thematic analysis. Semantic themes suggest that the researcher is only looking at what a participant has said or what has been written. The latent level, however, recognises or investigates the fundamental aims and assumptions, thus looking beyond what has been said. I utilised the latent level by using semi-structured interviews to get to the underlying meaning of answers that the participants provided. Data analysis is a systematic process to provide clarification of a single phenomenon of interest by the selection, categorisation, comparson, synthesisation and interpretation of data (Macmillan & Schumacher, 1997). It refers to transforming the datato extract useful information and allows for conclusions to be drawn. The researcher used thematic analysis to analyse the data in this study.

Henning (2005) asserts that thematic analysis qualifies the researcher to lessen, condense and categorise the content. The purpose of thematic analysis is to deconstruct research data by identifying patterns, categories and themes in the data (Patton, 1987). Braun and Clark (2006) mention that data interpretation must be thematic and in accordance with procedures for identifying, analysing and reporting themes within data. They put forward six stages of thematic analysis and also advise that the phases should not be perceived as a linear model. They state that, because analysis is a recursive process, the researcher is allowed to advance to the next stage without finishing the prior phase (completely). The researcher is permitted to move forward and back between the phases many times, specifically when dealing with a lot of composite data (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

Figure 3.2 provides the sequence of data collection and analysis that was conducted in this study.

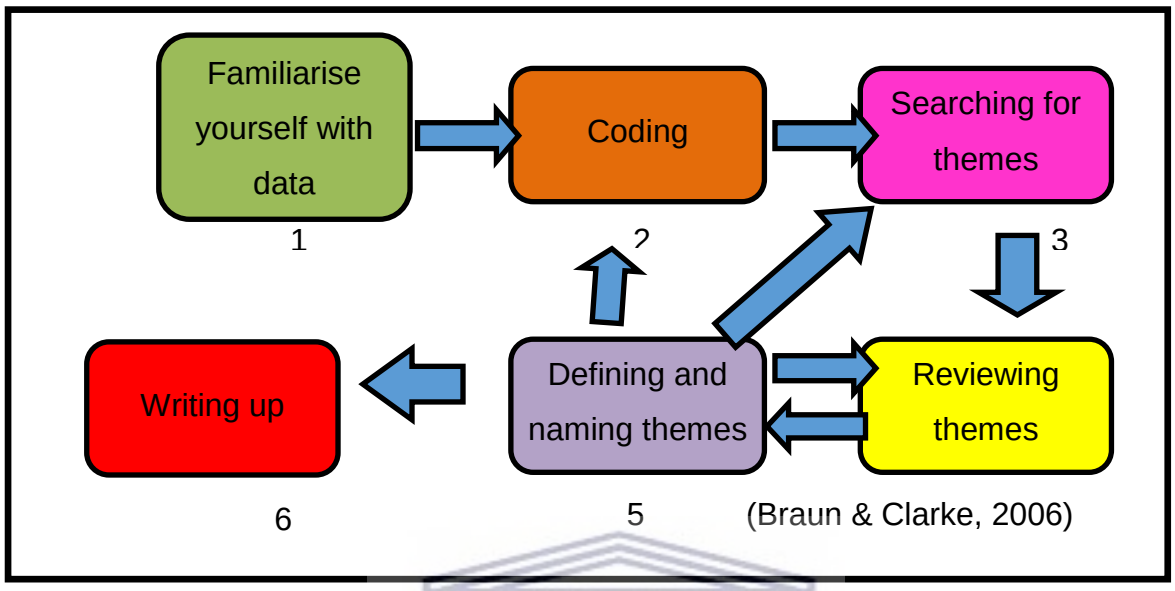

Figure 3.2: Braun & Clarke's six-phase framework for doing a thematic analysis

Thematic analysis was used to analyse the data collected from the focus-group interviews and the questionnaires. Braun and Clarke (2006) describe thematic analysis as a method that is used to identify, analyse, organise, describe and report themes found within a data set. This type of analysis is able to organise and describe the data set in a detailed manner. The researcher applied thematic analysis, according to the six-phase procedure set out by Braun and Clarke (2006) to the data collected in the focus-group interviews. The above-mentioned steps are guidelines and should not be used as rigid, prescriptive or linear rules when analysing data. The six steps should rather be used in the context of the research question and the data available. I alternated between the different steps.

I used a recording device to ensure that the interpretation of the interviews was as accurate as possible. The equipment was tested in the presence of the participants before commencing the interview process.

In the first phase, I familiarised myself with the data by spending many hours listening to and transcribing the focus-group interviews. I gave a verbatim account of the dicussions and responses of the participants. Data collected was stored on my

password protected computer. My study supervisor and I, were the only individuals who had access to this information. Participants were informed that their anonymity was protected as their names were not linked to their responses on the interview schedule. This process was prolonged but it proved to be an invaluable exercise. By listening to the interviews over and over, I thought of ways to code the data. Familiarity with the data was also achieved by reading and re-reading the transcripts.

Initial codes; including features in the data that were of interest to the researcher, were generated from the data in the second phase. In the current study, this was done by recognising and linking phrases and words within the data. For example, I identified the phrases; *"parent is reluctant to share the information with you", or "It isn't my child', 'it cannot be my child',* when a learner is identified with a barrier to learning. In the third phase I sorted and collated all the potentially relevant coded data extracts into themes (Braun & Clark, 2006). I completed this by arranging and grouping the codes and phrases that were identified in the second phase. The following phrases were, for example, grouped under the theme of parental involvement: "*parental involvement is limited, parents in denial – not wanting to /taking long time to admit that their children have barrier/s to learning/special needs"*, "*Challenge in getting developmental information of learners from parents, Parents not wanting to sign forms, Parental involvement - Somewhat of a challenge, Parents not wanting to/unable to come for PTA meetings to discuss learners' barriers, (work/transport/distance/ time constraints, Socio-economic challenges faced by parents impact on the support they give their children, parents' lack of knowledge/ignorance".* It is worth pointing out that in some examples, a code established a theme, while in other examples codes were broken down into different themes or developed into sub-themes. The themes that emerged from the third phase were reviewed and refined in the fourth phase.

Braun and Clarke (2006) aver that, once a set of themes has been formulated, they need clarification, and that is when the fourth phase begins. I for instance, reconsidered the parental involvement theme that emerged during the third phase of this process and realised that they transpired to form a logical pattern (Braun & Clarke, 2006). It was evident that both of the SBSTs observed perceived that the parents of their learners should be more involved in their child's education, as well as in the activities and daily operations of the school. Defining and naming themes was the focus of the fifth phase. Braun and Clarke (2006) supported clarity and recommended that the researcher try to

represent the “essence” of each theme by the “story” it tells (Braun & Clarke, 2006:92). Following the identification of themes in the data, I began finding descriptive and appropriate names for these.

In the sixth phase the focus was on producing a report on the findings of the analysis. Braun and Clarke (2006) assert that writing in thematic analysis is a fundamental component of the analytic process; as writing-up involves constructing and entwining the investigative commentary and data extracts to reveal to the reader a logical and convincing story. Writing also investigates the information with regard to existent literature. In this phase, extracts from collected data were identified verbatim in order to represent each theme. I used the following phrase, for instance, to relay the uniqueness of the SBSTs’ experiences of support from parents: “*the parents are completely in denial*”. Other verbatim extracts were also used to add to this perception within the analysis of each theme. The written report is presented in the form of this thesis.

3.8 TRUSTWORTHINESS

Lincoln and Guba (1985) suggest that trustworthiness is the foundational standard for qualitative reports. They further posit that, inquiries should be constructed on a sound principle that explain the use of the chosen methodology, and the processes involved in data collection and analysis for research to be considered genuine and reliable. To ensure validity in this qualitative research, I concentrated on the “appropriateness” of the tools, processes and data. I also ensured that the research question was valid for the desired outcome, the choice of methodology was appropriate for answering the research question, the design was valid for the methodology, the sampling and data analysis were appropriate, and finally that the results and conclusions were valid for the sample and context.

In this study, the trustworthiness of the data was essential to ensure the efficacious communication of the research findings; resulting in the enhancement of the trustworthiness in various ways. Devault (2019) posits that the ideas of validity and reliability are comparatively unknown to the field of qualitative research and are just not a good fit. Instead of focusing on reliability for validity, qualitative researchers substitute it with data trustworthiness; which consists of the following components: (a)

credibility; (b) transferability; (c); dependability; and (d) confirmability (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

3.8.1 Credibility

Internal validity is one of the central standards favoured by researchers. Researchers endeavour to guarantee that their studies measure or test what is actually intended through internal validity. The main purpose is thus to determine how consistent the research findings are with reality. Devault (2019) asserts that credibility subscribes to a belief in the trustworthiness of data through the following elements: (a) prolonged engagement; (b) persistent observations; (c) triangulation; (d) referential adequacy; (e) peer debriefing; and (f) member checks. Member checks and triangulation are commonly used methods to ensure credibility. I will now discuss each of these attributes.

3.8.1.1 Prolonged engagement

To assist the researcher to aquire more knowledge and to gain an awareness of the circumstances of the study, qualitative research data collection requires the researcher to engage with the participants in their environment (Bitsch, 2005). This immersion in the world of the participants ensures a reduction in the misinterpretation of knowledge that might emerge because of the presence of the researcher in the field. A significant understanding of participants' context and culture and building the confidence of the participants are the rewards of the researcher's extended time in the field (Leech & Onwuegbuzie, 2007). As the researcher, I was not able to spend much time with the participants given time-and-practicality constraints. However, I tried to be as thorough as possible in gaining as much information from the participants during the process of data collection. Probing questions were asked to understand each team and team members' concerns, frustrations and to celebrate the difference they make at their institutions.

3.8.1.2 Persistent observations

According to Lincoln and Guba (1985) identifying the factors and qualities in the circumstances that are pertinent to the theme being researched and focusing on them in detail, is the objective of persistent observation. "Assuming that prolonged

engagement produces scope, persistent observation produces depth" (Lincoln & Guba, 1985:304). I encouraged the members of the SBSTs to give in-depth explanations when answering the questions and not to hold back or be intimidated as their anonymity was assured. Being a knowledgeable member of a SBST myself, I knew which guiding questions to ask and when to probe further when questions were answered superficially.

3.8.1.3 Triangulation

According to Maree (2016) triangulation is the process where the validity of qualitative research can be enhanced by increasing the sources of authenticity. He further suggeststhat various sources of information or methods should be used to ensure triangulation. Leech and Onwuegbuzie (2007:239) aver that triangulation “involves the use of multiple and different methods, investigators, sources and theories to obtain corroborating evidence”. Denzin and Lincoln (2005) state that triangulation interrogates the honesty of participants’ responses and assists the researcher in the reduction of bias. Different sources of data or research instruments, such as participant observations, interviews or focus group discussions are used by data triangulation. Different informants to enhance the quality of the data from different sources are also utilised. Different research methods consequently use methodological triangulation (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005; Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Patton, 2002; Phillimore & Goodson, 2004). Therefore, it is suggested that qualitative research should comprise more than one triangulation technique. In order to ensure triangulation of the data, I used questionnaires as well as focus-group interviews in this study. According to Swanson and Holton (1997), triangulation of data should give similar or consistent results through the use of independent measurements and analysis of the same phenomena.

3.8.1.4 Referential adequacy

Cohen and Crabtree (2006) assert referential adequacy implies the identification of a portion of data to be archived, but not analysed. The researcher then manages the data analysis on the remaining data and develops primary results. To test the validity of the results, the researcher then returns to the stored data and analyses it. This attribute did not apply to my study since I analysed all the data collected at the same time.

3.8.1.5 Peer debriefing

Given (2008) posits that peer debriefing, also known as analytic triangulation, is the process whereby an impartial peer who is not partaking in the research project, is called upon by a researcher to assist in exploring the researcher's thinking around all the components of the research process. Guba (1981:85) asserts that peer debriefing "provides inquirers with the opportunity to test their growing insights and to expose themselves to searching questions". According to Bitsch (2005) during the research process, a qualitative researcher needs to seek support from other professionals willing to provide scholarly guidance, such as the department, academic staff members and the postgraduate dissertation committee. A qualitative researcher should, when writing his/her report, present the study's findings to peers to receive their comments as feedback from peers leads to improvement in the researcher and the reseach study. The researcher should also obtain the interpretations and viewpoints of their peers prior to establishing the conclusion of the study (Bitsch, 2005). This investigator looks at data collection methods and process, background information, data management, transcripts, data analysis procedures and research findings (Pitney & Parker, 2009). In this study, I presented and discussed the report of the findings as well as the interview transcripts with my supervisor who gave insightful and meaningful feedback.

3.8.1.6 Member checks

Birt, Scott, Cavers, Campbell & Walters, (2016) state that member checking is a technique for investigating the credibility of results and is also known as respondent or participant validation. Results or data are returned to respondents to check for accuracy and whether it resonates with their experiences. Member checks mean that the "data and interpretations are continuously tested as they are derived from members of various audiences and groups from which data are solicited" (Guba, 1981:85). Member checks is an essential process that any qualitative researcher should experience because it is integral to credibility (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Leech & Onwuegbuzie, 2007). The objective of doing member checks is to eradicate researcher prejudice when probing and explaining the results. It is crucial for researchers to include the voices of participants in the analysis and interpretation of the data. Therefore, the data was sent back to the participants for them to assess the clarification made by the researcher, and

for them to suggest changes if they were dissatisfied with it or if they felt that they had been misrepresented. Participants may repudiate the clarification of the researcher, either because of the way in which it was presented by the researcher or because it was socially unacceptable Schwandt, Lincoln and Guba (2007).

Guba (1981) avers that the member checks strategy necessitates establishing organisational confirmation or clarity, i.e. examining all the data to guarantee that there is no inner disputes or irregularities, and creating referential adequacy, i.e. evaluating the investigation and clarification against the research documents used during data collection prior to creating the final document. However, a broad, fundamental view of the use of member checks for establishing the validity of qualitative research was offered by Morse (1994), Angen (2000) and Sandelowski (1993). According to them, the process of member-checking may lead to incertainty rather than corroboration because new experiences (since the time of contact) may have occured, participants may change their mind about a matter, and the interview itself may have an impact on their initial assessment. Devault (2018) posits that when the researcher asks participants to evaluate both the data collected by the interviewer, and the researchers' interpretation of that interview data, member checks occur. In the current study, the audio-recording of interviews was an accurate record of participants' views and the participants were at liberty to check the transcriptions so that they had the opportunity to verify the views they would have expressed in the interviews. Trust is an important aspect of the member checking process.

3.8.2 Transferability

Babbie and Mouton (2001) assert that transferability refers to the extent to which the results can be applicable in other surroundings or with other respondents. All investigations are defined by the determined contexts in which they take place, consequently the qualitative researcher does not claim or maintain that data collected from one environment will necessarily be relevant to other surroundings or for the same environment in a different timeframe (Babbie & Mouton, 2001). The degree to which the results of a research study can be transferred to another setting is known as transferability (Trochim, 2001). According to Lincoln and Guba (1985:316), "It is, in summary, not the naturalist's task to provide an index of transferability, it is his or her

responsibility to provide the data base that makes transferability judgements possible on the part of potential appliers".

Given (2008) posits that qualitative researchers can use two approaches to increase the transferability of a study; the first one is through thick description and the other methodology is through purposeful sampling. Thick description means that the researcher provides the reader with a full and purposeful account of the participants, the context and the research design so that the reader can make their own verification regarding transferability. In purposeful sampling participants are chosen because they, for the most part, represent the research design, limitations, and delimitations of the study. Participants most compatible with the research design will increase the potential that readers can judge the level of transferability to their given environment.

To enhance transferability, qualitative researchers should focus firstly on how closely the participants are linked to the context being studied, and the second focus should be on the contextual boundaries of the findings. Firstly, the participants must be relevant members of the community associated with the study. The second consideration is concerned with providing a comprehensive understanding of the community under investigation, and ensuring that the research questions are answered properly. It is from here that readers can explore the research document and determine if the findings can be transferred to their setting or environment. In generalisability, it is the researcher's duty to confirm that the results are generalisable to a larger setting or the whole population. In transferability, it is the researcher's responsibility to give a detailed explanation of the circumstances and then permit the reader to determine if the work is interchangeable to their surroundings.

With regard to the current study, in ensuring that transferability could occur, I gave factual description of the research aims, theoretical framework and research methodology. The aim was to ensure the provision of detailed information about the research project and to enable the reader to relate the study to his/her own circumstances regarding support. The findings of this research led to provision of information and resulted in a better understanding of the role and responsibilities of the SBST in supporting teachers and implementing IE.

3.8.3 Dependability

According to Given (2008) dependability in a qualitative study acknowledges that the research context is evolving and that it cannot be completely understood from the one before or as a contingency. Dependability provides an explanation for these matters through applicable methodologies (Given, 2008). In the current study, to ensure dependableness, the researcher relied on an audit report which authenticated methods, data, and choices made during the research process, in addition to verbatim accounts of the participants' perspectives (Trochim, 2001). To attain dependability, researchers can verify that the research process is traceable, logical, and clearly documented (Tobin & Begley, 2004). Readers are better able to judge the dependability of the research if they are able to examine the research process (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). One way that a research study may indicate dependability is for its procedures to be examined (Koch, 1994). Dependability is essential for trustworthiness because it indicates the research study's findings as repeatable and consistent. To examine the dependability of a qualitative study, checks whether the researcher has been negligent in the conceptualisation of the study, collection of the data, interpretation of the findings and reporting of the results are required. The rationale used for the selection of event and people to observe, interview, and include in the study should be distinctly presented. The more consistent the researcher has been in these research procedures, the more reliable the results will be. A crucial method for evaluating dependability is the *dependability audit* in which an automonous assessor evaluates the actions of the researcher (as documented in an audit trail in archives, reports, field notes) to see how well the procedures for meeting the transferability and credibility levels have been observed. The dependability cannot be assessed and dependability and trustworthiness of the study are diminished if the researcher does not maintain an audit trail (Koch, 1994).

Given (2008) asserts that field notes can be vital to any qualitative study, irrespective of data collection processes or tools used. In field notes, qualitative researchers record comprehensive, explanatory facts of people (including themselves), events, things, places, as well as reflections on the data, patterns and the process of research. These specifics form the environment and quality control that forms multiple qualitative details into significant, combined and understandable research findings (Given, 2008).

Throughout the empirical phase of the research study regarding observations made, the researcher kept field notes (recordings of observations and reflections on them) during the pilot study as well as the focus group interviews (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010). Reflective field notes included the researcher's perceptions, ideas and suspicions as the interviews progressed, while descriptive field notes included an interpretation of the interview process and how it developed (Creswell, 2012). The researcher transcribed all the focus group recordings and organised the field notes to compare them against recorded details. Other field notes comprise participants' reflections and provisional clarifications made by the researcher during the data collection and analysis procedures. With regard to the current study, I was supervised throughout the research process, from conceptualisation to outcome, by the study supervisor. This process provided the opportunity for deep conversations between myself and the supervisor with regards to all aspects of the research and detailed records were kept as evidence of deep deliberation throughout the process.

