

UNIVERSITY OF KWAZULU-NATAL

INSTITUTIONAL-LEVEL SUPPORT TEAMS:

A CASE STUDY OF TEACHERS' UNDERSTANDING OF PROVIDING
EDUCATIONAL SUPPORT THROUGH COLLABORATION IN THE
CONTEXT OF INCLUSIVE EDUCATION IN ONE DISTRICT IN KWAZULU-
NATAL

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A THESIS IN FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF

DOCTOR OF EDUCATION

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SUPERVISOR

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**DECLARATION OF AUTHORSHIP
BY CANDIDATE**

I, Magavani Chetty, declare that:

- The research reported and the data presented in this thesis 'Institutional-level Support Teams: A case study of teachers' understandings and experiences of providing support through collaboration in the context of inclusive education', except where otherwise indicated, is my original work.
- That all sources and citations from literature have been acknowledged in the text and referenced (using APA 5th) in full.
- That this thesis has not been submitted for any degree or examination at any other university.

Signed:

Date: December 2013

DEDICATION

To all the people who have added value to my life

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I would like to acknowledge that there has to be higher guiding forces that helped me through this arduous journey.

I would like to acknowledge and thank the following people:

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ABSTRACT

With the introduction of inclusive education as an approach to support learners who experience barriers to learning in South African classrooms, schools, in line with international trends, have established collaborative structures to support teaching and learning. These structures draw on collaborative teaming and problem-solving approaches to identify and address the needs of learners who experience barriers to learning. The merit of collaborative teaming in the context of education has gained prominence through school effectiveness research, school improvement research, and policy imperatives. The Department of Basic Education in South Africa has adopted a strategy of collaboration in most school improvement efforts and has also applied it to educational support services. The collaborative structures are referred to as 'Institution-Level Support Teams' (ILSTs). These are novel to most teachers in South African schools and it is therefore necessary to explore how teachers tasked with implementing them, understand such provisioning of support. This study sought to investigate teachers' understandings of providing educational support through collaborative teaming in the context of inclusive education. The study utilised a multi-site case study research design at three primary schools in KwaZulu-Natal. Data was gathered using unstructured individual interviews, focus group interviews, observations, and document analyses.

The findings suggest that most teachers' understanding of educational support and collaboration is located within the medical discourse, while a few lean towards inclusive practices and beliefs. They interpret collaborative educational support as beneficial for learners and teachers, but difficult to achieve in practice. Their experiences reveal they feel coerced into complying with policy requirements, and they display preferences for a less formal structure than that proposed by WP6. However, teachers' experiences also reveal various enabling forces for the enactment of policy.

The study concludes by suggesting that policy implementers need to adopt both 'forward mapping' and 'backward mapping' as strategies for policy implementation, reculturing and restructuring should occur simultaneously and teacher cultures should be considered with the micropolitical perspective for sustainable change to occur. Changing the provision of educational support from individualistic to collaborative teaming requires changes in both the form and content of teacher cultures; changing the form does not result in changes in values, attitudes, and knowledge. Their compromised understandings could result in teachers becoming 'strained', 'frustrated', 'disengaged,' and 'burnt-out'.

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LIST OF ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

DoE:	Department of Education (for the duration of this study) (In 2009 the DoE was split into two sectors, the Department of Basic Education, and the Department of Higher Education and Training)
DBST:	District-Based Support Team
EWP6:	Education White Paper 6
ELSEN:	Education for Learners with Special Education Needs
ILST (IST):	Institution-Level Support Team
INSET:	In-service Education and Training
KZN:	KwaZulu-Natal
MAT:	Mainstream Assistance Teams
NCESS:	National Committee on Education Support Services
NCSNET:	National Commission on Special Needs Education and Training
NEPI:	National Education Policy Investigation
OBE:	Outcomes-Based Education
PIDA:	Panel for Identification, Diagnosis and Assistance
PGSES:	Psychological, Guidance and Special Education Services (Now known as SDSS- Service Delivery Support Services)
PRESET:	Pre-Service Education and Training
PSG:	Peer Support Group
REI:	Regular Education Initiative
TAT:	Teacher Assistance Teams

CHAPTER ONE

ORIENTATION TO THE STUDY

.... change is something when it comes is not met very kindly. The changes at our school too, sometimes we look at it with suspicion and especially when they say, okay, fine take on this portfolio. We meet it with suspicion, maybe with resistance...
(Institutional-Level Support Team teacher at focus group interview, FG1)

1.1 INTRODUCTION

Educational change, as illustrated in the participant's excerpt, is not something that teachers easily accept. Constant changes in South African education, considered as improvement for learning and teaching, have overwhelmed teachers. One such change is that of introducing inclusive education through "Education White Paper 6: Special Needs Education, Building an Inclusive Education and Training System" (DoE, 2001- now known as Department of Basic Education, DBE) (referred to as EWP6 hereafter). EWP6 recommends a single education system, and a change in provisioning of education support, as well as changes in practice at school and classroom level, ensuring that all learners develop optimally (Walton, 2007). Education support within inclusive education is determined by the level of support learners need. Prior to the introduction of inclusive education there were ordinary schools and separate special schools that catered for each specific disability. The introduction of inclusive education changed this dual system and proposes three types of schools; ordinary, full service and special, the last also serving as a resource to others. The admission requirements of the three schools differ and have moved from focusing on ability to focusing on the level of support required by the learner. All classroom teachers are tasked with providing educational support to learners who require low levels of support. Institutional-Level Support Teams (ILSTs) are new internal school structures tasked with the responsibility of providing first level educational support to learners and teachers (DoE, 2001; Pienaar & Raymond, 2013). Collaboration and problem-solving among and between teachers, specialists and the parent community, are perceived as the most effective means of providing educational support, and the implementation of inclusive education. As such, EWP6 is a guideline for education systems change, which clearly

demands that teachers change and adjust their teaching process and mode of providing education support.