3.8.4 Confirmability

According to Given (2008) confirmability is interested in proving that the researcher's analysis of participants' understandings is rooted in the participants' responses. Additionally, confirmability aims to prove that data analysis, the resultant findings and conclusions can be proven as reflective of, and grounded in the participants' perceptions. Fundamentally, confirmability can be communicated as the extent to which the findings of the study are based on the research motive and not adjusted due to researcher prejudice. Shenton (2004) posits that conformabilty must take place to help ensure that the study's findings are the result of the ideas and experiences of the respondents, rather than the preferences and characteristics of the researcher.

The role of triangulation (as was the case in the current study) in advocating such confirmability must again be accentuated. Given (2008) states that, confirmability requires that the researcher account for any biases honestly by declaring such biases and by using relevant qualitative methodological practices to respond to those biases.

However, confirmability does not deny that each researcher will bring a unique perspective to the study. When the researcher clearly describes how data was collected and analysed and provides examples of the coding process in the final document (Given, 2008), the researcher makes the research process transparent.

In this study the researcher tried to be as objective as possible. A concerted effort was also made by the researcher to be sensitive to personal bias and how it could potentially shape the study. I found it challenging to avoid filtering data through perceptions formed by my own historical and socio-political background (Creswell, 2003). In acknowledging the existence of bias, values and interests (or reflexivity) the researcher affirmed that she had attempted to limit personal interpretation while acknowledging that it was intrinsic to qualitative data analysis (Creswell, 2003).

3.8.5 Reflexivity

According to Jootun, McGhee and Marland (2009:45) qualitative researchers are susceptible to a degree of subjectivity as the "interpretation of the participants' behaviour and collected data is influenced by the values, beliefs, experience and interest of the researcher". Reflexivity contributes to ensuring the transparency of the research process. The acknowledgement of the reciprocal influence of both researcher/s and participants on the process and outcome is crucial to ensure thoroughness in qualitative research (Jootun et al., 2009). Reflexivity is the process of cogitating on yourself as the researcher, to provide unprejudiced and efficacious analysis. It involves investigating and accepting the presupposition and preconceptions you bring into the research and that therefore shape the outcome. We are all human beings with viewpoints and pre-formulated ideas, based on our experiences and what we have been exposed to in our lives. We cannot claim to be unconnected, impartial spectators. Attia and Edge (2017) posit that reflexivity involves a process of continuous, reciprocal shaping between the research and the researcher. Development involves an increase in awareness of such processes of interaction between organism and context. Rather than see development only as a welcome side-effect of reflexive research, we treat development of the researcher as central, with reflexivity in an instrumental relationship in this ongoing process.

Attia and Edge (2017) posit that reflexivity can be divided into retrospective and prospective reflexivity. Retrospective reflexivity refers to the effects of the study on the

researcher while prospective reflexivity refers to the effects of the researcher on the study. The purpose of prospective reflexivity is to ensure credibility of results by reducing the chances of researcher bias in the study. Reflexivity can also assist researchers to become aware of how the opinions, experiences and values they've brought to the research can be a positive thing. Reflexivity is vital in qualitative research because there are various ways in which researcher bias could affect the study; from the creation of data gathering tools, to collecting the data, analysing it and reporting on it. This is because of the subjective nature of qualitative data and methodology. The aim of retrospective reflexivity (refers to the effects of the study on the researcher) is for the researcher to become aware of how the research process affected them. As the researcher in the current study, I practiced reflexivity by keeping a journal. According to Ortlipp (2008) using and keeping reflective journals enables the researcher to make opinions, experiences, thoughts and feelings visible, and an acknowledged part of the data generation, analysis, research design and interpretation process. I also practised reflexivity by continuing discussion and open dialogue with colleagues or by internal reflection on the research process.

3.9 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Ethics in qualitative research is an essential aspect of all decision making in research, from problem formulation to presentation of results (Given, 2008). Ethics usually deals with beliefs regarding what is appropriate or inappropriate, right or wrong, moral or immoral (McMillan & Schumacher. 1997).

Permission to conduct the study was requested from the University of the Western Cape's (UWC) Research Ethics Committee. Permission to conduct the study in the two schools was also be requested from the Western Cape Education Department (WCED). I contacted the principals of the identified schools to ask permission to conduct the research at their institutions and the request was granted. According to the American Psychiatric Association (APA) (2000), potential research participants should be provided with information about the nature and purpose of the research project, as well as about aspects of the research process and the potential risks regarding participation. These might include the expected duration, and procedures, that they have the right to decline to participate and may withdraw from the research once participation has begun. They must also be made aware of the anticipated repercussions of declining or withdrawing. It is important that they take note of reasonably foreseeable factors that

may influence their keenness to participate, such as risks, discomfort or adverse effects. Any potential research benefits, limits of confidentiality, and incentives for participation (if any) must be discussed with them.

According to the APA (2000) the prospective research participants must be informed about whom to contact concerning questions about the research participation rights that they may voluntarily withdraw from the study and the possibility of publications of the research. In the case of this study, the research output would be my Master's Thesis and possible publications in academic journals. The principle of informed consent in this study was therefore strongly applied. All the possible participants were contacted by the researcher to explain the purpose of the study so that they could know if and how their participation in the study would have any potential impact on them. They were also informed about the procedures of the study so that they could anticipate what was expected of them. They were advised that they have the right to ask questions for clarification, and that their privacy would be respected. I also notified them about the potential benefits of the study to them such as improving their understanding of their professional and policy context and it could enable them to teach and lead more strategically and effectively. Another benefit would be that it could develop their influence, self-efficacy and voice within their own school and more widely within the profession. The participants and the researcher signed an agreement to these provisions. The participants also signed a consent form to indicate that their participation was voluntary. I also advised them that they had the right to withdraw from the research at any time without any negative consequences for them. Voluntary participation as well as voluntary withdrawal (with no penalties) was therefore emphasised and ensured by the researcher.

To ensure the safety of the data collected certain measures were put in place. During the course of the research study, raw data was kept in a locked drawer by the researcher and only reviewed by the researcher and her supervisor. Both the audio recordings and the transcripts were kept in a safe and on the password protected computer of the researcher. Participants were informed that all data would be destroyed after a period of five years. Hardcopies of data would be shredded and electronic data stored on the computer, would be permanently erased/deleted.

3.9.1 Confidentiality and anonymity

Confidentiality and anonymity were assured for all participants and any sensitive information was not shared with the school principal, the school or any official from the WCED. The two schools and the participants were not named to ensure complete confidentiality and anonymity. According to Gorman and Clayton (1997) confidentiality implies that the participants have the right to anonymity. It was important that the participants understood that their names had been changed to ensure their anonymity and that the information obtained remained confidential, and not accessible to anyone except the researcher (myself) and her supervisor (Kvale & Brinkman, 2009). Anonymity was maintained throughout the research and the participants were given pseudonyms. Confidentiality was achieved by encouraging participants not to disclose any personal information that others revealed during the focus-group discussions. In addition, no identifying details were included in the transcription of the data or quotes used to present the findings.

3.10 CONCLUSION

This chapter provided a detailed description of the research methodology employed in the study. It included a discussion of the research paradigm, research approach, research design, population and sampling, the data collection methods, data analysis, trustworthiness and the ethical considerations.

Chapter 4 focusses on the analysis and interpretation of the data collected through the qualitative data collection methods. The analysis and interpretation of the data enabled the researcher to provide answers to the research questions.

CHAPTER 4
PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

4.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents the thematic analysis of the data collected in the study by drawing on the responses from questionnaires and two focus group semi-structured interviews. This data will be presented according to the themes and sub-themes identified during the process of thematic data analysis. These findings will be discussed under the study's research questions. This study is underpinned by Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Approach (1979) and it is therefore pertinent to position the findings and their suggestions within this specific approach. Support structures such as SBSTs, LSTs, and the DBSTs are mainly situated in the micro-system, the meso-system and the macro-system. The data was collected from the SBSTs of the two schools under investigation.

4.2 CONTEXT OF THE STUDY

The research aimed to explore the perceptions of SBST members regarding the role of the SBST in two primary schools in the Cape Metropole. The purpose was to gain knowledge on how teachers view their roles and responsibilities as members of their respective SBSTs in implementing inclusivity in their schools.

This study was conducted to answer the research questions that frame the focus of my investigation.

The following were the research questions of this study:

- What does IE mean to members of the SBST?
- What are their roles and how do they implement IE in their schools?
- What challenges do they experience in implementing IE?
- What successes have they achieved in implementing IE?

I will now attempt to answer the study research questions by presenting the thematised findings (refer to Table 4.2) under the relevant research questions.

4.3 PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION OF THE STUDY'S FINDINGS

Data was collected via semi-structured questionnaires and focus group interviews with members of the SBST of the two schools. It was considered that, due to the limited amount of time allocated to the researcher to conduct focus-group interviews, the questionnaires would provide additional information on important aspects of the members of the SBSTs.

4.3.1 Biographical description of participants

Table 4.1 presents a short biographical description of the participants in this study

Table 4.1: Description of the participants

Participants' age	Teaching experience	Position at school	Experience in serving on SBST (Years)	Role in SBST	Formal training in IE
Participant 1 School A	> 20 yrs	HOD Foundation Phase Grade 3 teacher	10 years	SMT member Grade 3 teacher	None
Participant 2 School A	> 20 yrs	Grade 5 teacher	10 years	Previous SBST coordinator	None
Participant 3 School A	11-20 yrs	LST	2 years	LST	Remedial
Participant 4 School A	5-10 yrs	Grade 4 teacher	8 months	Current SBST coordinator	None
Participant 5 School B	> 20 yrs	Deputy principal	4 years	SMT member	Remedial
Participant 6 School B	> 20 yrs	Grade 1 teacher	6 years	Secretary	None
Participant 7 School B	11 – 20 yrs	HOD Foundation Phase	4 years	SMT member Grade 2	IE / SIAS
Participant 8 School B	11 – 20 yrs	HOD InterSen Phase	6 months	SMT member Grade 6	None
Participant 9 School B	> 20 yrs	LST	6 years	LST / SBST coordinator	Remedial

There were 9 participants in this study of which two were Learning Support Teachers (LSTs), four were School Management Team members and three were general education teachers who were teaching in two different schools – one in School A and

two in School B in the Cape Metropole of the Western Cape. All the participants were involved in the teaching of learners ranging from Grade 1 to Grade 7 in mainstream classes. This biographical profile revealed that all participants were qualified teachers, with the majority of them having considerable teaching experience in a mainstream school. In terms of gender, all the SBST members were female and their teaching experience ranged from five to thirty years. The majority of the participants were mature individuals and some had degrees or cerificates beyond an initial teacher education qualification. Some of the participants' teaching experience dated back to before the introduction of IE by the then Department of Education (DoE), which is currently known as the Department of Basic Education (DBE). All teachers had experience in working collaboratively as staff members of their schools. Their commitment and collaboration was confirmed by them volunteering themselves to be members of the SBST or by being nominated by the principal or other staff members.

4.3.2 Themes emanating from the data analysis

Thematic analysis was used to thoroughly analyse the data. The collected data was manually transcribed verbatim and a process of coding followed. Coding involves the transformation, categorisation and labelling of data in order to give meaning to it (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011). During data analysis consistency and patterns were recognised and coded to depict the topics covered. These codes were decreased and grouped accordingly. Themes relating to the research topic transpired from these groupings.

In the course of data analysis, it was interesting to note that participants of both the public ordinary schools' responses were very similar, yet there were nuanced differences. The teachers also had different teaching experiences, and only three participants had some training in remedial education which was received as part of their teacher training, and one participant had training in IE. There were also differences in their different post-designations. School A shared their Learning Support Teacher (LST) with another school and had only one SMT member serving on their team, while School B appointed their own LST in a school-governing body position (meaning that the post was funded by the school and not the education department) and three SMT members served as members of their team. Their responses, especially the manner in which support was practically given (Neimeyer & Levitt, 2003), and the extent to which it was successfully given, also differed.

Analysis of the data produced important themes pertaining to teachers' perceptions regarding the role and responsibilities of the SBSTs in their respective schools. This thematic analysis identified four themes with subsequent sub-themes.

The four themes identified were:

1. Knowledge of and attitudes about IE
2. Functionality of SBSTs
3. Challenges
4.. Successes

Table 4.2. presents an overview of the themes and sub-themes that emanated from the data. The main themes involved the self-knowledge of and attitudes about IE of the members of the teams, the functionality of the SBSTs under investigation, and the successes and challenges experienced by these teams.

Table 4.2: Overview of the themes and sub-themes

THEME 1	**KNOWLEDGE OF AND ATTITUDES ABOUT INCLUSIVE EDUCATION**
Sub-theme 1	Teachers' knowledge regarding the philosophy of IE
Sub-theme 2	SBSTs' attitudes about inclusion
THEME 2	**THE FUNCTIONALITY OF THE SBSTs**
Sub-theme 1	SBST composition
Sub-theme 2	Providing support
Sub-theme 3	Collaboration
THEME 3	**CHALLENGES**
Sub-theme 1	Insufficient teacher preparation to implement IE – SIAS process
Sub-theme 2	The tedious administrative process in the implementation of IE
Sub-theme 3	Language of Learning and Teaching (LoLT)
Sub-theme 4	Inadequate infrastructure
Sub-theme 5	Insufficient LST specialist support
Sub-theme 6	Parental involvement
Sub-theme 7	Support by the DBST
THEME 4	**SUCCESSES**
Sub-theme 1	Improvement of learner participation and learner performance

As mentioned previously, this study is guided by Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory and inclusive education philosophy. In Table 4.2, four main themes are highlighted with each main theme consisting of various sub-themes. These themes and sub-themes will now be discussed in detail to present the major findings of this research based on focus group interviews and semi-structured questionnaires. The themes will be discussed in terms of the relevant research questions. Relevant verbatim quotes

acquired from the raw data will be used for confirmation and justification of important findings.

4.3.3 Research question 1: What does IE mean to members of the SBST?

The theme answering this research question is: *Knowledge of and attitudes about IE.* This theme comprises two sub-themes, namely, (i) *Teachers' understanding regarding the philosophy of IE* and (ii) *SBSTs' attitudes about inclusion.*

It was evident from the response of the participants that two types of knowledge were revealed throughout the interviews which are both covered within this theme. The knowledge base for IE as conceptualised by the policy documents (EWP 6 [DoE, 2001]; SIAS, [DBE, 2014]) was the first type, and the experience and skills needed for teaching for diversity in the classroom was the second type of knowledge. Insufficient pedagogical knowledge of IE was evident in the interviews and will be discussed next under the following sub-theme.

4.3.3.1 Teachers' understanding regarding the philosophy of IE

The researcher found that the majority of the participants seemed to have knowledge of the concept of IE. It was, however also evident that some participants had a narrow understanding of IE, with regard to responding to children with disabilities. Some participants stated that IE is about integrating and accommodating learners with disability or those deemed as having special educational needs in mainstream schools. This may be regarded as a narrow view of IE (see explanation after the excerpts below). Two participants elaborated, as follows:

Participant 1: *My view of inclusive education is that any learner, look we have learners from various streams but any learner with any barriers, disabilities or whatever, should be accommodated in the mainstream. That's my opinion, mine. Whether you're… it to me… it's deaf mute, the disabled.*

Participant 7: … *I'm going to think of, uhm, one of my learners that has a disability. Uhm, I think its's called ... Merri ... Merri… (something) syndrome, so I'm going to use that as an example if I may, so we have to include her in Phys-ed for example but there was certain activities that she couldn't do, so we had to liaise and get advice from the department but she still felt included all along the way during, whether it was an extra-mural activity or Phys-Ed.*

Similar to the findings in this study, a study conducted by Unianu (2013) regarding teachers' knowledge of inclusive concepts revealed that there was a confusion between integrated education and IE. Teachers often believe that IE is synonomous with integrated education, and that the individuals who benefit the most from IE are learners with special educational needs (Unianu, 2013). Rodrigueza and Garro-Gila (2015) assert that inclusion proposes that all learners, with or without special educational needs are equal and all can thus be included in mainstream schools. According to Arbeiter and Hartley (2002) integration alludes to the process of accommodating learners with disabilities in mainstream schools, with the suggestion that the learner has to adjust to the system available. It is necessary for teachers to be familiar with EWP 6 (DoE, 2001) and to acknowledge that IE is developed from a socio-critical perspective rather than the traditional deficit model or medical model, which locates barriers within the learner (Ladbrook, 2009).

Rulwa-Mnatwana (2014) asserts that, although knowledge of IE forms part of the IE philosophy, the limited understanding could have serious implications for the way IE is implemented in schools. Unianu (2013) further posits that the variations between teachers' perceived knowledge, what they really know and what they actually do regarding IE is cause for concern and action should be taken to upgrade teachers' knowledge and skills regarding inclusive pactices. Without showing a clear understanding of IE, specifically: knowing what IE is actually about, the principles of this type of education, the meaning of this concept, and what other professionals do in this educational field, it is impossible to implement IE. The necessity of a better understanding and knowing of the inclusive concepts by the teachers, has been revealed by research. (Unianu, 2013). The quality of the teachers who organise, implement and evaluate instructional activities determines the quality of the education (Unianu, 2013). Adewumi, Mosito and Agosto (2019) assert that it is crucial to have teachers who have **both** the ability and the knowledge to teach learners with Special Educational Needs (SEN). The majority of learners with SEN, if they are in school, are accommodated in regular classrooms because of a universal call for the inclusion of learners with SEN (Adewumi, et. al, 2019).

The majority of the participants understood that IE is about providing support to all learners and accommodating all learners with barriers to learning in mainstream classes. As two participants stated:

Participant 1: *My view of inclusive education is that any learner, ...any learner with any barriers, disabilities or whatever, should be accommodated in the mainstream.*

Participant 8: *… being inclusive also means including children with barriers to learning whether that is physical, that could be emotional that could be a language barrier, to me that it's a barrier.*

The goal of IE is to support all learners in the mainstream classes. Kirschner (2015) asserts that one way to differentiate between inclusion and mainstreaming is that in an inclusive classroom, the emphasis should be on attempting to meet the diverse learning needs of all learners without removing them from the classroom. Constrastingly, when learners with special educational needs are mainstreamed, it generally means (at least in principle) that everybody in the class is expected to follow the same curriculum, irrespective of their uniqueness, or that specific learners are extracted from the class for a significant part of the day to receive their special lessons and services. IE has drawn criticism from both teachers and parents. Many concerns have been raised, only three of which will be discussed here. Firstly, while some supporters claim that all learners can be successfully educated in this way, others raise questions about the limits of inclusion and its ability to work well for everyone. This may result in some learners falling behind their peers in terms of their knowledge and skills, thus barriers to learning are further created. Kirschner (2015) further asserts that there are many ways to adapt curricula, educational approaches, and other aspects of learning and teaching to meet the diverse abilities and needs of learners. Universal design and differentiated instruction are two types of approaches that can make education accessible to a variety of learners. A universal design indicates methods that help make social and academic features of school obtainable to all learners, and the concept of modified instruction emphasises the significance of tailoring what is taught and how it is taught, to accommodate the individual learners' learning styles and needs. Differentiation can imply teaching significantly different material to different learners but it can also involve teaching the same concepts in several different ways, so that there are multiple points of entry into the same or similar material. One discussion within the field of IE advances the view that most learners can essentially be taught the same content (even if through modified means) while another view is that some learners will need completely different learning goals and curricula. A second concern, which is a persistent challenge for all democratic institutions that strive for fairness and equality, is how to balance the needs

of those who require extra attention and resources against the needs of ordinarily developing learners. A third concern has to do with the need for resources. In order for IE to be viable, teachers and schools need to be given sufficient training and other forms of support as well as financial and material resources (Kirschner, 2015).