Education support service personnel within the department, particularly at district office level, play a crucial role in providing professional development and support for teachers during the implementation and development phase of EWP6. However, research reveals that they are themselves struggling to make shifts toward inclusive education and often still function within an exclusive paradigm (Hay, 2003). Furthermore, provincial education departments are challenged by a lack of management expertise (Beyers & Hay, 2007) and funding (Wildman & Nomdo, 2007).

Teachers seem willing to learn about inclusive education but require additional support and resources from education departments (Hay, Smith & Paulsen, 2001) to effect the change. As a consequence thus far research on implementation of inclusive education reveals that teachers feel that the DoE expects too much of them and puts too much pressure on them without taking cognisance of their needs. They have a negative attitude toward inclusive education and are not prepared for it; and they lack the capacity for implementing inclusive education (Bothma, Gravett & Swart, 2000; Eloff & Kgwete, 2007; Engelbrecht, 2007; Greyling, 2009; Naicker, 2008; Pather, 2011; Walton, 2007). Ntombela's (2006) study too suggests that teachers have limited, varied and distorted understandings of EWP6, due to poor management of the diffusion of inclusive education in schools. The challenges experienced by teachers with the implementation of inclusive education could have negative consequences for the establishment of ILSTs at schools and the provision of effective educational support for learners experiencing barriers to learning.

The change towards inclusive education takes place within a demanding South African education context. Teachers work in increasingly complex and challenging conditions, as illuminated from media releases by the Department of Basic Education (DBE, 2012). For example, some schools still lack proper infrastructure, sanitation, water and electricity. There is a surge of HIV & AIDS, violence, bullying and abuse among learners in schools. Teachers and parents are even required to check learners' school bags for weapons and drugs. The department of education has been blamed for non-delivery

and/or delays in the delivery of learning and teaching support materials. Disruptions in schooling due to teacher protests and strikes are a common occurrence. Vacant teaching posts are not filled timeously and the teacher to learner ratio is set as 1: 30.6 (Department of Basic Education, 2013) for primary schools. The results of the Annual National Assessment released in 2011 by the Department of Basic Education reflected that in grade three, the national average performance in literacy was 35% and numeracy at 28%. In grade six the national average in languages was 28%, and for mathematics 30% (Strydom, 2011). In 2012 grade nine math results show a 13% average (Victoria, 2012), while Grade 12 results reflect that learners' pass with marks under 50%. Some public schools are also challenged by barriers to learning, such as poverty, minimum parent involvement, poorly trained teachers, and weak school management (Daniels, 2013). These statistics are a cause for concern as it indicates the extent to which learners require not only better teaching, but also increased educational support. It seems apparent that teachers work in increasingly challenging contexts, and that the many changes required by new policies might not be taken too kindly.

Educational change, such as inclusive education, is easy to propose, but complex to implement and even more problematic to sustain (Hargreaves & Fink, 2006). Fullan (1992, p. 109) concurs and maintains that "educational change is technically simple and socially complex", and that it is important to understand that educational reform is contextualised and entrenched in international and national political, social and economic contexts (Swart & Pettipher, 2007). Fullan and Stiegelbauer (1991, p.17) proceed to describe change as a "social political process involving individual, classroom and school factors in interactive ways".

Some enthusiastic teachers are easily attracted to change while it is more difficult to convince sceptical teachers to commit to the hard work of enacting change (Hargreaves & Fink, 2006). As expressed in the introductory quotation, change is approached with anxiety, doubt, resistance and fear by individual teachers. This situation makes change "unpredictable, uncertain, paradoxical and complex" (Swart & Pettipher, 2007, p.8).

The notion that traditional top-down policy implementation, namely that government makes the policy, teachers implement it, and that change is facilitated, is problematic.

Policy is contested at every level of extraction by street level bureaucrats that implement it. Fulcher (1989, p. 5) in his earlier work, aptly states that “policy is made at all levels”, and also contested by teachers. The teachers need to be acknowledged as professionals and be provided with the opportunity to address the challenges of reform. They should be provided with assistance when requested and not mandated professional development that may or may not address the needs of teachers, school or district (Roseler & Dentzau, 2013).

This study challenges the idea that restructuring, which alters the organisation of schools by forming structures such as ILSTs, is sufficient and capable of bringing about lasting change (Fullan, 1993a; Doyle, 2001). Prioritising restructuring alters the structures of schools and often ignores individuals as well as the context in which they work. It is individual teachers that make up a school and they need to change before the organisation can change. It was assumed that reculturing will follow restructuring (Davis, 2008), however, Davis and Fullan (1993a) argue for reculturing and restructuring simultaneously.

ILSTs are seen as useful mechanisms for change and the implementation of inclusive education, their primary task being to identify and address barriers to learning through teamwork. However, it could be seen as a departure from the existing culture amongst teachers, who favour working individually (Hargreaves, 1992a; 1994). Furthermore, collaboration does not occur spontaneously and implies a more scientific approach than social cooperation (Pienaar & Raymond, 2013). Teachers are often colleagues in name only as most work in seclusion, separate from one another. They plan and prepare their lessons without help, and struggle on their own to solve any challenges they may encounter.

Moreover, teachers cannot be coerced into being collegial (Dettmer, Thurston & Dyck, 2005; Fullan, 2001b). They are accustomed to making their own decisions in their classrooms and collaborating in any meaningful way might prove to be challenging. It is necessary to explore how teachers in the ILSTs make meaning of providing educational support through collaboration, and how the education policy established at the macro level is understood by teachers at the micro level. Individual teachers are the key

enactors of change in any reform process at schools, and how they participate in ILSTs shapes the functioning of the teams. EWP6 calls for a different way of thinking about providing educational support in the context of teacher change.

1.2 POLICY AND IMPLEMENTATION OF EDUCATION SUPPORT

One theorist describes policy as “the dynamic and value- laden process through which a political system handles a public problem. It includes the government’s expressed intentions and official enactment as well as its consistent patterns of activity or inactivity” (Fowler, 2000, p. 9). Christie (2008) provides some features of policy as follows:

- It is a form of decision making that has goals and purposes.
- It is a value-driven activity, based on what people would like a society to look like.
- It often involves a vision of some ideal state of affairs.
- It usually involves attempts to ‘make things better’ or prevent ‘something bad from happening’ (and what counts as ‘better’ or ‘worse’ clearly depends on your point of view).
- It typically involves allocating resources on the basis of interests.
- It may involve decisions not to act, as well as decisions to act.
- It often is the outcome of compromises between different interests and groups.
- Its results are not always predictable, and may take time to play out.
- It may be difficult to implement as intended. (pp. 117-118)

In essence policy is the activity of governments to provide society with “a framework within which we, as individuals, actively live our lives” (Christie, 2008, p. 121). Policy however, serves many other purposes. For example, Christie asserts that regulatory or procedural policies guide actions or provide procedures for doing things; distributive or redistributive policies are about varying the provision of resources; substantive policies reflect what governments should do while symbolic policies are more difficult to achieve and remain ‘rhetoric’ rather than become reality in practice. Since 1994, several

policies have been legislated in South Africa and they have been mostly symbolic, substantive and redistributive (Jansen, 2001).

Fullan (1993a) also argues that policies are not always interpreted (Fulcher, 1989; Ozga, 2000; Samoff, 1999) and practised as intended. Samoff (1999, p. 417), for example, makes the following fitting statement:

What, then, is policy? From one perspective, the policy is what the ministry has promulgated, and what the teachers do is a deviation from official policy. From another perspective, the actual policy (i.e. the working rules that guide behavior) is what the teachers are doing in practice. In this view, the ministry documents are just that: official statements that may or may not be implemented and certainly do not guide what people actually do. Stated policy may thus be very different from policy in practice.

Ozga (2000, p. 2) too presents her view of policy, “as a process rather than a product, involving negotiation, contestations or struggle between different groups who may lie outside the formal machinery of official policy making”. Thus different interpretations and understandings of policy influence the implementation process.

Teachers are the enactors of policy implementation and change at school level and their interpretation of policy directly influences it. For example some teachers might interpret policy as a set of systematic procedures to be followed, while others might interpret it as a framework from which they can make meaning of to suit their school contexts. What is important to consider in the context of W6 is the findings from Ntombela’s (2006) study which states that it is not possible to develop inclusive practices in an environment that is exclusive, and that all stakeholders - especially teachers –should be brought on board as early as possible in the innovation process so as to take ownership of the suggested change. Evidence from D’ Amant’s (2009) study too suggests that whilst teachers may understand the policy and ideology of inclusive education and use language of inclusion to describe themselves and their teaching practices, a personal shift is paramount to allow for professional development.

1.3 SOUTH AFRICA: WHY AN EDUCATION WHITE PAPER 6 ON SPECIAL NEEDS EDUCATION?

Internationally, an interest in rights, equity and inclusion in the field of special education needs has been established as an agenda for different social groups and organisations (Vlachou, 2004). In South Africa, the National Education Policy Investigation (NEPI) is considered the first attempt at reconceptualising special needs education (DoE, 1995). Subsequent calls from disability organisations and parent organisations regarding the identification of gaps in existing policy demanded stronger measures to be taken to improve the quality of education provided for learners experiencing barriers to learning. The South African National Department of Education set up committees to examine and recommend proposals on all facets of special needs and education support services in education and training in South Africa (SAND, 1997; 2001). The committees found that factors that caused barriers to learning could arise from within schools, within the wider system of education, within broad social, economic and political contexts, and/or within learners (SAND, 1997). Following the suggestions of NCSNET/NCESS, in 1999, a consultative paper on special education was released for public comment. Once stakeholders' opinions and comments were gathered, "Education White Paper 6: Special Education: Building an Education and Training System" (DoE, 2001) was finalised.

EWP6 (DoE, 2001) paved the way for transforming educational support provision for learners experiencing barriers to learning. It suggests that the range of educational support be based on levels of need rather than categories of disability and it also shifted from the focus of identification of barriers to learning within the individual learner to a more systemic view. It is important to note that inappropriate and inadequate educational support services are one of the main barriers to learning identified by the NSCNET/NCESS report (SAND, 1997) and is further endorsed by the EWP6 (DoE, 2001).