The participants stated that IE is about accommodating all learners, even learners with language barriers. This was evident in the following excerpts of their responses:

Participant 4: … *Inclusivity should also include our barriers of speaking, because if we are supposed to be an inclusive school, like White Paper 6 politely puts it, then teachers should be trained in various languages, ...inclusivity means we have various languages in our country so inclusivity is…… the mere fact that the country has become so open…so diverse that we have asylum seekers in our class, it is more than just our official languages now, now we need to go out to …Swahili, I need to go Portuguese …., so inclusivity is broad in my opinion…*

Taylor (2013) states that provision is made in the South African Constitution (1996) and articulated in the Language in Education Policy (LiEP) for the right of all children to be educated in the language of their choice, ordinarily their home language. This right is, however, impeded by the schools' ability to provide for its realisation. The basic idea of the LiEP is to maintain the use of home language as the language of teaching and learning (LOLT), particularly in the Foundation Phase (FP), while gradually providing access to an additional language(s). However, School Governing Bodies (SGBs), according to the South African Schools Act (Act 84 of 1996), have the power to determine the language policy of a school. This indicates that the LOLT provided by a school is mainly dependent on the decisions made by the parents. Parents may, and progressively do, opt for English or Afrikaans as the LOLT, rather than the majority home language of the learners at the school even though the government recommends teaching African children in their home language. Taylor (2013) further posits that language is the medium through which all learning occurs and learning will be severely restricted if teachers and learners are not experienced in the language of teaching and learning.

The changing language contexts due to migration, leave teachers unprepared for appropriately catering for learners with home languages other than the LoLT of the school. It is acknowledged that the variety of languages in the schools increase the complexity of teaching reading and writing. The provision of the appropriate Learning

and Teaching Support Material (LTSM) for learners under these multilingual circumstances presents a great challenge to provincial departments and SMTs (Taylor, 2013). Desai (2016) asserts that the onus is on the institution to supply learners whose productive and receptive knowledge of the medium of instruction is limited with such knowledge, if the institutions admitted the learners. This can only happen if learners are provided opportunities to obtain academic language skills in both English and their home language and to be able to learn English effectively. This should be a requirement at institutional level and there should not be a sole reliance on the benevolence of individual teachers or academics (Desai, 2016).

4.3.3.2 SBSTs' attitudes about inclusion

The attitudes of the members of the SBST were mainly positive about the principle of inclusion, but at the same time they had strong views of the practical implementation of IE and regarded it as problematic. It was apparent from the participants' responses that the teachers themselves may contribute as the external barriers to learning, as indicated in the following excerpts:

Participant 9: *I must say that I, I feel that the whole idea of inclusive education… uhm has its problems. Uhm, and I think that its hasn't actually been successfully implemented in the schools due to lack of resources. Uhm it's very, it's actually very difficult and don't and I think the concept itself although uhm… it's praise worthy, I think it's problematic logistically and practically… uhm so I think personally that's my personal opinion*.

Participant 7: *Uhm just adding on to what Participant 9 said you know you can only do so much as a teacher because you got the other children in your class that you also got to make sure that they, their needs are met and sometimes it depends on the level of …uhm… the challenge that the other child has in the class. If you find, this is the important part, if you are spending so much time on that one individual in your class and all the other children are neglected…*

Yoro, Fourie and van der Merwe (2020) posit that it is perceptible that teachers have displayed negative attitudes towards implementing inclusivity in the classroom, irrespective of the commitment of mainstream schools to accommodate learners with special educational needs. Learners who are meant to be accommodated in mainstream schools often find themselves as a 'guest' in the classroom and this is one

major problem experienced. This may be because of the existing expectations that the teachers must provide the much-needed additional support that would enable these learners to be full participants in the learning process. The teachers, however, are not adequately trained and feel overwhelmed and unprepared for the practice of IE in the classroom. Often the lack of confidence and labelling result from fear and a lack of awareness about the specific needs of learners or the potential learning barriers they may have to deal with (DoE, 2002). Mbengwa (2010) asserts that when teachers think or feel that they do not have the necessary knowledge and skills to teach and support learners in inclusive schools and classrooms, negative attitudes may arise. Research has shown that ordinary teachers believe that they do not have sufficient training, skills, and time or support networks to support learners and thus guarantee quality education for all.

Another factor leading to teachers' negative attitudes towards IE is their perception that inclusion is an extra responsibility on their already excessive workloads. They may also find it difficult to respond to the directive of integrating learners with disabilities in mainstream classes. The severity of the learning barrier may also add to teachers' attitude (Mbengwa, 2010). Similarly, Adewumi and Mosito (2019) aver that the attitude of teachers is one of the challenges of implementing the inclusion of learners with SEN. This author notes that, when teachers have a negative perspective on disability, they undermine the inclusive intervention strategies and may lose their confidence in teaching learners with SEN. This ultimately results in a negative impact on IE.

Malahlela (2017) posits that research done on the attitudes of professionals towards mainstreaming and inclusion in countries such as the USA, Canada and Australia, reveal that the majority of teachers support the idea of inclusion, but foresee problems with its practical implementation. A study which investigated the perceptions of mainstream teachers towards IE in Victoria, Australia revealed that, while teachers seemed to be accepting of and positive about inclusion, some concerns remained about the implementation of IE in mainstream classrooms. Carlson, Hemmings, Wurf and Reupert, (2012) suggest a reciprocal relationship between positive attitudes and inclusive practice, meaning that inclusive attitudes create the conditions for engaging in inclusive practice, which in turn results in more inclusive attitudes. Cologon (2013) discovered that the attitude of teachers in Australia were in accordance with their willingness or lack of confidence to teach all children. These attitudes are rooted in a

traditional method of teacher training where pre-service teachers are taught about disabilities, continuing the 'myth of the normal child' (Cologon, 2013:33). According to Mphahlele (2005) teachers need to be aware of their attitudes and behaviour in class as it can have a negative impact on the learners in their care.

4.3.4 Research question 2: What are their roles and how do they implement IE in their schools?

The theme answering this research question is: *The functionality of the SBST.* This theme comprises 3 sub-themes, namely, (1) the SBST composition, (2) providing support and (3) collaboration.

4.3.4.1 SBST composition at the two schools

Responding to the question to explain their role and how they are implementing IE in their schools, the members of the SBST explained their unique situations. It was evident to the researcher that both teams were functioning SBSTs and that they took pride in the fact that they were following the guidelines of the SIAS policy (DBE, 2014) in the roles they played and in implementing IE at their schools.

At School A, the members explained the composition of their team and stated they have one SMT member who also represented the Foundation Phase, a Grade 4 teacher who was the coordinator of the SBST and the representative of the Intermediate Phase as well as another member who would be retiring at the end of that year, who was also the previous coordinator. The LST, who was a member of the team, was appointed by the district office and she had two schools that she was responsible for. She was based at School A but spent her time between the two schools that she was responsible for.

Participant 1: *SMT. I'm the SMT member but I always had an interest in remedial education. I did remedial education as well…*

Participant 2*: I am the outgoing or the co-ordinator … that left… (laughter)*

Participant 3: *Ek is die ELSEN teacher, uhm ek leer ook ma, dis my tweede jaar dat ek nou voltyds ELSEN doen, want vantevore was ek 'n mainstream teacher. (I am the LST, uhm it is only my second year as a full time LST, as I was a mainstream teacher before…).*

Participant 4: *I'm Participant 2's* (replacement*)…., she's handing over the baton…*

School B had an SGB appointed LST who catered for the needs of the teachers and learners of that specific school, and who was also the coordinator of the SBST. This SBST had three SMT members who served as members of the SBST and who also represented the different phases. The Deputy Principal, Foundation Phase HOD and Intermediate Phase HOD all served on the SBST, and could give input on learners during the promotion and progression process at the end of the year. This team also had a teacher who provided pastoral care to the learners identified by the SBST.

Participant 6: *I'm the deputy principal. Uhm, … I feel that I've got years of experience, and being on SBST teams in my various schools, I played a vital role in terms of counselling and learners support; being there for those learners for what they need, same role that I play currently.*

Participant 7: *… Okay, so uhm I'm the departmental head for the foundation phase and I've been chosen to be because I see the development of the child from grade R to grade 3.*

Participant 8: *Okay, I'm fairly new to the SBST, I'm currently the acting head of department for the Intersen Phase so I've only been on the SBST for about 6 months but similar to Participant 7, it's, it's very good for me to get to know all these struggles of the learners in my phase…*

Participant 9: *So, I'm the learning, remedial, learning support teacher and I co-ordinate the SBST so I think it's just really that I need to have, uhm, an oversight of all the children in the school that, that are experiencing challenges whether they are part of my programme or not…*

Participants of School A stated that their SBST consisted of a mixture of experienced and less experienced members. This was evident in the response from ***Participant 4****: … in our meetings we have somebody very experienced, (referring to Participant 1). Our principal always refers to her... as … the senior on your team. So at the end of the day, whatever decision needs to be taken up, I need to consult the senior on the team.*

A participant of School B also acknowledged the variety of specialists and experience of members of their school's SBST.

***Participant 7**: … we are also, the ones that are sitting here now …are actually specialists in certain fields so if I look at Participant 8, she's head of home language or the subject head for English at our school…if we look at Participant 9, she's the remedial teacher at our school… Participant 5, is our deputy and she's the curriculum head for our school and Participant 6 is, a senior teacher at our school… her function, very much so, is the pastoral side, the well-being of the child.*

The DBE gives clear, yet broad guidelines as to who should be the members of the SBST and notes that the community needs and conditions have a role to play in deciding who will serve on the team (DBE, 2014). SIAS (DBE, 2014) states that it is ultimately the school manager's responsibility to establish a functioning SBST, to support the SBST and to ensure that the team consists of the following team members: the SBST co-ordinator, a representative of the SMT, phase representatives, the learning support teacher or, where relevant, a Grade head. In this study, the composition of the SBSTs of the two schools was in accordance with the directives of the SIAS policy (DBE, 2014). Their members were drawn from the school staff and they met regularly to address the challenges and concerns specific to the institution (DoE, 2005). The composition of the SBSTS were therefore in line with national policy which illustrates how the microsystem (school) functioning is influenced by the macrosystem (DBE) according to Bronfenbrenner's ecological theory (Bronfenbrenner, 1979).

The next sub-theme to be discussed is providing support to learners.

4.3.4.2 Providing support

Providing support, as experienced by SBST members who participated in this study, could be described as being predominantly positive. The SBST participants viewed their role and function in providing support in different ways, however, there were some similarities. The members of the SBSTs saw their role and function within schools as providing support to and addressing the needs of learners who experienced barriers to learning. They asserted that they also performed an advisory role and function, and many participants suggested that they work in partnership with teachers to find solutions in addressing barriers to learning within their schools. They advised on the support strategies to be implemented in the classroom, they assisted with the provision of social, emotional, and educational support from other roleplayers. Some participants

specified that they were asked to assist with selecting and ordering of learning and teaching support materials (LTSM) for the school.

It was evident in both teams, that the SBST structure and functioning were influenced by the different roles that teachers play in the different schools. SBSTs often comprise staff members who have other responsibilities within the school. The SMT members who served on these teams were responsible for more than just the SBST. These members noted that they also had an accounting role to stakeholders higher up in hierarchy, for example, at School B, a decision was made that the deputy and the coordinator would attend every meeting, because some other members were involved in extra mural activities, such as sport practices, matches or they had to attend meetings after school. This was evident in the statement from the following participant:

Participant 7: *Uhm… because we're quite thinly spread with regards to sports and cultural activities after school… so with regards to who's permanently on, we have our remedial…, the teacher who is our SBST co-ordinator and, …Participant 5 is at every meeting, but the two (referring to herself and Participant 8) of us also have other responsibilities, and therefore we came to that decision.*

The two schools had the structure (SBST) in place to provide support to the learners with barriers to learning in accordance to departmental criteria. The teachers encouraged the learners to learn and monitored their progress thus showing interest in the learners. The learners requiring extra support were identified and referred to the SBST by the class teachers. This interest and commitment by the two SBSTs in this study to support learners with barriers highlights the important roles that teachers can play in facilitating positive outcomes for learners. Osher, Cantor, Berg, Steyer and Rose (2020) remind us that schools are multi-layered, multi-level, dynamic contexts for human development where culture, peers, teachers, classrooms, public spaces and structures, composition, policies, and learner characteristics impact each other. Similarly, Pianta (2016) emphasises the significance of teachers for learner behaviour, motivation, engagement, learning, and psychological support. Osher et al. (2020) further posit that learner-teacher relationships are essential in development and learning especially for learners who are at high levels of risk.

According to Osher et al. (2020) personalised learning requires instruction that is adapted and paced to the learner's needs and abilities and moulded by the learning interests and preferences of the learner. Personalised learning includes teachers'

recognition of the learners' needs and characteristics in order to scaffold their learning to enhance their emotional and social abilities. Bronfenbrenner's bioecological model (Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 2006) is useful in its application to personalised learning, as attempted by the SBSTs of both schools in the current study, because the theory explains the relationships that learners experience that help shape and direct their learning and development. Bronfenbrenner suggests that learners learn and develop through their personal relationships with peers, parents, teachers, and through the impact of their personal features (e.g., gender, personality, intelligence, etc.). Proximal processes are essential experiences and represent the space where teachers and learners interact to move learning forward (Bronfenbrenner, 1979).

The members of both teams had different roles in the school and in the SBST and especially the SMT members who served on the team had to be informed about learner challenges in the different phases in preparation for governance decisions like promotions and progression. This observation is illustrated by the following excerpts:

Participant 8: … *it's very good for me to get to know all these struggles of the learners in my phase uhm because you sit there and you can hear the daily struggles of the teachers and how they trying to accommodate and assist children… also, at the end of the year, we sit in on progression meetings with the department. So when certain children are being discussed for promotion, (it is) very important that I have that inside information.*

Participant 9: … *I co-ordinate the SBST so I think it's just really… that I need to have, uhm, an oversight of all the children in the school that, that are experiencing challenges whether they are part of my programme or not… Uhm, and I think that ties very much to the two HOD's … as well the fact that we are also accountable to the structures above us in the hierarchy. Uhm, and so then we need that oversight, that general big picture so that we can be accountable for that as well.*

Participants asserted that they provided support to learners with various barriers to learning. As one participant stated:

Participant 4: *So the role of the SBST…, it's there to support learners with barriers. And it's a whole committee, and the teacher… the class teacher, or the subject teacher identify the barrier of the child, get in touch, have an interview with the parent and then*

discuss. Then the SBST …, will discuss and decide what is the road ahead for that child.

Participant 5: *I feel that I've got years of experience, and being on SBST in my various schools, I played a vital role in terms of counselling and learner support; being there for those learners… for what they need, …same role that I play currently.*

Yoro, Fourie and van der Merwe (2020) posit that any activities that enhance the capacity of a school as a system to respond to the various learning needs of children, is regarded as support. This support also presupposes the preparedness and accessability and of a group of teachers to support and accommodate learners with barriers to learning. According to SIAS (DBE, 2014) the focus of support should move to an integrated approach where a variety of possible barriers to learning, such as extrinsic barriers in the school, home, or community environment, or barriers related to disabilities that a learner may experience, are considered. The focus should no longer be on deficiencies that have been identified in specific learners who are presumed to be in need of intervention through specific attention by specialist staff. The objective is to design intervention strategies so that the learner may have access to learning, and this support should include all activities in a school which increase its capabilities to respond to diversity. The provision of support to specific learners is only one way of making learning environments and lessons available to all learners (DBE, 2014).

When the participants were asked what type of cases were referred to their teams, both schools indicated that the following were examples of some of the types of barriers learners experienced: social, economic, academic and physical disabilities, as collaborated by the following statements:

Participant 3: *At this school, it's the language mostly. Social, economic, …*

Participant 5: *The problems referred to the SBST often involve Maths. Afrikaans FAL is also quite a general problem, and not only for the learners for whom it is a third language. Language generally also presents a problem with learners' language comprehension (spoken as well as when reading) and vocabulary causing many academic problems. The SBST also provides support with behavioural and social problems as necessary.*

Participant 9: *… I got 3 children who need counselling and support from the social worker and psychologist, so we're talking about children, … domestic violence (is) involved, cutting on themselves is involved...*

It is not surprising, given South Africa's high unemployment levels and widespread poverty (Stats SA, 2020) and an example of the barriers to learning mentioned by the participants, were the socio-economic challenges learners experience. According to Mollborn, Lawrence, James-Hawkins and Fomby (2014) socio-economic inequality is considered as a foundational cause of variance in socio-emotional, physical and cognitive development over a lifetime. Taylor and Yu (2009) opine that, it is acknowledged that the socio-economic status (SES) of children's families has a substantial effect on their educational achievement, although education is often considered as a chance for children to overcome the disadvantage of social background. Family socio-economic status (SES) is a great determining factor in educational accomplishment and of the quality of education likely to be received (Taylor & Yu, 2009). Maswikiti (2005) posits that there is a relationship between children's IQ scores, SES and academic attainment. Bayat, Louw and Rena (2014) assert that learners living in environments with low poverty and low crime revealed higher achievement in both reading and mathematics than learners in other types of neighbourhoods. Again, learners living in environments with high poverty and high crime lagged behind in these two subjects compared to their peers in other neighbourhoods.

The SBST members of School A indicated that they supported the learners and the teachers at their school by providing extra classes or intervention classes. These classes were in addition to the support offered by the LST to the individual learners who were considered in need of a higher level of support as well as providing support to the class teachers. Support was provided to the learners so that the underlying problems that had been identified, were addressed timeously and appropriately. In these extra classes, teachers understood the learners' needs, the groups were much smaller and even the learners relaxed more and freely requested assistance form the teacher without fear of being judged or subjected to embarrassment. During these classes the focus was on literacy and numeracy.

Participant 1: *It's extra classes, after school. And uhm, say for more than a half an hour on a Wednesday, little programmes that you make and send home to the parent to*

help as well, right? And then all these little extra things, you know, extra reading that you have for these learners with the barriers.

Participant 2: *… our intervention classes, we focus on the two, on the three critical subjects, Home Language, Additional Language and Maths, you know and uhm, like the Maths, I do on a Monday, on Tuesday and a Wednesday. Where I take the one, the Tuesday I do the English learners and the Wednesdays I do the Afrikaans learners.*

School A's focus on numeracy and literacy is unsurprising given the challenges faced by South African learners generally with regard to mathematics and language skills. According to the DBE (2017) the quality of education provision in South Africa is receiving much public attention and criticism, and an impression may exist that the quality of education is dormant or even declining. According to DBE (2017), the Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS, 2015), Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS) (Howie et al., 2016), and the Southern and East African Consortium for Monitoring Educational Quality (SACMEQ, 2013) are the best available data sources created specifically for measuring trends in learning at a national level. South Africa has participated in these studies which have been significant in spreading the word throughout the education sector that the levels of learning in primary school mathematics, reading and literacy as well as mathematics and science in junior secondary schools are concerningly low in South Africa. The PIRLS assessments, for example, have revealed that a great segment of South African learners reaches Grade 5 without being able to read with comprehension (DBE, 2017). According to Mullis, Martin Goh and Cotter (2016) in comparison to other participating countries, South Africa was one of the lower performing countries in mathematics.

South African learners performed poorly in mathematics at Grade 5 and 9 (and science at Grade 9) level and this low performance was linked to the factors at school, home and community environments. In general, the learners at independent schools achieved very well, followed by learners from fee-paying public schools and the worst affected learners were those from no-fee public schools. The encouraging news is that in recent years of TIMSS, PIRLS and SACMEQ, South Africa's achievement has improved. According to Reddy et al, (2016) in the TIMSS assessment (Grade 9 mathematics and science), South Africa has been the best progressing country between the surveys of 2002, 2011 and 2015. South African mathematics and science achievement scores have progressed from a 'very low' (1995, 1999, 2003) to a 'low' (2011, 2015) national

average. Although South Africa is still one of the lower performing countries in mathematics and science in comparison to other participating countries, from 2003 to 2015 the country has shown the largest positive progress of all participating countries in both mathematics (by 90 points) and science (by 87 points), which is comparable to an accomplishment by two grade levels. There seems to have been a notable advancement in the country's PIRLS results between 2006 and 2011, although there was no noteworthy change between 2011 and 2016. In SACMEQ, a great advancement at the Grade 6 level was noted between 2007 and 2013 in both mathematics and reading.

The poor mathematics and language performances in South African basic education put the DBE under constant pressure to improve the performances of learners in these subjects. It is therefore unsurprising that the different systems in education (DBE [macro-system, district education office [exo-system] and school [microsystem] give so much attention to learner performance in mathematics and language, and maybe, at the expense of addressing other barriers to learning. This apparent over-emphasis on 'fixing' math and language barriers may inadvertently be leading to a narrow form of education. Therefore, this education orientation does not cater for all the developmental needs of the learner as a human being with different domains of development and hence holistic education is lost in the process (Moodley & Moodley, 2017).

Similar to School A, the School B LST provided a higher level of support to some learners that were identified by the SBST and also supported class teachers. However, School B had a different situation with regard to support classes after school. In previous years, the teachers were all part of an intervention programme after school, but this situation had recently changed. Since the beginning of 2020, the teachers were all used in the after-school sports programme as the school did not have enough staff to provide both academic support and the sports programme after school. The school's financial position did not allow it to appoint more staff to assist in this regard. The teachers made the decision in favour of an after-school sports programme instead of an academic intervention programme because they felt that the academic support that they provided previously in terms of literacy and numeracy was not sufficient to make a significant difference to the learners. Previously the learners at School B were assisted with comprehension, reading, spelling and basic mathematical skills in an intervention programme after school, but the teachers were not confident since they believed that

they were not trained in strategies to provide support to learners experiencing barriers to learning. According to the DBE (2015) teachers are most confident if they have received some informal training and have a formal qualification in special needs education. It is thus evident that a combination of more theoretical and practical training is required, as stated by the following participant:

Participant 9*: Until 2019, we had an after school intervention programme for key areas in both the Foundation and Intersen Phases. However, as from January 2020, this has been almost entirely dropped as the school's finances did not allow us to provide the intervention and the sport programme and teachers were not convinced that the intervention provided was making a decisive difference to marks.*

School B's approach to learning support was therefore slightly different to that of School A since School A seems to have had another level of support (extra classes) that School B no longer had. The focus on sport was not surprising at School B since this school previously only catered for white learners during the Apartheid era of South Africa's history. The former whites-only schools are commonly known as ex Model C schools, with a history of having sport being a fundamental part of their curriculum offerings (Bartlett, 2016). The respondents at both schools reported that they approached the DBST in line with the SIAS guidelines (DBE, 2014) when higher levels of support were required.

The comparison of the manner in which support was provided at both schools reflects the importance of context in shaping how support is implemented. This finding once more echos Bronfenbrenner's emphasis that context does indeed influence children's development (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). IE philosophy is based on the belief that all children can learn and attain great heights given effective teaching, opportunities and appropriate resources. Smit, Preston and Hay (2020) posit that the learner will not be supported if the learner with barriers does not benefit from teaching and learning because the teacher has no experience in teaching or supporting the learner with barriers. Contrarily, in the case of functional education structures and a good physical environment, stability of regular service provision, positive developmental outcomes and interactive relationships, support can occur. Proficient outcomes can outweigh malfunction, even in disadvantaged schools, if stable environments are in place to support proximal processes.

The SBST members at both schools posited that it was the role of the SBST to provide support to teachers by advising them on additional support strategies to use in class to support a learner who displayed learning barriers, as indicated by respondents below:

Participant 1*: I feel that the role of the SBST is to help the teacher as well, to give ideas, you know, of how to combat this problem.*

Participant 7: *…and I also think it's experience… it is the understanding of the child's growth from a specific grade and supporting my colleagues at the end of the day. Uhm, it's not only about the child but it's the support of the colleagues as well…*

School A seemed to have adopted a holistic approach to support for learners, and the practices align much more with IE philosophy and policy when compared to School B. Unlike, School B, there was an attempt in School A to source support from within the community and not only the education department's support structures. School A also endeavoured to capacitate teachers through exposure to different intervention approaches such as Word Works and Maths Mums.

Donald, Lazarus and Moolla (2014) aver that the interconnection that exists between creatures and their environment should be comprehensively reviewed in order to acknowledge how each system and sub-system contribute to the support and maintenance of the larger system. Circumstances in one segment of an environment influence other environments, revealing the complementary character of the association, frequently affecting the whole process (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). According to Mphahlele (2005) one of the theories for school-community relationships is that the community is the source of human and material resources schools need as extra resources to successfully educate all learners. Aside from supplying helpful assets, communities can also be sources of barriers to development and learning. Numerous forms of abuse and other problems learners experience at home, at school, and in the community, create barriers to learning and development that need school-community cooperation as a complete intervention. School-community partnership is more than just about the provision of support to teachers in their attempts to implement IE in their classrooms and schools. It is about schools and community structures sharing the purpose and responsibility of promoting and supporting learning and development through forms of community partnerships to address barriers to participation, attendance, and achievement in the teaching and learning processes. Community

structures and resources are prospective stakeholder like, rural or other community based orgaisations, municipal agencies, arts and cultural groups, businesses, trade unions including teacher organisations, the media and other government departments, parents and other family members. This illustrates the importance of the mesosystem (interactions of different microsystems) that influence the learning and development of the child (Mphahlele, 2017). In this study, for example, the community (SBST) cooperation contributes to the support and maintenance of the larger system, ensuring scholastic success for learners with barriers to learning, thereby ensuring the DBE's success.

Mavuso (2013) posits that in South Africa, the rationale behind the establishment of district offices was to bring education authorities closer to schools and it was expected that their role would be to make schools effective and efficient by providing educational resources and professional support. When participants were asked about their understanding, experiences and their practices of supporting teaching and learning they gave different responses. The SBST members of School B, however reported that it was their role to consult role players outside the school to provide more support in identifying problems and facilitating support. As stated by one participant regarding a learner who had a history of struggling and was getting worse…

Participant 9*: … we have input from the district support team, luckily. And the psychologist from the DBST suggested that he actually has an attachment disorder.* The learner was given the support needed to assist him in overcoming the learning barrier.

At School B participants also indicated that they were instrumental in arranging for district officials to come and address senior learners with regard to a very relevant, age-related topic. This team also indicated that

Participant 9 *…we have had people from the district office to do parenting talks as well…* The learners, teachers and the parents benefit from these programmes as learning takes place and all stakeholders are empowered on different levels.

Smit et al. (2020) state that the district education office (exo-system), which is the interactive processes between developmental settings containing the child and other settings such as the parents' workplace, is an influential system in education, as it provides a bridging area between the nine provincial departments in South Africa (the

second layer of government), the meso system. The departments collaborate with DBSTs to operate in conformity with provincial and national law (DBE, 2010). The DBSTs comprise staff from regional, provincial districts and Special School Resource Centres (SSRCs) (DoE, 2001), guided by the recommendations made in the *macro* system which refers to the DBE. The DBE as a *macro* system presents the value system and ideas of IE, enacting the broader governing system of education responsible for legislation, strategic planning, coordination of planning, policy drafting and funding for education for learners experiencing barriers to learning. (Smith et al, 2020).

The DBSTs and the provincial departments supervise and execute the programmes for support service provision to schools, for example, investing in whole school progress by supporting and assisting learners, teachers and principals (DoE, 2001) to improve learning support for learners in the microsystem.

The SBST members of School A and School B responded to the learning support needs of the learners who were referred to them by supporting the learners experiencing barriers to learning during contact time. The SBSTs also provided the teachers with a ISP (Individual Support Plan) to advise and support the teachers in the support of the learners in their classrooms.

Participant 8: *Uhm, if I also, I would like just to mention, we have a Grade 6 learner who academically was struggling with describing, uhm, reading the comprehension and so that case was brought to the SBST. And so I think, in the June in exam, we had that learner actually on the laptop using an application with immersive reader that could actually assist him in reading questions, and then answering to great success. I think that's also something…*

Participant 9: *And he has a medical condition that affects his eyes, affects his sight. So the teachers have also enlarged all of their notes and they give him the notes in class because he can't copy things down and they enlarge things for him and now we using the technology.*

From the responses of the participants, it was evident that both schools followed SIAS (DBE, 2014) guidelines with regard to individual support plans. Mapepa and Magano (2018) assert that differentiation is essential to set up individualised education plans

(IEPs) to assist learners with barriers to learning and that assessments are also adjusted to review the specificied barriers of each learner.

It was evident that the participants at School A were trying their best to implement IE in terms of presenting the curriculum using the learning and teaching support material (LTSM) provided by their colleagues in the team, or from the teachers in the lower grades that was needed to address the learners' barriers to learning. It was also the LST of School A's goal to provide and integrate the learning support she provided with the daily class activities and mainstream curriculum that was followed. This teacher also ensured that she provided the teachers with LTSM for the work that the learners were doing in class whilst receiving learning support from her. According to Yoro, Fourie and van der Merwe (2020) learners in need of assistance or learning support should not be separated from the mainstream classroom teaching in IE. The focus of learning support in inclusive settings should be supporting the needs of these and all other learners in the classroom. Inclusive policies such as EWP 6 (DoE, 2001) clearly stipulate that support should be provided using methods to remove the barriers to accessing the curriculum and learning opportunities and that learning support for learners with additional needs should be seen as an everyday practice in the classroom (DoE, 2001). Classroom teachers need to provide support using various teaching approaches that addresses the needs and ensures all learners can actively participate during the lessons. Through this support, learners should be able to interact with the teacher and other learners whilst learning is developed (Yoro, Fourie and van der Merwe, 2020). The following excerpts reflect the attempts by School A to integrate intervention and curriculum delivery in the daily classroom activities:

Participant 3: *Ek is die LST, uhm… vantevore was ek 'n mainstream teacher. … ek weet wat in die mainstream aangaan…. het ek besluit, en het ek ook gesê, ek gaan met die mense insit. Ek wil probeer hê, dat uhm…, my werk moenie vanaf die opvoeders se werk afwyk nie. Ek wil hê dat dit saam met die curriculum integreer. (I am the LST, uhm… I was a mainstream educator previously… I know what happens in the mainstream… I have decided… I have also said… I will sit in the people's classes… I want to try that uhm… my work does not differ from the work that the teachers are busy with. I want it to integrate with the curriculum).*

Participant 3: … *whenever my subject advisor kom en ons discuss die goedjies… en via die SBST discussions and stuff, dan probeer ons dit, dan probeer ons dit*

implementeer om daai kind te akkomodeer. So, ek sal sê, die skool probeer die beste … ek praat nou as 'n LST. Uhm… is daar baie educational goedjies wat voorsiening maak vir verskillende kinders se behoeftes. (…whenever my subject advisor comes and we discuss the things… and via the SBST discussions and stuff, then we try it, then we try to implement it to accommodate that child. So, according to me, the school tries its best… I am speaking as the LST. Uhm… there are many educational things that cater for the learners' needs.)

As previously mentioned, the SBSTs of both schools seemed to be organised in terms of its functioning and based on their school's context. The participants of both SBSTs indicated that they had weekly meetings outside teaching or assessment times. School B's SBST met every Wednesday and School A's team met every Thursday**.** The following was mentioned by one of the participants from School B:

Participant 9: *Uhm, we allocate, we say to the Grade, you are coming on this Wednesday. You need to discuss with us all of your children that are at risk and we go through all the, their children who are at risk and, and you know, discuss then how we are going to support them.*

Both schools' SBSTs were pro-active in their approach and ensured that core SBST members met, even when other SBST members could not attend due to other work engagements. This ensured the effective functioning of the SBST since meetings could continue, and that no time would be wasted in providing plans for much-needed learner support. The learners' progress was monitored by the referring teacher and, in instances when there was a decline in the learner's progress or even a lack of progress, the referring teacher would schedule a meeting or discussion with the core members of the SBST team to revisit the IEP provided for the learner. The participants of both SBSTs indicated that the review date, to determine the progress of the learner, was at the end of a term, after formal assessment had taken place. As one participant mentioned:

Participant 9: *Yes, yes now that does happen in between, because I mean you could have a situation where you just seen that Grade and the very next week something happens and the teacher needs support. And we are not gonna see her for another 3 months, so she can't wait that long so that happens on a more informal kind of basis.*

Both SBSTs had processes in place to ensure that important information pertaining to a learner with barriers to learning was shared with the teachers in the next grade. At both schools, meetings were scheduled at the end of an academic year or the beginning of a new academic year, for class teachers to meet with their counterparts. The aim of these meetings was to discuss their learners' educational needs with the respective colleagues who would be teaching the learners in the new academic year. Regular interactions and discussions of learners also took place, formally and informally with current teachers, future teachers and subject teachers. The knowledge, understanding, insight and the information about the learners was shared in an attempt to better understand the learner, and thus to support the learners adequately. The following excerpts reflect this practice:

Participant 2*: And that she said that handing over the baton as she refers, it happens every year at the beginning of the year or before even, if we can. It happens when the term is in progress already…Or at the end of the year..., we do it in the new year where the Grade 4s hand the baton over to the Grade 5s and the Grade 5s hand the baton over to the Grade 6s. Especially learners with barriers…. And which we find its quite positive within our grades that we know why is Johnny is so uitgehak (acting differently) in your class.*

Participant 9: ... *But, it helps that we understand … what that, what it is actually causing him to behave the way he is. That makes a difference to the way you interact with him, uhm and it's something that we will now be able to carry next year, to tell the teacher this is the problem, this is the problem now that we actually understand what that problem is.*

Therefore, the proximal relations among teachers, as described by Bronfenbrenner (1979) seemed to be aligned to share knowledge with one another in both schools with the aim of providing informed and appropriate support to learners with barriers to learning.

The SBST of School B in this study responded to the learning support needs of learners with the use of **I**nformation and Communication Technology (ICT). According to Brodin (2010) teachers should be assisted with how to adapt teaching for SEN learners that use ICT in the classroom in order to utilise all benefits of ICT and so that ICT can become the bridge for the inclusion of all learners. Support via the use of ICT can potentially enhance, and optimise the delivery of information that can lead to

better teaching methods and improved student learning (Brodin, 2010). Effective use of ICT in supporting learners experiencing barriers to learning is encapsulated in the following excerpt:

Participant 8: *We have a Grade 6 learner who academically was struggling with describing, reading and comprehension, and so that case was brought to the SBST. And so I think, in the June in exam, we had that learner actually on the laptop using an application with immersive reader that could actually assist him in reading questions, and then answering to great success*.

Participant 9 also described a learner who had a medical condition that affected his eyes, and thus affected his vision. To support the learner, the teacher was advised to use the technology and enlarged all of the notes that the learner received. Arrangements had been made to give the learner the notes in class because he was not able to copy things down.

The use of ICT support by School B and the apparent lack of use of such support at School A possibly reflects the different socio-economic contexts in which these schools operate. School B is located in a relatively more affluent suburb than School A with the concomitant influences on the type of learning support provided in the different educational contexts.

SIAS m states that if the class teacher perceives that he/she is unable to provide support for a learner with barriers to learning in the classroom, the teacher must complete the Support Needs Assessment Form 1 (SNA 1) giving a detailed explanation of the problem or barrier to learning identified by the teacher and present it to the SBST. The following responses from participants indicate that the process was followed in both schools.

Participant 4: … *and the teacher… the class teacher, or the subject teacher identify the barrier of the child, gets in touch, have an interview with the parent and then discuss. Then the SBST will, … discuss and decide what is the road ahead for that child.*

Participant 3: *Soos byvoorbeeld, die class teacher sal sê, but this learner struggles with the, met die dubbelklank of sinskonstruksie…, daai tipe van goedjies. So dan sal ek, ek maak gewoonlik my eie notules. Soos die kinders na my toe kom, dan weet ek presies - Jonny sukkel met dubbelklanke, die enetjie sukkel met kleure en hy sukkel*

met shapes. So die class teacher kom met, met die besprekings, dan pinpoint sy exactly, presies met wat sukkel die kind. (For example, the class teacher will say, but this learner struggles with the, with the double sound or sentence construction … those types of things. So then I will say, I usually make my own notes/ minutes. As the learners come to me, I know exactly – Johnny is struggling with the double sound, that one is struggling with colours and he struggles with shapes. So when the class teacher comes to discuss the learner, she pinpoints exactly, precisely with what the learner is struggling).

The coordinators of both SBSTs knew that they were regularly monitored by the DBSTs and therefore made concerted attempts to adhere to the guidelines as determined by the SIAS (DBE, 2014) policy. The coordinators and some of the teachers at both schools were trained to follow the SIAS guidelines in accessing support for learners with barriers. The participants realised that the role of the SBST was also administrative in nature, especially when addressing and or responding to parents of learners with barriers to learning and the completion of documents in line with SIAS policy protocols. The members posited that, as a team, they tabled the individual cases for discussion at meetings and then invited the relevant role players to provide input. After input was given by the different role players, ISPs would be designed in terms of the specific needs of the learners to assist the teacher and the parents to address the concerns regarding the referred learners. The ISPs would then be evaluated and monitored by both the class teacher and the LST for a period of time as determined by the SBST based on the availability and efficacy of the support. These processes are reflected in the following extracts:

Participant 9: *Well, when we... meet every term then we would go back to the previous term's list of children that were discussed, and say these were the ones that we looked at last term, how is so and so doing... are they still on your list? Or are they doing better…*

Participant 2: *It depends; the committee decides on the timeframe. Right, like it depends what it is… it can be a month, it can two…, it can be a term… You know, uhm... and uhm… monitored by the class teacher and the …. (LST).*

Participants of both SBSTs reported that they used the quarterly scholastic results to identify learners for intervention classes. One participant explained:

Participant 2: *We get…, I select my learners every term from their results.*

The participant then explained how the learners are supported during these intervention classes.

Participant 2: … *I take the children and I reiterate or emphasise what we ...were taught within today or within that week, especially when they don't have or they haven't grasped it so well within the teaching time and those are the learners.*

According to SIAS (2014) caregivers and teachers need the support of the SBSTs in screening, identification, assessment and support processes of learners by providing opportunities for consistent, cooperative problem-solving in areas of concern, and to ensure that support is provided where needed.

The next sub-theme to be discussed is collaboration in providing learning support.