The goal of the policy on inclusive education is to establish a single education system, comprising three schools (mentioned earlier in the chapter), with an integrated educational support structure. District-based support teams (DBSTs), are established at

district level and should be working collaboratively with the ILSTs to improve the educational opportunities offered to learners (DoE, 2001).

ILSTs are structures that represent a problem-solving team that indirectly supports the teaching and learning process by identifying and addressing learner, teacher and institutional needs. They provide a forum where teachers explore the management of barriers to learning in the school (DoE, 2008; Walton, 2011), allowing teachers to focus and develop a variety of strategies for coping with learners experiencing barriers to learning (DoE 1997; 2001; 2002a; 2008).

In the United States of America, United Kingdom and New Zealand ILSTs have been perceived as a cost effective means to provide educational support to school communities and to address the issues of diversity of learners in schools (Pysh & Chalfant, 1997). While some positive results of educational support teams have been published (Norwich & Daniels, 1997; Pysh & Chalfant, 1997; Vernon, 2003), the literature offers both encouraging and sobering thoughts on what structural reforms in the educational system can achieve (Safran & Safran, 1996). Influenced by international trends and successes, South Africa has followed by implementing ILSTs in all schools.

Prior to 1994, education support services in South Africa displayed three features. Firstly, those that *did* exist functioned according to population group with unequal provisions made for white, coloured, Indian and black learners. Secondly, intelligence tests were used to identify, label and place learners in specialised educational facilities. Finally, a medical model dominated the way in which the nature of the support services was defined, focusing on the problem within the learner, where a professional knows what the learner needs and how the need should be met (Pienaar & Raymond, 2013).

EWP6 has broadened the definition of educational support services to include community-based support (CBS) (DoE 1997; 2001). CBS, according to the report of the NCSNET/NCESS (1997, p. v), is defined as:

The provision of appropriate support to meet learner and system needs in any centre of learning should be facilitated through the utilisation of skills and expertise available within the community. The identification and accessing of

community resources should be regarded as a primary responsibility of centre-of-learning based teams.

This reflects a shift from relying on specialists' intervention, disregarding teacher, parent and community participation. Dependant on the community concerned, the human resources will vary to include any sector that has the potential to assist. CBS has to be carefully coordinated and evaluated by the ILSTs with assistance from the DBSTs. This implies ILSTs are to work closely with DBSTs, school governing bodies, parents and community members, school management teams, teachers (within and outside schools) and any outside agencies deemed relevant to address particular needs.

The implementation of ILSTs in line with EWP6 (DoE, 2001) was a relatively new innovation when this study was initiated. It was important to establish what was happening in primary schools since EWP6 (DoE, 2001) suggested that ILSTs would be implemented in all primary schools.

1.4 CLARIFICATION OF CONCEPTS

1.4.1 Inclusive education

There is on-going confusion regarding the terminology (Engelbrecht & Green, 2007) which makes inclusive education a “bewildering concept” (Lawson, Parker & Sikes, cited in Bornman & Rose, 2010, p. 6). The meaning and interpretation of inclusive education also differ depending on the context in which it is applied (Green, 2001; Bornman & Rose, 2010).

In South Africa, EWP6 (DoE, 2001) indicates that inclusive education and training:

- Are about acknowledging that all children and youth can learn and that all children and youth need support.
- Are accepting and respecting the fact that all learners are different in some way and have different learning needs which are equally valued and an ordinary part of our human experience.

- Are about enabling education structures, systems and learning methodologies to meet the needs of all learners.
- Acknowledge and respect differences in learners, whether due to age, gender, ethnicity, language, class, disability or HIV status.
- Are broader than formal schooling and acknowledge that learning also occurs in the home and community, and within formal and informal modes and structures.
- Are about changing attitudes, behaviour, teaching methodologies, curricula and the environment to meet the needs of all learners.
- Are about maximising the participation of all learners in the culture and the curricula of educational institutions and uncovering and minimising barriers to learning.
- Are about empowering learners by developing their individual strengths and enabling them to participate critically in the process of learning. (DoE 2001, p. 16)

This definition of inclusive education moves away from the medical model and locates barriers to learning widely within the broader context of learners. For the purpose of this study inclusive education refers to how teachers in ordinary schools develop and support the participation of all learners in the programme of study; identify and attend to barriers to learning, which may be internal and/or external to the learner, thereby enabling all children to learn optimally.

1.4.2 Educational support

Educational support structures exist in various forms worldwide and there seems to be no standard term for it, but all include the word 'team', indicating that the format is a team process. In South Africa the name for school-based support teams have changed over time. They were first called 'centre-of-learning-based teams' (SAND, 1997); then 'teacher support teams' (Campher, 1997); and later 'institutional-level support teams' (DoE, 2001; 2002a). The name suggests a more holistic support system for the development of the whole school with the intention of improving the quality of education for all learners. Although the terminology differs, depending on the context,

all terms embody a collaborative and problem-solving approach to providing educational support.

Prior to EWP6 educational needs of learners were identified and informed by the medical model of disability. “Barriers to learning are a new theory of knowledge” (DoE 2002a, p. 17) within the inclusive education model. It can be defined as factors that prevent the learner from learning optimally in the school system, which may not provide the necessary support for the learner. The medical model advocates that the ‘problem’ is located only within the learner, whereas an inclusive education model asserts that potential barriers may arise internally as well as external to the learner (SAND, 1997; 2001; Engelbrecht & Green, 2007). Barriers to learning covers multidimensional factors that could impinge on a learners’ access to learning. In my study barriers to learning could be physiological, physical or a mental condition exclusive to the learner, and/or it could be within the structures, cultures or curriculum of the school itself, it could be in the educational system and/or the within the social, financial and political contexts (Bornman & Rose, 2010; DoE, 2001). The barriers become apparent when learners display poor academic achievement, or when learners leave school before the successful completion thereof.