4.3.4.3 Collaboration in providing learning support

According to the DoE (2001), teachers draw on each other's expertise and they provide support to each other making collaboration vital in the enactment of IE. Swart and Pettipher (2011) mention that when two equal parties intentionally participate in shared decision-making while working together towards a shared goal, collaboration occurs. Collaboration is a holistic approach which acknowledges that all problems and development challenges are complicated and require considering various perspectives of the problem and solution. This makes collaboration essential for SBSTs which aim to provide comprehensive and holistic support to teachers and acknowledges that a variety of perspectives and skills are necessary to address the challenges of catering for diverse learner needs in a classroom. This is what drives collaboration (DoE, 2002).

Mulholland and O'Connor (2016) posit that teacher collaboration can promote communities of practice through a series of professional relationships that improve the educational experience and learning outcomes of learners with special educational needs (SEN) within schools, consequently collaborative implementation is fundamental to efficacious inclusion. In Ireland, Learning Support Teachers (LSTs) and Resource Teachers (RTs) provide additional assistance to the growing number of learners with SEN in mainstream classrooms. Working alongside Classroom Teachers (CTs), these three different types of teaching proficiencies represent a possibility for classroom-

based and whole-school approaches to collaborative, successful inclusive practice. All class teachers in Mulholland and Connor's study (2016) promoted collaboration with LST/RT, identifying a range of benefits, including the following: access to creative teaching methods for and managing children with SEN, an opportunity to share knowledge and resources, an opportunity for different teaching approaches, including co-teaching and team teaching, extra and different viewpoints which could help to plan and adapt the curriculum.

According to Mulholland and O'Connor's (2016) study, all LSTs/RTs acknowledged and supported the advantages of collaboration with class teachers. These benefits included the acknowledgement that the teacher worked with learners throughout the school day which allowed an improved perception of the learners' abilities, and enabled the teacher to intervene appropriately to help eradicate the barriers to learning. This ensured that all teachers were aware of the learners' needs, leading to clearer focus and less confusion on learning and teaching objectives and allowed for optimal use of the appropriate LTSM and intervention strategies. This resulted in better results for learners through consistent communication and monitoring of progress.

Maphumulo (2019) asserts that one of the roles of the SBST which is necessary to organise activities for effective learning and teaching, is collaboration. Members must work in collaboration with teachers to design SBST activities that will benefit all learners experiencing learning barriers and other needs. The needs, interests and goals of learners inform accountability, collaborative decision making, responsibility and problem-solving initiatives. All of this resourcefulness should be prepared and guaranteed within an inclusive community to enhance knowledge and skills development. In this study, collaboration as a theme comprises the following sub-themes, that is, collaboration within the SBST, SBST collaboration with teachers**,** collaboration with the parents, collaboration within the DBST, collaboration with outside agencies. The collaboration within the SBST is discussed next.

4.3.4.4 Collaboration within the SBST

It was evident that members of both SBSTs worked together as a team, and that there was a harmonious relationship among the members of the respective teams. The members respected, trusted and supported each other; they were very open and genuine in their communication, and there appeared to be good peer relations amongst

them. The SBST teams under investigation added value in the school context, particularly for younger, and less experienced teachers, as they could approach the older, more accomplished teachers for guidance on how to support learners thereby learning crucial skills in the process.

The members of the SBST were provided with the opportunity to learn from each other as an informal support system and a mentoring system was fostered. The participants regarded each other as the most valuable resource, acknowledged that they continually learnt from each other, shared their resources, special talents and strengths within their specific teams in order to develop high morale, cooperation and a good work ethic. This was evident from the following statements:

Participant 3: … *in 'n neutedop gese, die beste resource wat ek kry by... (skool), is tussen my colleagues, my SBST, weet ek gaan enige tyd, … sluit ek my klas toe, en ek sal gaan… even though sy nie lank die co-ordinator is nie, dan sal ek haar vra. Ek sal werk gaan vra. Die verhouding tussen ons is, ons is mekaar se beste resource sal ek sê… (In a nutshell…. The best resources at school are my colleagues, my SBST (members), any time… I can lock my class up …and I'll go… even though she has not been the coordinator for long… I will ask her. I will ask for work. The relationship between us is, we are each other's' best resource… according to me…)*

Participant 7: *… Uhm, it's not only about the child but it's the support of the colleagues as well, and just growing, just taking everything that I … all the experience that I gathered and sharing it with the team.*

Participant 3: *... (Participant 6), is one of our senior teachers at the school, she served on the SBST for… since the beginning…so she has seen the growth of the SBST, as well, how it's developed at our school and she's very involved with the pastoral care of the learners, making sure that, uhm their needs are seen to. Uhm, she knows the learners extremely well and is also experienced… various schools she's taught at so she brings that all to the table, to the sessions.*

Considering the above statements, it is apparent that the SBSTs depended on teamwork to support the learners within their schools. The SBSTs allowed members of the team and their colleagues within the school to form a community of practice and to collaborate with one another by seeking advice on how to support their learners in their classes. They shared knowledge about learners and gave advice to the teacher on

how to address the problem in class. Mortier, Hunt, Leroy, van de Putte and Van Hove (2010) posit that communities of practice are groups of people who share difficulties, concerns, or a passion about a topic, and who expand their proficiency and knowledge in this area by interconnecting regularly. Communities of practice is a principle of learning based on the assumption that learning is a practice of social engagement. It combines identity (learning as becoming) and community (learning as belonging); and it addresses both practice (learning as doing) and meaning (learning as experience) (Wenger, 1998).

Millen, Fontaine and Muller (2002) posit that community interests comprise those accrued to the community and these advantages involve problem solving, increased creativity, creating a common context and increased quality of knowledge and advice. Communities offer a platform for the unrestrained exhibition of innovation and new ideas, offering members the chance to share recommendations and think unconventionally.

At school A, the current coordinator was relatively new in her position, however, the management of the school was proactive in this regard. The previous coordinator was available a year before her retirement to assist in the 'training' of the teacher and in her year of retirement was available for the smooth transition of leadership. Therefore, the experienced peer played a mentoring role, which is vital in preparing individuals to competently act in new roles.

According to Berzina (2011) one of the ways to successfully improve teachers' competencies and to enhance collaboration is school-based mentoring. Mentoring is especially helpful for professional development in organisations where support, human connection and learning have the main role for organisational growth and schools are unquestionably, organisations of this kind. Mentoring is predicated on the mentees' capacity to learn and develop, and that their progress can be affected by various processes that can sometimes be difficult. According to Finkelstein, Allen, Ritchie, Lynch, and Montei (2012) he idea of knowledge and skill (experience) being associated with age is deeply-rooted in the conventional assumption of mentoring whereby a mentor is known as someone who is older than the mentee, and is experienced in the sector to share knowledge with the younger person. There could therefore, still be problems to mentoring connections that do not follow the conventional older-mentor and younger-mentee association (Finkelstein *et al.* 2012). Matabooe, Venter and Rootman

(2016) assert that the accessibilty of the mentor, creating a comfortable and open environment to enable mentees to express their views freely with mutual respect in the mentoring relationship has an impact on effective mentoring relationships. Collaboration and mentoring are prerequisites for the successful professional development of teachers which consequently, creates a foundation conducive for the improvement of IE projects, as indicated by the responses from the participants, below:

Participant 4: *Yes, to me, it's a learning curve… all the time since last year when I was there (SBST) for observation. At this point in time, I still feel touch and go. I still run over and say, "Juffrou, hoe maak ons in so 'n geval?' (Teacher, what do we do in a situation like this?) Miss, but I am still there … learning from grassroots.*

Participant 4: *There is always a line of history that we can go... and even if we come till SBST discussions. For example, I come discuss a learner, Miss will be able to comment on my child, cause hy was dis en daai by my gewees, maar jy kan hom so en so en so help. (…he was like this or that in my class, but you can help him like that…). It's, I must say, we're open with each other.*

Participant 4: *I feel that the role of the SBST is to help the teacher as well, to give ideas, you know, of how to combat this problem.*

4.3.4.5 SBST collaboration with teachers

Analysis of the participants' responses indicated that both SBSTs collaborated effectively with teachers. Participants from each of the schools indicated that there was a collaborative relationship between the teachers and the SBSTs. The members specifically referred to the team work that took place when learners with learning and/ or social barriers are referred to the SBSTs, when their recommendations regarding interventions and teaching strategies are implemented by the teachers and they receive valuable feedback regarding the progress of the referred learners. Teachers collaborated at different levels, whether with peers in a phase or with those who taught the same subject. They met on a weekly basis to discuss progress as well as the challenges they faced and possible solutions. It was evident from responses given by participants on the effectiveness of their team that they felt that they, and the teachers within their schools worked towards a common purpose. The participants opined that their teams were making a difference because when a learner was referred to them, the

members of the team would make every effort to determine what barriers the learner was experiencing. They would also endeavour to find ways to intervene by developing an ISP for the learner, and monitor the learner with the assistance of the class teacher, learning support teacher and the parent. The following excerpts illustrate that teachers worked well with the SBSTs:

Participant 9: *I think… the benefit of having a SBST where you're supporting, is that we all got things to contribute, so that we can all think of different options, different ways of coping… uhm helping a particular learner. It might have to do perspectives on them, some of us might have experienced that child earlier in their school career, and then we … can then can add extra information uhm, … or we may have a sibling that can also get an even bigger picture of the learner… their home situation, their emotional situation. Then we are all there to offer different ideas of how the teacher can support, can support that learner… uhm and to facilitate any referrals outside the SBST that need to happen.*

Participant 8: *So the teachers know well in advance of when the meetings going to be. They all have a learner support file which they started the beginning of this year. So they prepare a register of learners that they are concerned about so that register comes with in the support file and then also blank ISP- individual support plans and, as we discuss the learners and we want to put a plan together, then that gets filled in at the meeting so we have a discussion and that's often where I come in, it's often English, looking at English and Maths so then I can offer support or I think you should try this and then teacher would record that on the ISP and then we kind of get feedback from the teacher again, uhm, a term or so later.*

It was evident that the SBSTs allowed other teachers and the SBST members to share opinions and ideas and to give advice regarding teaching strategies, LTSM and other support strategies in order to support the learner with special educational needs in their classes. There was a community of practice to support learners across consecutive grades. This was evident by the sharing of information about learners, including learners' challenges with the teachers. In this way the class teachers were prepared for the new cohorts of learners on an annual basis. This was evident in the following responses:

Participant 4: *…speaking about Grade 4… uhm, we have a good relationship with our Grade 3's where we have the handing over of the baton. The handing over of the baton*

is not only when it comes to paper. We always have a, I'm quickly going to run to Mrs So, help us quickly here. We also have where we ask listen man I need…

Participant 2: *Good interaction between the grades.*

Participant 9: *So we don't only discuss academic problems, we are also looking at behavioural problems... But, it helps that we understand …, what it is actually causing him to behave the way he is. That makes a difference to the way you interact with him uhm and it's something that we will now be able to carry next year, to tell the teacher this is the problem, this is the problem now that we actually understand what that problem is.*

4.3.4.6 SBST Collaboration with parents

The participants mentioned that parents were very important in the whole learner support and intervention process and that there should be a good connection between the teachers and the parents in order to support the learner. Parents know their children better than the teachers and can be regarded as a valuable source of information. Their input is thus essential for the provision of the best support for their children (DBE, 2014). The parents form part of the mesosystem that can be described as the linkages between microsystems such as connections between family experiences and school experiences (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). Parental involvement is very crucial in the process of support provided by the SBST as they need to grant consent for every step of the process as enshrined in the SIAS policy (DBE, 2014).

The participants in the current study mentioned that when a learner with a barrier to learning has been identified, the teacher completes SNA 1 and informs the parent who must first grant permission for the learner to be discussed at the SBST meetings. Following the discussion of the learner's perceived difficulties with the referring teacher, interventions to assist the learner should be put in place. The parents of the learner are encouraged to be involved in supporting the learner. This point is reflected by the following excerpt:

Participant 4: … *and the teacher… the class teacher, or the subject teacher identify the barrier of the child, gets in touch, have an interview with the parent and then discuss. Then the SBST will, … discuss and decide what is the ……*

4.3.4.7 Collaboration with the DBST

Collaboration is important for DBSTs whose objective is to provide comprehensive support (DBE, 2014). The SBST of the two public schools in this study worked closely with their DBST in managing barriers, providing psychological assessments, disciplinary hearings, assessment concessions and placements in special schools. Responses from the participants also revealed that the SBST members referred their problems and issues to the district education office, and that the district officials visited the school and advised them on how to assist and support the referred learners. The participants clarified that they had a collaborative, professional interconnection with the DBST, they regularly interacted with them, and that reports regarding their functioning were also submitted to the DBST. The DBST also monitored the effectiveness of the SBST and once the SBST referred the learners to the DBST, the referred learners were provided with the specialist support they needed, even if it took a long time in some cases. The DBST also assisted the participants in other ways, as one participant explained:

Participant 9: *And they also did, they also assisted us recently in arranging a talk for the Grade 6-7s about dealing with social media because that was a problem that we identified. So they… they do, do their best to support us with those kind of things uhm we have had people from the district office to do parenting talks as well…*

According to the DoE (2005) teachers and their institutions need continual support in order to consistently grow and learn and it is the responsibility of the DoE to provide the necessary human resources and support. The DBST is the main channel through which this support should be provided. SIAS (DBE, 2014) recommends a desegregated community-based model of providing support. This presupposes the involvement education district staff, the circuit and the DBST. It also includes staff from different education district portfolios such as school management and governance, finance, curriculum, assessment, psychosocial support, care and support in teaching and learning (CSTL), Whole School Evaluation, ECD, LTSM and e-Learning. These staff members intervene as intersecting teams to support schools to recognise and address an extensive variety of barriers, and guide and mentor schools to implement IE in all its facets. It is the role of the SBST to deliver the support service at school-level. The support systems are dependent on a network of Care and Support in Teaching and Learning (CSTL) which integrates all existing services including private professionals, community services, NGOs, other government departments, early intervention

providers and community-based rehabilitation services and disabled people's organisations (DPOs) (DBE, 2014).

4.3.4.8 SBST collaboration with outside agencies

The responses of the participants were varied when they were asked about their experiences of collaborating with community members. Participants from School A mentioned that their team had reached out to departmental officials and agencies outside the school to present parental skills workshops and Mathematics and English intervention workshops to assist parents in supporting their children. This team collaborated with the NGOs such as Math Mums and Word Works to assist their parent community to support the teaching of their children to read and solve mathematical problems. These academic workshops were well attended and the results showed an improvement in the progress of the learners whose parents attended these sessions regularly. School B seemed to have only sought support from the next line of support within the education system, namely the DBST to provide support or to present workshops for parents, regarding their roles and responsibilities in the education of their children. Therefore, unlike School A, School B apparently did not seek support from agencies outside the DBE except for professional consultants in private practice such as occupational therapists.

As one participant from School B responded:

Participant 9: *We do have an occupational therapist that comes into the school uhm and the parents pay on a private basis but she does…, a percentage of her work is done pro bono for us, yah.*

Participant 9*:* *…uhm we have had people from the district office to do parenting talks as well but again… that doesn't always, we don't always get the guidance (to) from the parents we targeting with that kind of, that kind of thing. And we need… those kind of parents, those kind of parents need more one-on-one help and that's the problem.*

The practice at School B to refer learners to professionals in private practice is not necessarily a bad one. Professionals providing specialised support play an important role depending on the level of support needed by the learner (e.g. SIAS clearly describes levels of support). However, this practice may suggest that the responsibility of the school in providing and facilitating access to learner support has been outsourced

and the costs are borne by the parents. Therefore, this practice does not reflect well with the philosophy, policy (e.g. SIAS, DBE, 2014) and practice of IE in South African schools. In addition, such practice seems to reflect a medical model (the learner needs 'fixing' by a professional who knows best, with the teacher playing a minimal role) rather than an inclusive approach. More concerning is that this practice suggests that there is a disjuncture between the claim that IE is being implemented at School B and the actual practice. However, this dissonance may resonate in many schools of higher socio-economic status in South Africa where parents are encouraged to seek private learning support for their children. According to Green and Moodley (2017:172):

> This approach to support is not within the spirit of inclusive education and is what we term the 'business model of accountability'. A concerted effort must be made to support the learner in the classroom by integrating the input of different role players such as the class teacher, learning support teacher, school-based support team, community resources, the learner's parents and, indeed, the learner himself.

4.3.5 Research question 3: What challenges and successes do they experience in implementing IE?

The themes answering this research question is: *Challenges* and *Successes*. Challenges comprise six sub-themes, namely, *Insufficient teacher preparation to implement IE, SIAS processes, Language of Learning and Teaching (LoLT), Insufficient specialist support, Parental involvement and Support by the DBST.*

4.3.5.1 Challenges Insufficient teacher preparation to implement IE

Although most participants understood the philosophy of IE and the IE policies of the DBE, they admitted that they had insufficient knowledge and skills for the effective implementation of IE practices. The SBST members asserted they lacked the pedagogical knowledge in effectively implementing IE in their mainstream classrooms. Participants alluded that they did not feel sufficiently capacitated by their Initial Teacher Education (ITE) training. The majority of teachers experienced stress and anxiety when

interacting with learners with special needs in an inclusive classroom because they lacked suffcient training to accommodate and support these learners with educational support needs. As one participant's elaborated:

Participant 4: … *also, a challenge in general which affects the SBST… Uhm, teachers that are not old school trained, is also a challenge… We are not, everyone is not specialised trained, but the little that we have, is also a barrier… if I am not fully equipped to identify a learner with barrier how equipped is that educator (with a PGCE) … to identify. I mean, I got four years of training and I still feel I'm not equipped.*

Participants from both schools indicated that, while they had received some training on how to perform their functions as members of a SBST and the implementation of the SIAS policy (DBE, 2014), they did not receive and really needed in-service training as they lacked the pedagogical strategies to provide appropriate support to learners. This was evident from the following responses of two participants.

Participant 2: *SIAS is where the teacher identifies … but most times the, the, the problem of the child is of such a nature that you as a class teacher cannot help, we on the SBST are also not equipped to help that child, …*

Some participants emphasised that they did not consider themselves to be sufficiently skilled to support their colleagues as members of the SBST because they themselves experienced difficulties in their classrooms. Other members raised concerns about teachers who have completed a Post Graduate Certificate in Education (PGCE), as they perceived these teachers to be inadequately trained to teach effectively; since the PGCE involves the completion of only one year of teacher training. The following extract reflects this sentiment:

Participant 4: … *also, a challenge in general which affects the SBST… Uhm, teachers that are not old school trained, is also a challenge, because I come… It used to be a college for teachers. The new thing that has…, I've noticed that we have in society in general, many schools, they have teachers that studied something else first and then they do a PGCE… So, if I may ask Miss, if I am not fully equipped to identify a learner with barriers how equipped is that educator…to identify. I mean, I got four years of training and I still feel I'm not equipped.*

Participants in this study were referring to inadequacies in teacher preparation for IE with regard to both pre-and-in-service training. Stofile, Raymond and Moletsane (2013)

posit that without possession of the necessary skills and knowledge, teachers are likely to lose their confidence in their capacity to successfully include and support learners with various needs. Teachers construct a barrier to the implementation of IE when they consider themselves to not be appropriately equipped with sufficient skills and knowledge to teach and support the learners with learning barriers. In support of this view, Makhalemele and Nel (2015) state that insufficient knowledge of team members remains one of the challenges of providing quality and effective support services in South African schools. Part of the challenges to the effectiveness of a SBST, according to Masango (2013), is the lack of knowledge of team members to take care of learners with special needs which may have resulted from the lack of training and motivation to carry out their responsibilities. Zwane and Malale (2018) reported that most classroom teachers specified that, in order for them to to be capacitated to support learners with special educational needs (SENs) in their classes, they needed comprehensive training in IE. Research further revealed that teachers who have not received instruction pertaining the inclusion of learners with disabilities and special learning needs may display uncooperative or unenthusiastic behaviour towards such inclusion, whilst prolonged instruction was correlated with more positive attitudes towards the inclusion of learners with barriers to learning. Education in the field of special needs education seemed to improve understanding and attitudes concerning inclusion, however, introductory courses offered through teacher preparation programmes may at times not prepare the teachers sufficiently for efficacious inclusion (Zwane & Malale, 2018).

The data from the current study suggests that there is a gap between policy ideals and reality. The guidelines of the SBST stipulates that the team should comprise of teachers with proven specialised knowledge and skills, learning and classroom support, guidance and counselling and life skills, among other guidelines (DoE, 2005), which was not the case with the participants in this study, with regard to specialised pedagogical knowledge. Haug (2017) avers that there is a gap between formulations and realisations of IE in all countries because changes are few, slow and there are many complications. He questions whether IE has produced the purposive results in the education of the learners and posits that the realisation of IE, requires the development of teachers' competencies in this particular type of education (Haug, 2017).

Malahlela (2017) asserts that the willingness and passion of the teachers to implement IE for the benefit of the learners, reveals the degree to which teachers regard the

enactment of IE as being essential. This concurs with Bronfenbrenner's theoretical framework (Bronfenbrenner, 1979) that proposes the significance of the relationship between the developing learner and the teacher as a focal point within the immediate environment (micro level) where proximal approaches are exhausted to benefit the developing learner. The application of Bronfenbrenner's ecological framework (1979) in the analysis of the South African basic education system provides insight into how IE is experienced at various levels of the system. For example, teachers at school-level (microsystem) are directly affected or encouraged by the South African system of education (the macrosystem), to enact its IE policies because the policymakers believe in IE, value it and regard it as praiseworthy and to be enacted by all schools and consequently, the impact of the macrosystem with its values and belief systems on the microsystem, as proposed in Bronfenbrenner's ecological model (Malahlela, 2017). However, with regard to the current study, it was evident that, with the implementation of IE, there seems to be a gap between advocating the philosophy of IE via policy and providing teachers with the actual tools for implementation, the latter being the deficit aspect. At the macro level (the DBE), more work needs to be done to capacitate teachers with the correct tools. It was evident from the SBSTs' frustration that the education policymakers work in isolation from teachers working in the field; hence the clash in practicality and theory of the implementation of IE.

Malahlela (2017) asserts that, according to Bronfenbrenner's ecological model, the proximal relationships that should exist between the learners and teachers at the microsystems level should emerge within an accommodative and supportive learning and teaching environment (the mesosystem). This learner development model recommends the comprehensive progress of the learner, which is completely reliant on proximal relationships that exist between the learner, school, peers and the family (microsystems). Since the teachers were found not to be well-trained, the speculative beliefs of the model are compromised, and more still needs to be done by the teachers and the DBE at the exosystem level. In this situation, the DBE is expected to provide pertinent, adequate guidance for teachers, in addition to follow-up monitoring or consultations of the implementation of IE towards realising the specifications of the contemporary system of education (the implementation of IE). This entails the chronosystem in Bronfenbrenner's socio-ecological model (1979), which relates to the periods during the progression of the learner (Malahlela, 2017).

Donohue and Bornman (2014) propose more conviction and a concerted effort by the DBE towards the successful implementation of IE. These authors assert that, the DBE can no longer monitor or control the accountability of implementing a policy developed by them to other role players such as teachers and school principals if they wish to make significant progress. Research has found that, in the absence of support, school officials will rapidly retogress to a special education model of educational support if and when the burdens associated with IE implementation become overwhelming. These researchers further assert that the top-down approach emphasises the importance of policy clarity, as well as the direction and control by policymakers for comprehensive policy implementation. Contrastingly, bottom-up approaches emphasise the significance of appreciating the experiences and viewpoints of service deliverers and target groups. These researchers prefer a top-down approach for inclusive policy implementation due to many different attitudes that result in a lack of consensus about best education practices for children with disabilities. Hence, they believe that clear policy mandates, together with enforcement of such mandates, will be the most effective means by which inclusive policy will be realised in South Africa (Donohue & Bornman, 2014).

b) The tedious administrative process in implementing IE

One topic in this study, that heightened participants' emotions in both SBSTs was the administrative burden associated with SIAS protocols to be followed to access support for learners in need. The participants mentioned that the tedious administrative process in implementing IE; the completion of the documents required by SIAS; SNA1 and SNA 2 (DBE, 2014), caused much stress and frustration for teachers and the SBST members of both schools. This was supported by the following statements:

Participant 2*: It's the admin!*

Participant 4*: All the paper work, yes!!: To me also, with the SBST, in my personal experience, the paperwork … it's too much, it puts those teachers back … to even come and discuss that child.*

Participant 3: *As ek moet eerlik gesproke sê, baie teachers vir my om…, hulle sien die problem, but because of the paperwork, gaan ek nie daai problem aanspreek nie. En dit plaas druk op die SBST, dan lyk dit funksioneer ons nie, kom ons nie tot reg nie. (I can honestly say, many teachers, I think… they see the problem, but because of the*

paperwork, they do not want to address the problem. This places pressure on the SBST, then it looks like the SBST is not functioning properly.)

Participant 9: *Oh no, it's completely… and it holds up the whole process. I mean, we just yesterday, now because the District Support Team was there. I got 3 children who need counselling and support from the social worker and psychologist so we talking about children who domestic violence involved, cutting on themselves are involved. So these are fairly serious things but we cannot, they cannot, nothing can be done until the teachers completed that 5 page from. And that's going to take us at least a week, whereas, if there was… if that admin wasn't in the way, they could be here Tuesday next week and be addressing the issues. But the whole process is going to be delayed because of that. Big problem…*

Participants also reported that the lack of information to complete the forms due to a lack of parental involvement and incorrect information provided by guardians, caused much frustration and also hampered the process. Participants reported that they spent time at home and after school to complete these forms as the whole administrative process was extremely time consuming. According to some participants, the burden of administration led to teachers not wanting to refer learners with barriers to the SBST and the participants felt strongly that the process of accessing support (SIAS) was burdened by bureaucracy. The implication of this situation was that learners' needs were compromised. Ironically, it seems as if the very IE policy guidelines to access support, are themselves, external barriers to learning.

One of various options for the provision of early intervention services in the least restrictive environment is mainstreaming. Nevertheless, bureaucratic and professional barriers continue to impede efforts to successfully implement mainstreaming. According to Travers, Balfe, Butler, Day, Dupont, Mcdaid, Donnell, Prunty (2014) teachers mention time constraints with regard to their administrative duties, including planning, meeting with colleagues and differentiating their teaching as a barrier to inclusion. Participants also raised the lack of time to plan appropriately for the needs of learners with special learning needs, and mentioned gaps in learners' education, lack of readiness for grade level and apprehensions regarding IEPs as added pressures. Teachers reported that they are under immense pressure and experience feelings of anxiety and guilt in their efforts to give adequate time to their learners with and without additional learning needs. Zwane and Malale (2018) assert that, because neither the

teachers nor the administrators in Swaziland were knowledgeable regarding the implementation of an inclusive curriculum, and because of the lack of teacher training in some inclusive schools, they were dealing with administrative barriers that hampered their ability to access their and their learners' support needs.

c) Language of learning and teaching

Another challenge to the efficacy of the implementation of IE that was revealed by the participants of School A in this study was that the Language of Learning and Teaching (LoLT) was not always the same as the learners' mother tongue, especially when English was the LoLT. According to the participants, this posed a challenge for the learners and parents whose native language was Afrikaans, isiXhosa or any other language, including foreign languages due to the increasing number of immigrant children enrolling at their school. Research participants in this study acknowledged that they lacked the capacity to support learners with language barriers, especially the children of refugees. They further stated that the parents of these learners also experienced difficulties in supporting their children because they did not understand the language of instruction. This situation has led to the increase in referrals to the SBST. The following participants explained:

Participant 1: …*, but there are problems that have been forced on us, this foreign problems…*

Participant 4: *So that to me is part of inclusivity because you need to include and the mere fact that the country has become so open. So open and so diverse that we have asylum seekers in our class, it is more than just our official languages now, now we need to go out to …Swahili, I need to go Portuguese*

Participant 3: *Yes, but even, even, even coloured kids ook. (also). Die parents create die barrier, die parents sê my kind moet in 'n Engelse klas wees but die kind is Afrikaans speaking. (The parents create the barrier, the parents say my child must be in an English class, but the child is Afrikaans speaking.)*

Supporting the perceptions of the participants, Ntombela and Raymond (2013) postulate that mismatches between the LoLT and the home language of a learner can have major repercussions for learning. According to Stofile, Raymond and Moletsane

(2013) learners who have a restricted capacity to comprehend and converse through the LoLT tend to experience difficulties in learning.

The DoE (2005) states that teachers of all learning curriculums are expected to give support and supplementary learning in the language of learning and teaching (LOLT) until learners are able to learn adequately through that method when they register at a school in which the LOLT is not their home language. Over twenty years ago, National Commission on Special Needs Education and Training (NCSNET) and National Committee on Education Support Service (NCESS) (1997) averred that more barriers also arise from the curriculum as a result of the medium of teaching and learning. Currently, this learning barrier is still common in many South African schools. Learning and teaching for a multitude of learners take place through a language that is not their first language. Ntombela and Raymond (2013) note that for the majority of learners in South African education takes place through a second or even a third language. What is even worse is that many learners are taught by teachers who speak a language different from their own, or by teachers who are also struggling with the language of learning and teaching.

d) Inadequate infrastructure

The challenge of infrastructure pertained to only one of the two schools. The SBST members in this study alluded that IE is the process of ensuring that the facilities and infrastructure provided by the school is aligned to the needs of all the learners. School A recently moved into a brand new single-storey building. This building has ramps and the ablution facilities are wheelchair friendly. Members of that SBST stated that their infrastructure was conducive to the implementation of IE. School B had a different response and the participants stated that their school's infrastructure is not conducive for the implementation of IE. School B's participants mentioned issues such as the unavailability of services –for example, the lack of adequate support from the DBST, the shortage of equipment to assist learners with various disabilities and old school buildings for the accommodation of learners who were physically challenged. Verbal quotes from interviews reflecting School B participants' viewpoints of their school environments are provided below. This includes the building of ramps as the members of the SBSTs were apprehensive about the physically disabled learners who may have

had restricted entry to additional facilities and some school buildings. The following excerpts are indicative of their sentiments:

***Participant 2**: First of all, our new building allows inclusivity. We have the accommodation for children in wheelchairs.*

***Participant 4**: We don't have upstairs… Also, our bathroom is equipped for, for… wheelchair friendly.*

***Participant 9:** Our school infrastructure is not particularly sympathetic to learners with physical disabilities. There is a ramp at the front door but there are also gutters between the gate and the front door which might be difficult for wheelchairs. Getting to any of the classrooms upstairs would be a challenge for wheelchairs and getting outside for break from anywhere in the school involves at least 4 or 5 steps. Because the school is situated on the slopes of the Tygerberg, the playground itself has different levels with steps leading from one level to another*.

Participant 9 elaborated that getting to any of the classrooms upstairs would be a challenge for learners in wheelchairs or with any other physical disability.

Barrett, Treves, Shmis, Ambasz and Ustinova (2019) assert that the performance of learners is improved in schools with exceptional physical learning environments. These researchers further state that a deplorable form of inequality, is discriminative against learners with disabilities as revealed by insufficient bathroom facilities, poor signage, a lack of specialised teacher support and a lack of ramps. In most countries, this kind of inequity is unacceptable and could be addressed through the provision of appropriate facilities that meet modern day standards of design. Dissatisfaction and discouragement and, in many cases, teacher absenteeism and school drop-outs were mostly created by the disproportionate distribution of educational resources. Conversely, guaranteeing that schools have appropriate facilities could play an irrefutable role in promoting the retention of learners, enhancing impartiality and improving the rate of enrolment (Barrett, et al., 2019).

Similar to these research results, Malahlela (2017) presented the findings of a study that he administered where numerous schools were functioning in settings that were not prepared for the establishment of IE, for example, antiquated buildings in most public schools; school furnishings that could not serve wheelchair-bound learners; the

structural styles of buildings of the former Model-C schools which were two storey buildings without elevators or ramps for learners with physical disabilities; and the absence of slopes, indications, sidewalks and ablution facilities to serve learners with disabilities. According to Malahlela (2017) intolerant school learning settings, do not observe the 'Guidelines for Full-service Schools' (DBE, 2010:37) which prescribes that the school should be a secure and safe place for all teachers and learners, that all classrooms should be convenient for all learners, including those with disabilities; that the school should have appropriate ablution facilities for staff and learners, including at least one lavatory that can accommodate wheelchair users.

e) Insufficient LST specialist support

Nel, Tlale, Engelbrecht and Nel (2016) posit Learning Support Teachers (LSTs) have recently been appointed as members of the DBST. The LSTs were expected to provide assistance regarding the identification and support of learners experiencing barriers to learning and were assigned to numerous schools. These researchers further assert that about fifteen years ago, a governmental seminar titled, "Learning for Democracy in an Inclusive Education System: Implications for Teacher Development", was held where the LSTs were acknowledged for making an immense contribution in supporting the SBST and networking with community role players, building partnerships and for the provision of teacher professional development (DoE, 2005). According to SIAS (DBE, 2014) one of the roles of LSTs is the facilitation of learning support in schools and to train and support their mainstream classroom colleagues. In this study, the researcher found that the roles of the LSTs of the two schools were fundamentally the same yet it differed in the context of the schools.

In the current study, the LST at School A was employed by the WCED, but she had to service two schools and School B had their own learning support teacher who was in a SGB post, meaning that she was paid from the school's own funds and not by the state. The members of the School A's SBST mentioned that sharing their LST with another school was problematic. The School A LST teacher stated that it was expected of her to attend training sessions and workshops offered by the district and the Cape Teaching and Learning Institute, which is the teacher professional development institute of the WCED. This meant that she was not always available to assist the two schools that she

was responsible for and where her knowledge, skills and expertise was needed. According to the following participant, staffing is definitely a challenge.

Participant 4: *Challenge for support for my colleagues, first and foremost is that Miss (LST) is not here full time … I need to ask uhm," Wanneer kom juffrou? Wanneer kom juffrou leiding gee, wanneer kan juffrou kom". (When is Miss (LST) coming? When will Miss come and give guidance? When can Miss come?)*

This finding suggests that School B had the benefit of a full-time LST compared to School A, which meant that School B received reduced specialised support from the LST.

Mahlo (2013) posits that the value of learning support teachers in the IE process cannot be exaggerated as they serve teachers in areas where teachers lack skills, attitudes and knowledge. According to Dreyer (2013) the WCED has endorsed a methodical technique to providing learning support in mainstream primary schools. This model, in which the learning support teachers have to primarily provide support within the mainstream class, is based on a continuation of support provision. Learners who otherwise would not be able to afford individualised or highly specialised support services gain access to such services when the small groups of learners are withdrawn by the LST for extra support. In addition, LSTs play three other roles in primary schools in the WCED. According to this researcher, these involve the support teacher as an information-consultation agent, an agent for change and as a cooperative team leader. It incorporates the support and empowerment of mainstream classroom teachers, as envisaged by the DoE (2001). The role of LSTs has thus become more complex and comprehensive than it was more than a decade ago (Dreyer, 2013).

f) Parental involvement in the provision of learner support

When asked about the level of parental involvement, the participants of both SBSTs indicated that parental involvement was minimal. They admitted that parents did attend parent meetings. They provided various reasons for the lack of parental involvement; which included the socio-economic challenges faced by parents. The SBSTs in this study would have liked parents to be more involved in their children's education and stated that the parents of learners in need of support often did not attend school meetings. The participants in this study also mentioned that, due to the nature of their

work and family structure, parents were sometimes unavailable for school meetings and other commitments that demand their attention at school. Participants also stated that parents were sometimes in denial about the learning barriers experienced by their children, and did not respond when they were invited to school to discuss their children's progress, and or to attend parental workshops.

Another stress factor mentioned by the SBSTs, was the lack of parental cooperation in giving consent for learners to be referred to and discussed at SBST meetings. This could be because the parents were in denial that their child experienced a barrier to learning or the parents might have been ignorant about the role of the SBST, its aims and functions. Parents also only became concerned about their children's scholastic progress when their children did not meet the pass requirements and had to repeat the year. The participants also mentioned that respecting the rights of parents in their (the SBST's) attempt to support learners with barriers, as per policy, was potentially a source of much administrative work. The teachers had to complete referral forms for learners requiring extra support; but then some parents refused to sign the forms. The participants of the current study reported that some parents were reluctant to share personal, private information regarding their children. This reluctance hampered the referral process since the SBST could not discuss learners without the consent of their parents (DBE, 2014).

One participant explained that because some parents found it difficult to accept that their child had some sort of learning barrier, they hampered the referral process. The following extracts capture this sentiment:

Participant 2: *Daar's niks verkeerd met my kind nie. (There's nothing wrong with my child) Now the child, there's a referral form already in the child's profile. Now you in Grade 5 the child, the parents are completely in denial. … now the child gets to Grade 7. Now the parent wants to wake up because now they must apply for a high school and the child's results is weak and then they want to play the ball game, change the ball game and they want to blame the teacher. And then there's a … that is why there must be a paper trail. Now you see what I'm referring to, all that paper work and yet the parent refuses for the child to be discussed.*

Participant 4: *And the other thing … the parent is reluctant to share the information with you; the parent is the lot of the times in denial … "It isn't my child', 'it cannot be my child'. The parent is reluctant to even sign for you to just take the forms and discuss*

with the SBST … after the learner has repeated the grade then the parent pick up, "My child is not improving! Nou, "Waar is die juffrou met die vorms?' (Where is the teacher with the forms?)

Participant 2: *…, there's a referral form already in the child's profile. Now you in Grade 5 the child, the parents are completely in denial. … now the child gets to Grade 7. Now the parent wants to wake up because now they must apply for a high school and the child's results are weak. …. All that paper work and yet the parent refuses for the child to be discussed* ***...*** *and parents are reluctant to share that little painful information with you. It's very personal…*

Maphumulo (2019) asserts that the SBSTs in South African schools include parents and caregivers, who are considered as the providers of valuable information of their children's family situation, emotional, social, personal, medical, behavioural strengths and interests, skills, health and scholastic history. When the processes of the planned intervention programmes are discussed, parents should be intentionally included in meetings. Moosa (2014) posits that parents must understand the procedures of the meetings, and that the SBSTs must arrange a translator for those who are hearing-impaired or those whose home language differs from the LoLT of the educational institution.