Support is provided at different levels to address barriers to learning that learners may experience in an inclusive education environment. The national and provincial departments of education provide the framework for support service delivery at district and school levels. DBSTs have to develop the capacity of schools to understand and respond to diversity among learners and barriers to learning by working very closely with ILSTs.

For the purpose of this study educational support refers to the educational support provided within and by the ILSTs at school level, drawing on collaboration, to provide support to the learner, the teacher and the school to enable all learners to learn optimally.

1.4.3 Institutional-Level Support Teams (ILSTs)

The DoE envisages the development of ILSTs as a mechanism to transform the provision of education support (DoE, 2001; Nel, Müller & Rheeders, 2011). ILSTs are similar to other kinds of school-based collaborative groups, such as: school management teams; curriculum committees, grade and phase teams; fund-raising committees and other planning groups that are formed. What makes ILSTs different is their focus on learner and learning concerns, teacher and teaching concerns, the fact that individual teachers participate on a voluntary basis, and that there should be a quick response to particular teaching and learning concerns. The ILST members examine reports submitted by teachers discussing the problem the learner is experiencing, identifying possible barriers to learning, providing suggestions on an intervention programme, and is followed by monitoring and evaluation of the intervention. Formal records must be kept by the ILST for follow-up action (Walton, 2011).

The ILST is seen as a permanent structure of the school, rather than a team created in response to a crisis (Engelbrecht & Green, 2007). In South Africa there have been previous attempts to use some form of teamwork among educational support professionals. Three models include trans-disciplinary, multidisciplinary and interdisciplinary models. ILSTs are not to be confused with the more traditional multidisciplinary teams, which have been widely used in special needs education in South Africa (Engelbrecht, 2007). EWP6 proposes a trans-disciplinary model of educational support services. ILSTs display a sharing of expertise among colleagues, rather than a situation where some teachers or professionals act as experts (Creese et al., 1997). ILSTs are “unique” (Engelbrecht, 2007, p. 177) in that they must transcend professional boundaries or as other researchers refer to it as becoming “a borderless community” (Nel, Müller & Rheeders, 2011).

For the purpose of this study ILST (participants sometimes refer to it as Institution Support Team - IST) refers to an educational support structure in primary schools, composed mainly of ordinary school teachers and can include parents, caregivers, relevant community members and specialists depending on the case, who collaborate

with each other to identify and address barriers to learning within the school environment.

1.4.4 Collaboration

Collaboration is critical for inclusive education to succeed (Pienaar & Raymond, 2013). Inclusive education requires the development of teachers with knowledge and skills of inclusive practices as well as collaborative teaming (Bornman & Rose, 2010) for the provision of education support in schools. A systemic approach implies mutual interaction as well as collaboration, which is different from consultation, where team members share their knowledge and skills with colleagues in a transitory manner. Collaboration is the more recent preferred way of conceptualising team work. It allows teachers to meet on a regular basis to design intervention plans, discuss, implement, evaluate and coordinate educational support provisioning in the school. The idea is that teachers work together in a non-competitive, supportive environment in an endeavour to create an enabling environment for all learners. Bornman and Rose (2010), suggest that the term “collaborative teaming” is suitable as members of the ILST are not paid extra for taking on the task nor are they necessarily support professionals

For the purpose of this study collaboration refers to teachers working together in a non-competitive and supportive environment in an endeavour to create an enabling environment for all learners, teachers and the school.

1.4.5 Teachers

The South African Schools Act of 1996 defines an “educator” as “any person, excluding a person who is appointed to exclusively perform extracurricular duties, who teaches, educates or trains other persons or who provides professional educational services, including professional therapy and education psychological services, at a school” (DoE, 1996, p.1). In this study I use the term ‘teachers’ to refer to the ordinary class teachers, support teachers, deputy-principals and principals, who are members of the ILST.

1.4.6 Understanding

According to the Webster's Encyclopedic Unabridged Dictionary (1997, p. 1545) 'understanding' means "To perceive the meaning of ...; apprehend clearly the character, nature and subtleties of...; to assign a meaning to or interpret; to get knowledge of...; to have a systematic interpretation in a field or area of knowledge".

Understanding, in this study, therefore refers to how teachers make meaning of inclusive education with regards to the provision of educational support through collaboration in an ILST.

1.5 RESEARCH ON EDUCATIONAL SUPPORT

Nel, Müller & Rheeders (2011) claim that the United States of America has led the way with inclusive education and can serve as an example to other countries like South Africa. Walton (2011) too, asserts that while the South African context is unique historically, socio-economically and educationally, much can be learnt from successful international experiences and practices of inclusion. However, the practices cannot be followed blindly as one has to consider the context and work with the challenges and opportunities of the post-apartheid education system. It is believed that some aspects would work for inclusive education but not all given the shortage of resources, especially trained personnel and therapists at schools (Bornman & Rose, 2010; Walton, 2011).