The participants of School A also mentioned that, when a learner was identified as experiencing barriers to learning and the parents were informed by the teacher or a member of the SBST, the parents did not really believe the teachers. However, when their children were assessed by a psychologist and the psychologist provided feedback (e.g. a report), parents seemed to consider the psychologist's views as important or meaningful. This report (depending on the content) also convinced the parents that their child had a barrier to learning.

Participant 2 *…many of the times parents are, fill in or they agree but once you tell them that this is a report on the assessment of the school psychologists … then you can see that they are starting to realise that there's a barrier for… about my child.*

The role of the school psychologist was valued much more than the teacher's input. This suggests a medical model belief that ranks the expertise with teachers being placed in the bottom rung. Moola (2011) asserts that work of school psychologists is collaborative in nature and may potentially include probing, the evaluation of learners,

development and implementation of intervention programmes, discussion with applicable professionals, parents and teachers. This researcher described that situational actualities necessitated moving away from the classical child-deficiency medical model towards a multi-systems and ecological model, proposing a broad range of actions and analysis. According to Kaleshi (2010) school psychologists can play an indispensable role in advocating participation between the home and the school and, as a result, affect learners' academic results. School psycho-therapists not only have a role to play in parental involvement, but they are equipped with experience, skills and knowledge to play a pivotal role in the improvement of home-school collaboration (Kaleshi, 2010).

Ntekane (2018) posits that parental participation refers to a situation where parents are directly involved in the education of their children; they fulfil their obligations as parents by ensuring that the learner is assisted in the process of learning as much as they possibly can and they are involved by the school and teachers in the learning process of their children. Parental participation does not only refer to parents showing interest in their children's academic performance, but also in conversing with their children towards having a strong connection with them, so that the process of inspiring, encouraging, mentoring and leading may be authentic. Mokala (2020) asserts that parents' concern, contribution and knowledge in the learning of their children will encourage them to welcome positive behaviour and unquestionably guide them to value education. Ntombela and Raymond (2013) strongly believe that parents or other primary caregivers are important resources in the teaching and learning process and the unavailability of parental support negatively affects children's learning.

g) Support by the DBST

SIAS (DBE, 2014) declares that the DBST is the next level to ensure the provision of extra support if the SBSTis unable to arrange high level support in an organised, cost effective and practical way. It is the function of the DBST to determine the strengths of the SBST, support needed by the SBST, assist the SBST to recognise further community-based support and to investigate ways in which more support can be aquired, and also support and interdependence through the Care and Support for Teaching Learning (CSTL) structure.

According to the DBE (2019) DBSTs play a pivotal role to the execution, observation and analysis of CSTL. They supply an interrelated professional assistance that utilise proficiencies in tertiary learning and local neighbourhoods. The predominant purpose is the capacity building of schools (and other educational institutions) to assit them in the recognition and support of addressing barriers to learning and the accommodation of a variety of educational needs. DBSTs are also obliged to organise school-based support in cooperation with provincial education departments and are responsible for the provision of access to adequate and appropriate pre-service and in-service training, education and professional support services.

Nene (2017) avers that the crucial component for integrated Care and Support for Teaching and Learning (CSTL) is its immediate effect on fundamental academic results - particularly attainment results and not repeating an academic year. Simply put, school-based support provided by teachers enables the early recognition of vulnerable learners and allows service providers to ascertain the needs that may not be addressed otherwise (DBE, 2014).

However, both schools reported there were often challenges in working with the DBST concerning learners with serious barriers to learning. Accessing the specialist support that a learner may need is problematic as it may not be readily available due to a lack of human resources. It appeared that the DBST was often unable to ensure “well-coordinated and collaborative support to the institution” (DoE, 2005:37) according to its mandate.

When asked about how the DBST supports the SBSTs and how the DBST could support them better, the participating members were initially very diplomatic in their responses. This was possibly because they feared that their principals or the district officials would get to hear about what they had shared during the study. I reminded them about the confidentiality and anonymity principles related to the research. The two teams however stated that teachers needed practical training sessions with regard to the administrative part of the referral process and pedagogical strategies on how to support learners who experienced barriers to learning. This was evident in the following responses:

***Participant 4**: Okay Miss speaking as an educator, now not as part of the SBST, as an educator you know what… uhm when the forms are filled in, we explain the barriers be there to support me when filling in the form, because if I'm not trained as I said to you I don't know what to write where, what barrier does this child have…? Uhm, how now? And also, teachers regularly need to have workshops with regards to identifying barriers. Barriers change all the time and… I don't always know if this child just needs that extra year, is the child a late bloomer or is this child a…, is there a problem? Test…, come test the children regularly!*

The participants reported that when a referral was made to the DBST, specifically to a psychologist, it was problematic as there was a long waiting list or one was just not available. The DBST services were not easily accessible when learners needed higher levels of support because the school-based strategies were ineffective. The following responses were provided by the participants:

***Participant 2:** SIAS is where the teacher identifies … but most times the, the, the problem of the child is of such a nature that you as a class teacher cannot help, we on the SBST are also not equipped to help that child, neh. Then we go to the department, we got the school psychologist and then there's a waiting list. There's children that's been discussed in Grade R for example, the child is in Grade 3 already, the child hasn't been assessed by a psychologist yet, you understand?*

***Participant 3:** Ons in nou sonder 'n psychologist… Sy's nou weer af siek, daar het een gekom, maar sy's nou afsiek weer.*

The participants also posited that the referral process to the DBST, after it was determined that intervention at school level was ineffective, was an administrative burden, very time consuming and ineffective. This was evident in the following responses:

***Participant 2:** En dan as ons sien daar is nie soos byvoorbeeld, daai een, ek gaan nou een voorbeeld maak, een leerder wat nou, wat nou die class teacher sien waar daar glad nie vordering is nie dan sal die SBST besluit maak, okay hier is 'n probleem so ons gaan verder die DBST inkry, en verder verwys na 'n special school of 'n OT so iets as ons nie op die skool kan nie. (And then if we see, for example, that one, I am going to make an example, a learner, who the class teacher notices …who does not make any progress, then the SBST will make a decision, okay, this is a problem that needs to be*

referred to the DBST, and a further referral will be made to a special school or an OT, things we can't do at school level.)

The participants acknowledged that the DBST wanted to assist where they were needed. They realised that insufficient resourcing at district level did not meet the demands made on the district office for more specialised support. This sentiment is evident in the following responses.

***Participant 7**: I just think that they are under resourced, they don't have enough people to actually maintain the quality of service that we require from them so uhm you know they just, they just, they just can't…*

***Participant 9: ….** So I understand that, I understand their limited resources. I understand that we think our problems are serious but there are many other schools that have many more much serious problems. So I understand that, but uhm, it has been a little bit frustrating uhm, sometimes that they not as available as we would like them to be. They, when they manage to come, so they were here yesterday, all 3 of them, but it was the first time all 3 of them has been this year and they were extremely helpful, they were really very able to contribute…. But it doesn't happen quite as often as we would like it to. …we followed the pathway and asked for the* (District-based) *support team's assistance and, uhm, you know it's not that they don't want to, sometimes it takes a long time uhm yah, not as effective as it could be.*

Participants also mentioned that the ineffective support from the DBST gets them in trouble with frustrated parents who blame the teachers and are not always patient and understanding.

***Participant 7:** The class teachers, the one that faces the parent at the meetings and they will ask. Why is the process taking so long if, let's say, a child needs to be assessed by the psychologist then we would say we have to wait until the school's psychologist can come to our school and then she can also do a few children now parents don't understand that, but the teacher is the one facing the parent. So there, I feel we are not being supported enough as well.*

Participants stated that, in the absence of specialist support services such as educational psychologists, social workers, etc. provided by the DBST they have to resort to outside support which is also not readily available.

Participant 9: *But we are well, my experience, we are very frustrated by having to deal with other government agencies so where we would have to work through the public health system, uhm social development, with social care system… We find that very frustrating because we find ourselves trying to fulfil all those roles where those agencies are not there to come to the party.*

Adewumi and Mosito (2019) posit that while teachers attempted to implement inclusion of learners with special education needs, systemic barriers were revealed. This included insufficient support from the district office due to limited staff. The availability and provision of suffcient resources and assistance determines the teachers' attitudes. The teachers will become negative when the support and resources provided are insuffient or reduced (Adewumi & Mosito, 2016).

According to Nel et al., (2016) the DBST members recognise that their functions have been modified and that they now comprise, among other things, providing resources to schools; analysing programmes and suggesting amendments; providing cooperative ordinary and academic support to educational institutions, communities, and other sectors. Nontheless, the DBST members are experiencing difficulties in fulfilling these amended roles. The functions of the DBST are not presently effectively executed which may be the result of inadequate support received from the DBE, more specifically because there are gaps in the responsibilities of the the districts, the provincial departments and the DBE. Furthermore, there are other barriers that impede the service delivery of the DBSTs. An example is the inadequate infrastructure and facilities available to DBST members in the provision of educational support services at the district level. The limited human resources and the insufficient accessibility of transport for officials to visit schools leads to the overburdening of the available district personnel.

The educational difficulties revealed by the current research study mean that there is a negative and indirect impact on the holistic and educational development of the learner as the central focus of Bronfenbrenner's ecological model as there is insufficient support from the DBE as the exosystem of the model (Malahlela, 2017). Contextually, the expectation is that the DBE provides efficacious training for teachers and SBSTs, as well as conduct further investigation, observation and feedback of the application of IE geared towards the fulfilment of policies directives. This system (the implementation of IE) also incorporates the developmental achievements of the learner from the Foundation Phase (FP) to the tertiary level of learning. This necessitates the

chronosystem in the Bronfenbrenner's ecological model, which refers to the periods during the gradual development and growth of the learner (Malalehla, 2017).

4.3.5.2 SBST successes

Most participants reported that their SBST experienced successes during the process of implementing IE. Two primary areas emanated from their contributions and emotional responses, including that teamwork was established (as discussed under the collaboration theme) and the improvement in learner participation and performance.

The theme: *Successes* comprise one sub-theme, namely, *Improvement of learner participation and learner performance.*

a) Improvement of learner participation and learner performance

Despite admitting that they had limitations like the lack of pedagogical knowledge in effectively implementing IE, the SBST participants in this study, opined that they had largely succeeded in their roles. Participants from both schools were impressed with their successes in the support that they provided to the teachers in the teaching of learners who were experiencing barriers to learning in spite of the many challenges they had faced. Participants mentioned that all learners who were referred for additional support academically, behaviourally, psychologically, and other barriers to learning were discussed, and they (the SBSTs) gave invaluable input on how to support the learners. These learners were supported and assisted academically by the SBST and or DBST members. The DBST gave advice and provided support to the best of their abilities although the specialist support from the DBST was not readily available due to insufficient human resources at the district level. The learners received the appropriate teaching strategies, LTSM, technological devices, assessment accommodations, and extra support classes during and after school (the latter applying to School A only), despite the SBSTs facing some challenges. Participants maintained that the aforementioned learners attained learning during the periods of support, which had a positive impact on their scholastic progress. Learners who needed emotional support because of behavioural and psychological problems, suspected domestic violence, or other learning barriers were referred to the DBST to be supported by social workers, psychologists and/ or other professionals. Participants of both SBSTs also indicated

that their interventions and collaboration with DBST specialists enabled the successful transfer of some learners, requiring higher levels of support, to special schools. The participants took pride in the fact that they supported each other as members of the SBST; they worked well together as a team and with the teachers at their respective schools. As participants explained:

Participant 9: *Well, I think successes were like Participant 8 mentioned with that learner and, uhm, many of the children that we've found, I think we are able to help through the recommendations that we can make…*

Participant 2*: Uhm, some of our children are accepted to the school of skills. Some of the children are even accepted at special schools already. We have yearly been successful with our applications. Ja, so it shows that how our …the identification of our children has been successful.*

Malahlela (2017) postulates that according to Bronfenbrenner's theory, harmonious relationships should exist between the learners and their peers, as well as between the learners and their teachers at school. These interrelations are regarded as microsystems interactivities which are the systems of the mesosystem. The mesosystem is a constructive environment which improves the learner's sense of security and self-confidence over a prolonged period. The mesosystem upholds an integrated system of education and challenges a prejudiced system of establishing parallel streams.

According to Bronfenbrenner, the existing and developing relationships between the microsystems should encompass the activities, actions and connections that occur between two or more settings accommodating the developing person (Bronfenbrenner, 1994), hence the underpinning of a desegregated learning system. To create and ensure this non-discriminatory learning environment, SBST members and classroom teachers must facilitate a network of support around a specific child, prevent the isolation of any team member, and concomitantly concentrate on the child's social (association with parents and other learners) and learning needs.

4.4 CONCLUSION

The purpose of the research was to the role of the School-based support team (SBST) in two primary schools in the Cape Metropole and how they perceived the support that they provide within their schools. The findings in this study reveal that SBSTs had negative and positive experiences during the implementation of IE. In this chapter, the researcher presented the results of research conducted through questionnaires and focus-group interviews with the members of the SBSTs.

Analysis of the data collected revealed that the participants in the study were largely positive and self-confident about their roles within their respective schools. They asserted that they provide adequate and sufficient support within their schools but specified the need for increased support and involvement from the parents of learners at their schools, as well as the DBST to ensure the holistic support of learners.

The members of the SBSTs requested training to improve their pedagogical knowledge and skills and to assist them in recognising learners who were in need of support. The participants further indicated that the provision of much needed Learner Teacher Support Materials (LTSM) would provide learners and teachers unique ways to approach learning tasks on various levels. It is also very evident that the amount of administrative work involved in the SIAS pathway causes much frustration for teachers and members of the different SBSTs.

The following chapter will provide the conclusions, limitations and recommendations of the study.

CHAPTER 5
SUMMARY OF THE FINDINGS, RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSION

5.1 INTRODUCTION

As outlined in the previous chapters, this study was conducted with the aim of exploring SBSTs' understandings and experiences of IE and the provision of support in their schools. Chapter 4 presented a descriptive analysis and discussion of the data. In this chapter, a summary of the findings with regard to the main research questions posed at the beginning of the study is presented. The researcher also makes recommendations for future research and outlines the limitations of the study.

5.2 SUMMARY OF THE FINDINGS

The researcher reflected on the research questions and the purpose of the study to summarise the findings of the research. The implementation of IE, and specifically the important role that the SBSTs play in providing support and addressing barriers to learning and development, was investigated. The findings of this study are summarised and various recommendations are made on the basis of the findings of the research.

5.2.1 Teachers' knowledge regarding the philosophy of inclusive education

The SBST members in this research study were very positive about the role and function they perform within their schools. It was also evident that participants in this study had a good understanding of IE and how it should be implemented, but some of the responses indicated that participants had not shifted from the medical model or explanations of barriers to learning from a special needs education paradigm.

5.2.2 The functionality of the SBSTs

With reference to EWP 6 on IE (DoE, 2001), the schools are following the guidelines and are mostly compliant with this policy. SBSTs perceived their role and function within schools as collaborating with teachers to support learners by strategically addressing the needs of learners who experience barriers to learning. Participants assisted teachers with problem-solving and played an advisory role in addressing the barriers to learning some learners experienced within their schools. Each participating school had a functioning SBSTwhich provided support to the learners, teachers and parents of the

school. Participants in this study reported that, through their service in the SBST, they established good relationships with the teachers and parents of their schools. This collaboration among the teachers and the SBST members was observed and confirmed during the focus group interviews. The collaborative role that SBSTs adopted enabled them to support the learners in their schools effectively. It also allowed the SBST members the opportunity to share their knowledge and expertise with each other and with other staff members, thus supporting learners holistically.

5.2.3 SBST challenges

The SBSTs of the two schools also experienced some challenges. The participants in this study posited that they, and the teachers they support, did not feel capacitated by their initial teacher training to provide quality support or assistance regarding the varied needs of the learners they are required to support. The SBST members also reported that they were overwhelmed by the numerous responsibilities they had in their daily routine as teachers, SBST and SMT members. These participants asserted that there is a dire need for sustained and comprehensive training of teachers to ensure the successful implementation IE. The participants also raised other concerns regarding the reporting and/ or referral of the learners identified as experiencing barriers to learning. The paperwork involved in the implementation of the SIAS policy (DBE, 2014) was specifically highlighted as a bureaucratic and time-consuming process which deterred some teachers from referring learners. Participants also mentioned that the language of teaching and learning is preventing the implementation of IE in their schools. Participants reported that some of the learners did not understand the language of instruction, and this resulted in these learners being denied access to the curriculum content and participation in class activities.

Appropriate and adequate resources and infrastructure are necessary for the effective implementation of the IE policy. This study found that School B's infrastructure was not conducive for the implementation of IE as it was not wheelchair accessible. This study also found that School B would benefit more from having their own LST and not having to share the LST with a neighbouring school. The role of the LSTs is to actively participate in the ILST (SBST) structure, to provide continuous support to teachers and to assist in developing and strengthening their knowledge, abilities and skills on

strategies for supporting learners (Mahlo, 2011). Not having a full-time LST caused frustration for the participants of School B and hampered the implementation of IE.

It was apparent from the focus-group interviews that the SBST of School A had more collaboration with parents, community members and NGOs than School B that was inadvertently following a special needs education approach. School B had good contact with district officials, but little to no collaborative relationships with parents and other community members. The participants indicated that they would like more parental involvement as this would lead to learners being more motivated to learn and there could also be the provision of extra support to learners who experience barriers to learning. Many factors led to parents not actively participating in school activities or being readily available to assist with their children's school work. Parents were often in denial about the barriers to learning their children experienced as they did not want to acknowledge or accept that their child needed support.

SBST members expressed their frustrations caused by the inadequate participation and assistance provided by DBSTs. Moolla and Lazarus (2014) state that collaboration within the schooling sector is vital if schools are to be effectively empowered and supported to provide quality education to their learners. District personnel, parents and SBSTs and other stakeholders are thus called upon to cooperate in order to provide learners with the support they need. The importance of intersectoral collaboration, where partnerships are developed between all role-players in order to work towards a common purpose is thus emphasised (Moolla & Lazarus, 2014).

The data revealed that the participating SBSTs need the guidance and assistance of support staff or specialist staff such as psychologists and social workers to address barriers to learning within their schools. These teams indicated that access to these support specialists would be beneficial and would aid the SBSTs and teachers to appropriately and adequately support the learners

The members of the SBSTs indicated that increased involvement from the DBST would make the learner referral process easier and better, as DBSTs can make decisions regarding learners based on prior knowledge about the learner and their current situation. In addition, participants indicated that involvement by the DBST would potentially assist in accessing professionals and specialists who could assess learners.

5.2.4 SBST successes

SBST members alluded that, because different team members are representing the different phases, it increases the effectiveness of the team by enhancing collaboration of the group during meetings where the support of learners is discussed. The main purpose of these meetings is to discuss the improvement of learning and teaching in the classroom to benefit all the learners with various abilities. The feedback to the referring teacher and/ or class teacher results in appropriate support provided to the learner experiencing a barrier to learning. This, in turn, leads to improved learner participation, progress and ultimately, better learner performance. Participants in this study acknowledged that because IE supported the values of equality, human rights and the recognition of diversity, it is an educational strategy that could contribute to a democratic society. The SBST members believed that, if IE was enacted the way it was intended, every learner would have the opportunity to reach his or her full potential.