The literature consulted reveals that most research on ILSTs has been conducted in the United States (Benn, 2004; Fuchs & Fuchs, 1990; House, 1990; Perryman & Gallagher 2007; Slonski-Fowler & Truscott, 2004), New Zealand (Moore, Glynn & Gold, 1993; Moore & Gilbreath, 2002) and the United Kingdom (Bedward & Daniels, 2005; Creese, Daniels & Norwich, 1997; Norwich & Daniels, 1997). Very few studies are located in the context of South Africa. (See Campher, 1997; Duncan, 2005; Gugushe, 1999; Johnson, 1999; Mphahlele, 2006; Naidu, 2007; Nel, Müller & Rheeders, 2011). A possible explanation could be that the ILST is a recent phenomenon. Furthermore, most of the

studies have been conducted in developed contexts, where resources are provided as required by school-based support teams (Safran & Safran, 1997).

Internationally, the focus of research has been on collaboration between special education and ordinary teachers (Carter, Prater, Jackson & Marchant, 2009; Perryman & Gallagher, 2007); the satisfaction of team members with the ILST process (Kruger & Struzziero, 1995); evaluation of the impact of ILSTs on inclusive education (Vernon, 2003); administrative participation in promoting ILSTs (Raforth & Foriska, 2006); evaluation of teacher support teams (Carter et al., 2009; Creese et al., 1997; Moore, Glynn & Gold, 1993; Norwich & Daniels, 1997), and collaboration in high schools (Knackendoffel, 2005).

The South African studies on ILSTs focus on teachers' experiences of receiving school-based support from ILSTs (Mphahlele, 2006); the experiences of support teachers (Naidu, 2007); implementation studies (Bailey, 1999; Duncan, 2005; Gugushe, 1999); and evaluation studies (Johnson, 1999; Nel, Müller & Rheeders, 2011). There is a lack of research, to date in South Africa, that specifically explores teachers in the ILSTs' understanding of providing educational support, using a combination of cultural and micropolitical perspectives of change, and teacher cultures and reculturing within the context of policy implementation. ILSTs have emerged through the implementation of EWP6 (DoE, 2001) on inclusive education; however changing teachers' mind-set about the provision of collaborative educational support could be influenced by many contextual factors in which they work.

Studies have also focused on individual support teachers and special education needs coordinators (Creese, Daniels, & Norwich, 1997; Moore, Glynn & Gold, 1993; Naidu, 2007), with little research conducted on support teams. Some studies have investigated the usefulness of teams as effective vehicles for change in schools (Henkin & Wanat, 1994). Theories of change in school settings posit that cultures of collaboration, rather than individualism, create and enhance "qualities of openness, trust and support between teachers and their colleagues" (Fullan & Hargreaves, 1996, p. 233). Collaborative cultures are ones which encourage learning from each other in group problem solving, sharing ideas and providing mutual encouragement.

Research into inclusion and ILSTs in South Africa is most often located within the discipline of Educational Psychology using a structural approach to educational support services within discourses of special education (e.g. Campher, 1997; SAND, 1997; Duncan, 2005; Gugushe, 1999; Johnson, 1999; Mphahlele, 2006). Structural approaches assume that it can support different parts of the system, and direct resources to where it should rightfully be, however, restructuring has little impact on bringing about change (Fullan, 1996). Furthermore, special education and disability issues have been viewed through a deficit lens (Donald, Lazarus & Lolwana, 2002; 2010; Engelbrecht & Green, 2007). The trends in ILST research explore sociological or socio-psychological approaches and contextually located dimensions (SAND, 1997; 2001; 2002a).

Teachers are the key policy enactors in the implementation phase and although teachers are represented by trade unions at policy level, their voices are rarely heard (Smit, 2001). In my experience as a researcher in the field, implementing EWP6 in the rural areas of KwaZulu-Natal, this scenario was evident from the absence of trade union representation at most management team meetings regarding policy implementation. Despite the growing literature on educational and policy change, relatively little research has been conducted on the understanding of primary school teachers and policy change in the context of South Africa (Smit, 2001). It is necessary to involve teachers who are required to participate in the educational policy changes, and my research aims at investigating this need. It is imperative that teachers are prepared for and have the capacity to implement inclusive education practices (Fullan, 2001a).

Creating a culture of collaboration among teachers can be challenging, given that professional individualism has been the preferred culture in the past and still remains so. Individualism, which might be caused by the culture of the school, may well be a barrier to collaboration. Researchers have yet to examine how teachers understand collaboration, and what these experiences mean for collaborative efforts aimed at improving the educational support provisioning for teachers and learners in schools. This study aims to contribute toward such knowledge in the context of South African primary schools.

1.6 RESEARCH AIMS

Given the background to the study and the dearth of research regarding the provision of educational support through collaboration, the primary research aim of this study is:

To explore Institutional-Level Support Team teachers' understanding of providing education support through collaboration within the context of EWP6.

The secondary research aims are:

- To explore ILST teachers' views in the provision of education support.
- To explore ILST teachers' understanding of providing education support through collaboration.
- To explore ILST teachers' experiences of providing education support through collaboration.
- To explore possible enabling factors for providing education support through collaboration.

1.7 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The primary research question can be formulated as follows:

How do teachers in Institutional-Level Support Teams understand the provision of education support through collaboration within the context of White Paper 6?

The secondary research questions can be formulated as follows:

- How do ILST teachers view providing education support?
- How do ILST teachers understand providing education support through collaboration?
- What experiences do ILST teachers have of providing education support through collaboration?
- What are possible enabling factors for providing education support through collaboration?

1.8 A BRIEF OVERVIEW OF THE RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

This research is located within qualitative research and draws on an interpretive paradigm, utilising a multi-site case study as research strategy. The study is an exploration of teachers' understanding of providing educational support through collaboration in three primary schools and is “bounded” (Creswell, 1994, p. 12) by the activity of providing educational support to the school community (cf. 5.5.1).

1.8.1 Context of the study

The three primary schools of the study are located in an urban community in Durban, South Africa, characterised by escalating unemployment among parents and caregivers. The participants of the study provided a detailed description of the context. The area is controlled by drug lords and there is a high rate of drug dependency within the community. Many learners in the schools come from dysfunctional family systems, and live with single parents, grandparents, or siblings. Abandoned children are sometimes taken care of by grandparents or caregivers. The living conditions of most learners are inadequate and there is overcrowding, with eight to ten people often sharing a two bedroom flat. Given the context in which the schools are located, it could mean that many learners experience barriers to learning.

Two sample schools have Education for Learners with Special Education Needs (ELSEN) classes which provide direct support to learners experiencing barriers to learning. The learners in ELSEN classes experience barriers to learning related to disability. Teachers cannot cope with these learners in the ordinary class, even though they require moderate levels of educational support. However, in all three schools, ordinary classes also have learners who experience barriers to learning. However, the teachers are able to cope with them in the ordinary class and draw on ILSTs for educational support. Accessing such indirect support is in accordance with EWP6 (DoE, 2001a). It is within this context that I explore how teachers in ILSTs understand providing education support through collaboration.

1.8.2 Sampling

A purposive sampling technique (Strydom, 2005, p. 202) was adopted to assist with the identification of relevant and appropriate sites for data collection. With the help of a District official three urban primary schools from one district in a circuit of KwaZulu-Natal were selected. The schools were specifically chosen because they have ILSTs which were developed with the help of the DoE. All the ILST teachers in the three schools had training in the development and management of ILSTs to support learners. Two district officials, three principals and twelve teachers were purposively selected for the study (cf. 5.5.2).

1.8.3 Data gathering

Two district officials were individually interviewed and the focus was on their experiences of setting up, supporting, and maintaining ILSTs at the three sample schools. To gain information from teachers I collected documents from the three schools, conducted individual, unstructured interviews with the principals and ILST coordinators of each school; and conducted focus group interviews with ILST teachers' at the three schools. The focus on school personnel was to elicit information about their understanding of providing educational support through collaboration to their school communities. I also observed ILST meetings (cf. 5.5.2).

1.8.4 Data analysis

To make sense of the data, I transcribed the audio and video-tapes. I utilised the thematic approach as "a method for identifying, analysing and reporting patterns (themes) within data (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 79). An independent coder was used to corroborate the emergent themes and categories. Literature control allowed me to identify both similarities and differences and to re-contextualise my findings. The results are presented as central themes which emerged depicting the teachers' understanding of providing educational support through collaboration in an ILST in the context of inclusive education (cf. 5.6).

1.8.5 Ethical considerations

In order to fulfil the requirements with regard to ethical concerns, the study conforms to ethical considerations as set out in the Belmont Report (1979). Ethical clearance for this study was processed through the University of KwaZulu-Natal and clearance was granted by the Research Committee (See Appendix 1) (cf. 5.7). Approval for the study was granted by the Department of Education (See Appendix 2); District Office Director (See Appendix 3); school principal (See Appendix 4) and participants (See Appendix 5).

1.8.6 Trustworthiness

An important concern in any research study is to ensure rigour and quality in the research process and the findings. In this study Guba's (Lincoln & Guba, 1985) measures to ensure trustworthiness were applied, i.e. credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability. They posit that the "aim of trustworthiness in a qualitative inquiry is to support the argument that the inquiry's findings are worth paying attention to" (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p. 290). I utilised data, method and theory triangulation; contracted the use of an independent coder, and did member checks as a means of achieving credibility. Transferability was ensured by the use of thick descriptions and purposive sampling, enabling other researchers to consider the transferability of the findings. Dependability was ensured by providing full disclosure of the research process, including limitations, researcher positionality and ethical requirements (Rule & John, 2011). Confirmability was also achieved by using direct quotations from the data to confirm the findings (cf. 5.8).

1.9 THEORETIC FRAMING OF THE STUDY

A number of theoretical frameworks informed this study, namely that of educational change (Christie, 2008; Dalin, 2005; Engelbrecht & Green, 2007; Fullan & Stiegelbauer, 1991; Fullan, 1993a; 1993b, 1996, 2001; Morrison, 1998; Oswald, 2007), teacher cultures (Hargreaves, 1992a; 1992b; 1994) and reculturing (Deal & Peterson, 2009; Doyle, 2001; Fullan, 1993a; Giles & Yates, 2011).

In the context of schools, teachers are the most important enactors of change and their experiences must be understood from their perspectives as well as in the context in which they operate. Educational change provides a useful framework for understanding the influences that shape teachers' providing education support through collaboration in the ILST in primary schools. It provides a useful lens through which to capture the roles that various stakeholders play in the change process as well as the influences that shape collaboration between teachers in the implementation and development of the ILSTs.

Teacher cultures viz. Individualism, balkanisation, contrived collegiality and collaboration (Hargreaves, 1992a; 1992b; 1994) have implications for teachers' work and educational change. They helped to identify and understand the relationship between teachers and their colleagues in the ILSTs. It also assisted with identifying the nature of teacher collaboration in the three primary schools.