5.3 RECOMMENDATIONS BASED ON THE FINDINGS

Based on the findings of the present study and the literature reviewed, the researcher recommends the following strategies for improving the functioning of the SBSTs and the implementation of IE in mainstream schools:

5.3.1 Developing communities of practice

It is imperative that district personnel and the DBE investigate ways in which teachers, particularly SBST members, could be supported more effectively. The provincial and national departments of education also need to explore ways of facilitating closer cooperation between SBSTs and DBSTs. This will ensure that the SBSTs function optimally, which will enable them to support the learners and the teachers more efficaciously.

SBSTs and SGBs should be motivated to initiate language intervention and enrichment programmes to increase the acquisition and development of the language of teaching and learning (LoLT). This will ensure that the LoLT does not impede the implementation of IE in their schools.

5.3.2 Enhanicng teachers' inclusive education pedagogical skills

These educational departments, in collaboration with educator training institutions, should arrange more in-service training for teachers and SBSTs through workshops that specifically address improving teachers' knowledge regarding the philosophy of IE, and how to deal with emotional and social problems within schools. This will bring about a paradigm shift in their understanding of IE, and enhance their knowledge of strategies and skills that relate to their role of supporting their colleagues, and the learners experiencing barriers to learning. This could also reduce the schools' need for assistance from support specialists, such as social workers and psychologists to assist in addressing barriers to learning within their schools. It is recommended that the DBE explore and review ways to expedite the provision of specialist support services which will subsequently support the learners and the SBST members in the execution of their duties.

Teachers should also be encouraged to take responsibility for their own education by attending upgrading and reskilling courses on the latest developments in inclusive practices. Teachers should be motivated to form clusters and to conduct seminars and conferences on IE.

It is also advised that SBSTs continue to create settings where decision-making and problem-solving are executed in a cooperative and participative manner.

5.3.3 Networking with other role players to improve infrastructure

In the event that the DBSTs lack the capability to provide continuous support to schools, it is recommended that they guide SBSTs and make them aware of community resources that could be accessed for assistance.

To ensure that the appropriate and adequate resources and infrastructure necessary for the implementation of the IE policy is acquired, it is recommended the DBE conducts a survey and prioritise the upgrading of schools that are not equipped with appropriate and accessible infrastructure and other resources to accommodate learners with physical disabilities. Schools must be encouraged to explore community resources and support to compliment the DBE's efforts by finding creative ways to involve skilled people from the community. There are, for example, people in communities with relevant skills, such as construction workers who can be approached to volunteer to build ramps without charge or at minimal cost to the school.

It was evident from the focus-group interviews that, although School A received some support from NGOs, the SBST of School B needed more collaborative relationships with parents and other community members. It is therefore suggested that the DBSTs investigate strategies that SBSTs can utilise to create cooperative partnerships with parents and community members or organisations. SBSTs should also find creative ways to build collaborative relationships between parents and other community members. It is recommended that schools be encouraged to conduct a needs analysis with NGOs, parents and community members to ascertain how they could be of assistance to schools, and how a relationship between these different stakeholders could be fostered.

5.4 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

It is hoped that this study will help SBSTs to develop policies, approaches and plans to support teachers with the implementation of IE by working collaboratively with relevant roleplayers to gain indepth knowledge of IE in service to schools, the education fraternity and entire communities. Various ways of improving the delivery of IE may be developed, including by supporting teachers who are struggling to support learners with barriers to learning. The study's research results may be informative to policymakers, and may help programme designers develop intervention strategies that support teachers and strenghten their teaching methods in supporting learners of various capabilities in a mainstream classroom. The different stakeholders, such as the parents, teachers, psychologists and social workers should work cooperatively in order to form a strong relationship. The data and recommendations of this study may serve to compliment the existing literature on IE and enhance teaching in an inclusive classroom.

5.5 LIMITATIONS OF STUDY

Only two schools were sampled in this research study and this study is therefore limited in scope. It may be worthwhile to ascertain if the experiences of SBSTs in this study are comparable to those responding to the same matters in homogenous schools in the Western Cape Province, and in South Africa as a whole. It was difficult to generalise the findings to the whole population of teachers at schools in South Africa where IE is

implemented because the sample size of this study was small, and that was another limitation of this study.

Qualitative data cannot assure external validity, and because this study is of a qualitative nature, the researcher cannot generalise the findings to a broader context (De Vos, Strydom, Fouche & Delport, 2005). This research is only applicable to two SBSTs in the Cape Metropole in the Western Cape and the research findings can therefore not be generalised to other schools.

Another limitation of this study was that, while some participants were hesitant to express their experiences or their perspectives on the questions raised by the researcher during the the focus-group discussions, other members of the SBSTs were very vocal about their experiences. The reluctance of the participants to express their opinions and share their experiences and ideas may be attributed to the interactive nature of focus-group interviews. Pearson and Vossler (2016) assert that, when conducting and analysing focus groups, the nature of the group dynamic also plays an important role. The participants who regard themselves as experts and other participants who are controlling talkers may discourage the rest of the group to participate in the discussions. During focus groups, the group dynamics, including the potential for some personal opinions and experiences being withheld for the sake of conformity which could diminish the researcher's ability to obtain a more nuanced view with divergent voices. Participants may not always have had the time to express their opinions in detail, so the amount of time allocated for the researcher to conduct the focus-group interviews could also be perceived as a limitation of the study.

Finally, in an attempt to guarantee triangulation, various sources of knowledge or processes were used, namely, questionnaires in addition to focus-group interviews. In addition, in order to guarantee that the explanations of the participants were original, verbatim statements and quotes from the data collected were used. This was done to ensure the credibility of the information. Coherence in the data was achieved by the supervisor checking the researcher's findings. Reciprocity was realised by facilitating the discussions and allowing the participants to lead the way during the focus group interviews. Simplified questions were also presented to verify explanations based of what research participants had said. Noble and Heale (2019) posit that triangulation has

limitations, but it also offers simplicity and richness to investigative studies. When used as a method for integrating research methodologies, triangulation may not be consistently achieved. Triangulation consequently adds to the complexity of research, making it more time-consuming. In addition, researchers may not sufficiently explain their method for merging results and there may be times when a comparison of the findings of two sources are irreconcilable. Triangulation does not always sufficiently alleviate problems in a chosen research methodology and triangulation procedures may furthermore need a skilled analyst, as they are complex, and the value of triangulation may be overstated in some studies (Noble & Heale, 2019).

5.6 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

The sample for this study was drawn from schools in different socio-economic backgrounds in the Cape Metropole. These two primary schools are in the same school district. Further investigation could comprise participants from different provinces' school districts as well as schools situated in townships or rural areas within South Africa. Research on the experiences of SBSTs from different regions of South Africa regarding the support that they provide within their schools is also considered as worthy and potentially fruitful as this would provide data that could be compared with that of the current study.

Research investigating the experiences of the SBSTs and the support that they provide in special schools as resource centres or inclusive schools could be another area of research. The research findings of these studies would provide invaluable knowledge for additional guidance, training and support for SBSTs. Research to investigate the support skills and knowledge required by both SBSTs and teachers in general, also needs to be conducted. The results of this research could provide insight into possible intervention strategies to support learners that experience barriers to learning. The research participants in this study were all teachers at primary schools. It may also be engrossing and advantageous to compare the experiences of high school teachers to that of their colleagues in primary schools while implementing IE. It would be interesting to compare and contrast the level of transition of learners with SEN between these educational levels. It is also vital to establish whether supporting learners experiencing barriers to learning in conventional classrooms has determinable benefits for teachers

and for all learners – those with or without barriers to learning. The level of training and education of the participants could be another interesting discourse.

In conclusion, it would be valuable to conduct research into the support provided to schools by the DBSTs, as well as the experiences of parents and caregivers as role-players within schools. These research findings may identify the challenges that DBSTs and parents experience while initiating cooperative relationships with members of the SBSTs.

5.7 CONCLUSION

This chapter summarised the findings and recommendations for this study which aimed to explore the experiences of members of the SBST's in providing support in their schools. The research questions which intended to determine what IE means to members of the SBSTs; what their roles are and how they implement IE in their schools; what challenges they have experienced as well as the successes that they have achieved when implementing IE, was answered by this study.

This study indicated that for the effective implementation of IE, education support services must be strengthened from the Ministerial level to SBST level in schools. It is also imperative that the DBST continuously empower and support SBSTs.

5.8 CONCLUDING REFLECTIONS

As a member of my own school's SMT and SBST, the identification and support of learners experiencing barriers to learning is of utmost importance to me. I also acknowledge that the implementation of IE, in particular the SIAS process, has a profound influence on a teacher's day-to-day teaching experiences. While conducting this research study, I was very impressed with the attitudes of the participants in how they perceived their roles and responsibilities in their different SBSTs. This study recognises that the majority of teachers are devoted and committed professionals whose goal is to help their learners to progress and achieve. The participants' passion for teaching and their dedication in providing support was evident, and I was distinctly aware that I was dealing with competent, caring professionals. Teachers are exposed to challenges over and above those of just teaching and learning on a daily basis, and it is

thus imperative that they are supported, empowered and consulted regarding the successful implementation of inclusive education.

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APPENDIXES
Appendix A: Questionaire for schools

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR SCHOOLS

Indicate your answer with an X in the appropriate block.

1.1 What is your gender?

Female	Male	Decline to select

1.2 What is your age?

20 – 30yrs	30 – 40yrs	40 -50yrs	50 and over

1.3 Teaching experience?

Less than 5 years	5 – 10 years	11 – 20 years	More than 20 years

1.4 Number of years at this school:

Less than 5 years	5 – 10 years	11 – 20 years	More than 20 years

1.5 Which of the following positions do you hold in the school?

Teacher	DH	Deputy	Principal	LSEN	Other (specify)	

1.6 What is your role in the SBST? _____

1.7 List the training workshops, related to Inclusive Education and/ or the functioning of the SBST, that you have attended.

_____ offered by _____

_____ offered by _____

_____ offered by _____

1.8 Specify all formal/ informal training that you have received in Remedial Education/ Special Education other than the ones mentioned in 1.7

_____ offered by _____

_____ offered by _____

_____ offered by _____

Appendix B: Focus group interview questions for schools

FOCUS GROUP INTERVIEW QUESTIONS FOR SCHOOLS

What does inclusive education mean to members of the School Based Support Team (SBST)?

1.1 What does inclusive education mean to you?

……

……

1.2 Explain how your school implements inclusive education.

……..

……..

2. How do members of the SBST perceive their roles and responsibilities in providing support?

2.1 Who are the members of the SBST and how were these members chosen to serve on the SBST?

……

……

2.2 What is your understanding of the role and function of the SBST?

……

……

2.3 How does the SBST support the teachers in your school?

……..

……..

3. How is inclusive education implemented at your school?

3.1 When do your SBST meetings take place and how often do you meet?

……

3.2 What types of cases have been referred to the SBST?

……..

……..

3.3 As the SBST, explain how you respond to cases referred to you?

……..

……..

3.4 Was the learner monitored during the referral and support process? If yes, how?

……..

……..

……..

4. What successes and challenges do you experience in implementing inclusive education?

4.1 What are the challenges/ frustrations/ problems that your school's SBST has to deal with?

……..

……..

4.2 What successes has your school's SBST achieved?

……..

……..

4.3 How does the SBST collaborate with agencies/ professionals outside the school?

……..

……..

4.4 Are there issues related to confidentiality that your SBST had to deal with?

……..

……..

4.5 How does the DBST support you?

……..

……..

4.6. In your opinion, what can the DBST do to support the SBST of your school, and ultimately the learners of your school better?

……..

……..

Appendix C: Letter of permission from WCED to conduct research in schools

Audrey.wyngaard@westerncape.gov.za
tel: +27 021 467 9272
Fax: 0865902282
Private Bag x9114, Cape Town, 8000
wced.wcape.gov.za

REFERENCE: 20181126–9093

ENQUIRIES: Dr A T Wyngaard

Mrs Caroline Agulhas

11 Mikro Street

Goodwood

7460

Dear Mrs Caroline Agulhas

RESEARCH PROPOSAL: THE ROLE OF SCHOOL-BASED SUPPORT TEAM (SBST) IN TWO PRIMARY SCHOOLS IN THE CAPE METROPOLE

Your application to conduct the above-mentioned research in schools in the Western Cape has been approved subject to the following conditions:

1. Principals, educators and learners are under no obligation to assist you in your investigation.
2. Principals, educators, learners and schools should not be identifiable in any way from the results of the investigation.
3. You make all the arrangements concerning your investigation.
4. Educators' programmes are not to be interrupted.
5. The Study is to be conducted from **01 February 2019 till 27 September 2019**
6. No research can be conducted during the fourth term as schools are preparing and finalizing syllabi for examinations (October to December).
7. Should you wish to extend the period of your survey, please contact Dr A.T Wyngaard at the contact numbers above quoting the reference number?
8. A photocopy of this letter is submitted to the principal where the intended research is to be conducted.
9. Your research will be limited to the list of schools as forwarded to the Western Cape Education Department.
10. A brief summary of the content, findings and recommendations is provided to the Director: Research Services.
11. The Department receives a copy of the completed report/dissertation/thesis addressed to:

The Director: Research Services
Western Cape Education Department
Private Bag X9114
CAPE TOWN
8000

We wish you success in your research.

Kind regards.
Signed: Dr Audrey T Wyngaard
Directorate: Research
DATE: 12 April 2019

Appendix D: Ethics clearance

UNIVERSITY of the WESTERN CAPE

OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR: RESEARCH
RESEARCH AND INNOVATION DIVISION

Private Bag X17, Bellville 7535
South Africa
T: +27 21 959 2988/2948
F: +27 21 959 3170
E: research-ethics@uwc.ac.za
www.uwc.ac.za

26 February 2018

Mrs C Agulhas
Faculty of Education

Ethics Reference Number: HS18/1/5

Project Title: The role of the school-based support team (SBST) in two primary schools in the Cape Metropole.

Approval Period: 17 February 2018 – 17 February 2019

I hereby certify that the Humanities and Social Science Research Ethics Committee of the University of the Western Cape approved the methodology and ethics of the above mentioned research project.

Any amendments, extension or other modifications to the protocol must be submitted to the Ethics Committee for approval.

Please remember to submit a progress report in good time for annual renewal.

The Committee must be informed of any serious adverse event and/or termination of the study.

Ms Patricia Josias
Research Ethics Committee Officer
University of the Western Cape

PROVISIONAL REC NUMBER - 130416-049

Appendix E: Confirmation from editor

Margaret Farred

Language Editing Service

082 899 3783

felicitas@mweb.co.za

This serves to certify that the MASTERS OF EDUCATION (M. Ed) Thesis titled:

THE ROLE OF THE SCHOOL-BASED SUPPORT TEAMS IN PROVIDING SUPPORT AT TWO PRIMARY SCHOOLS IN THE CAPE METROPOLE

by:

CAROLINE AGULHAS

was duly edited by me.

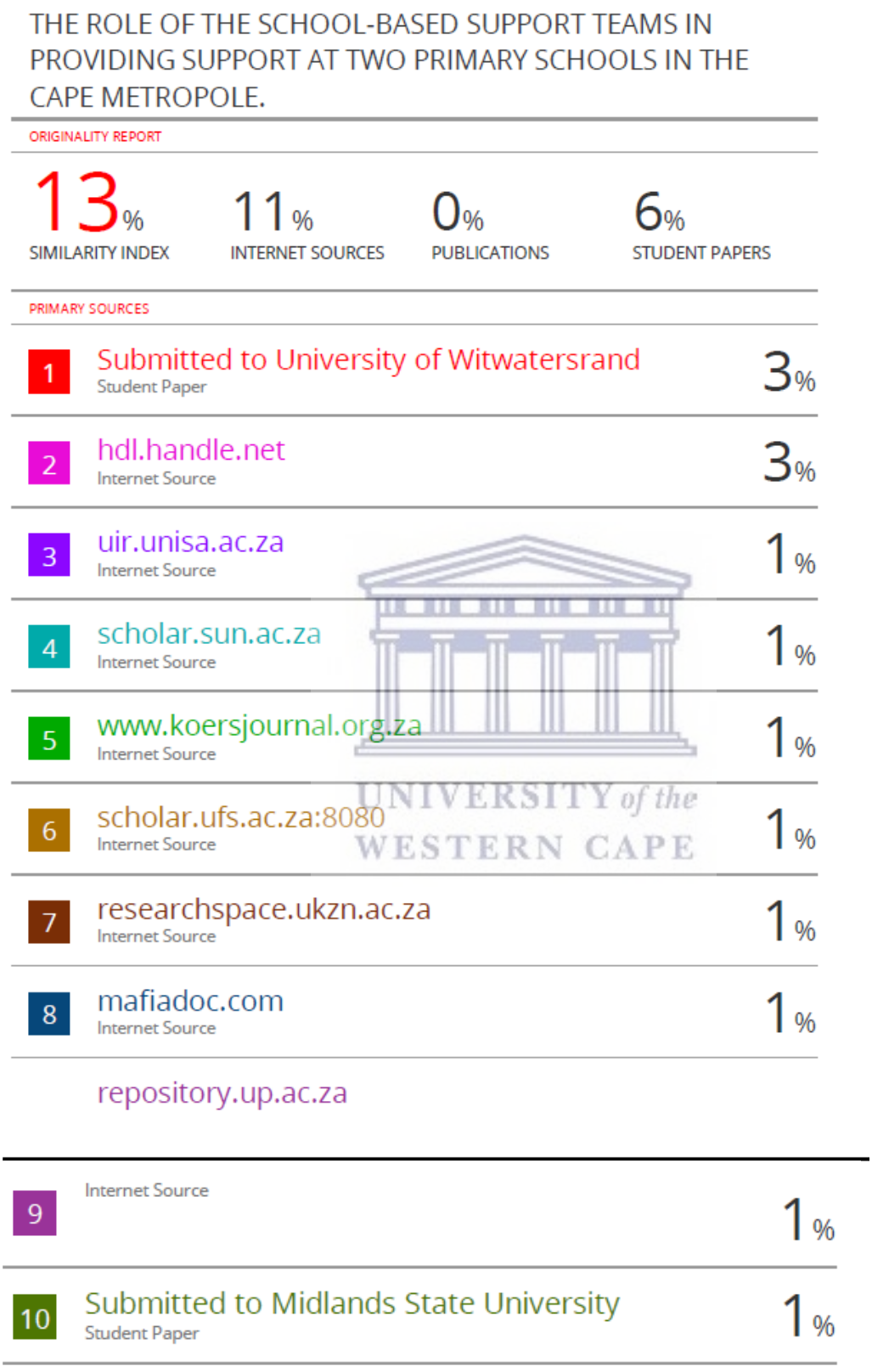
I am an experienced editor and have previously edited a range of different publications, including academic journal articles, Research and Annual Reports, Dissertations, Theses and books.

Please note that all editing is done in *Track Changes*, and I therefore have no control over what is accepted or rejected by the author. Furthermore, I have no control over text added at a later stage.

Should there be any queries, please contact me on the number provided above.

Margaret Farred
Professional Editors' Guild
Membership Number FAR007

Appendix F: Turnitin report



THE ROLE OF THE SCHOOL-BASED SUPPORT TEAMS IN PROVIDING SUPPORT AT TWO PRIMARY SCHOOLS IN THE CAPE METROPOLE.

ORIGINALITY REPORT

13%	11%	0%	6%
SIMILARITY INDEX	INTERNET SOURCES	PUBLICATIONS	STUDENT PAPERS

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