Reculturing (Deal & Peterson, 2009; Doyle, 2001; Fullan, 1993a; Giles & Yates, 2011) focuses on building the capacity of teachers to reflect critically on providing educational support, by asking 'why' instead of 'how' questions, thereby changing the culture to one of providing educational support through collaboration. It was useful to determine whether teachers, through the training provided by the District officials, were able to make relevant shifts in their thinking about educational support within an inclusive paradigm.

The theoretical frameworks were chosen to provide a lens through which I could explore how teachers work together, or not, and to determine which influences shape their collaborative efforts to provide educational support in the context of inclusive education. The theories provided a guiding structure for data collection and analysis (Bailey, 2007). Using the identified theories, this thesis argues that attempts at implementing collaborative structures such as ILSTs in schools will not materialise if teachers are not recognised as active agents in the process of change. This means that when teachers are expected to change their beliefs and practices, they must simultaneously be supported through the process. Failing this, attempts at providing

educational support to address barriers to learning in the educational system will be hampered.

1.10 POSITIONING THE RESEARCHER

Since qualitative research is an interpretive process, it is necessary to explicitly state the biases, values and judgements of the researcher (Creswell, 1994; 1998). I therefore begin by explaining my past experiences that provide familiarity with inclusion and educational support services, especially ILSTs, as it might shape events and interpretations of the current study (Creswell, 1998; De Vos, Strydom, Fouche & Delport, 2004).

My career as a lecturer and researcher is an important experience that continues to shape my knowledge of inclusion and educational support services. My first direct encounter with inclusion was through a module in Advanced Educational Psychology during my Masters in Education programme. I was made aware of the negative consequences of rigidly adhering to the special education theories of the past. A more democratic discourse on supporting learners experiencing barriers to learning and development was brought to my attention.

A more focussed engagement with inclusion began in 2000 when I joined a consortium at the University of KwaZulu-Natal (previously known as the University of Natal), as a researcher on a major internationally funded pilot project, known as the DANIDA pilot project, in the implementation of inclusive education policy. The project was implemented in selected areas in KwaZulu-Natal (KZN); the Eastern Cape and North West provinces. The second project I joined as a researcher was a provincial initiative to implement EWP6 in KZN after the publication of EWP6 (DoE, 2001a).

One of the first tasks in both projects was setting-up, developing and maintaining ILSTs which were seen as important mechanisms to assist in bringing about the required change toward inclusion within educational institutions. An assumption that I brought to my work, in these pilot studies included the need for step-by-step guidelines in setting up ILSTs so that they would develop as planned. The other assumption was that

ILSTs would automatically become a reality at every school. Furthermore, I assumed that all teachers would accept their roles as educational support providers in the school communities.

During my work in the pilot projects, however, upon critical reflection, I encountered various challenges including; teachers resistance to the concept of inclusion and collaboration; ILSTs were not established and developed at all the schools; once the projects reached completion and the researchers no longer supported the schools, the ILSTs at most schools ceased to exist. This particular situation caused me to think about the process of change and more especially to understand it from the perspective of the teachers themselves who are seen as major change agents in the process. I believe that within each school teachers have a unique set of experiences, beliefs, cultural values and understandings that are complex and therefore defy any form of uniformity in the way change could be brought about.

In qualitative research the researcher is the primary instrument for data collection and analysis (Creswell, 1994) and I therefore acknowledge that my previous work experience and knowledge has influenced the data collection and analysis to a certain degree, but in an attempt to avoid bias, I bracketed my views, and engaged in a reflexive practice.

1.11 DELIMITATION OF THE STUDY

This study was located in the field of Educational Psychology which “is a scientific field concerned with applying psychological theories and concepts to the understanding and improvement of teaching and learning in formal educational settings” (Coomarsingh, 2012, n.p). The main thrust of Educational Psychology is how learners develop and learn and how teachers can support them to optimize their learning within schools. Inclusive Education is framed within Educational Psychology. The support structures such as ILSTs imply teamwork and collaboration among and between teachers, other specialists like educational psychologists, and parents to provide education support by addressing barriers to learning to optimize learners’ achievement within schools.

This study was undertaken in three ordinary primary schools located in a semi-urban area of Durban in KwaZulu-Natal, with fifteen teachers within the three ILSTs. The study focused specifically on teachers in the ILSTs and their understanding of providing education support through collaboration in the context of EWP6. This study did not attempt to confirm or refute the usefulness of ILSTs as a mechanism to bring about change in schools, but tried to make meaning of how teachers in ILSTs understand providing education support through collaboration.

1.12 STRUCTURE OF THE THESIS

Chapter One provided an orientation to the study, highlighting the rationale for the study, explaining key concepts, the research design and methodology and the theoretical frameworks underpinning the study.

In Chapter Two, I present a landscape of inclusive education and educational support provisioning in South Africa, also taking in a historical perspective. This presents differing conceptualisations of educational support at various points in time.

Chapter Three offers a review of literature on collaboration as an approach to teamwork for providing educational support. It provides a conceptualisation thereof, as well as the dimensions of collaboration and teacher support structures in schools.

In Chapter Four I provide a brief exposition of my understanding of a theoretical framework and its application to research. The theoretical frameworks that are utilised in this study are then discussed, and include educational change, teacher cultures and reculturing. These theories provide lenses through which I looked at and made meaning of the data.

Chapter Five sets out the research design and methodology used. This research is located within a qualitative, interpretive paradigm and utilises a multi-site case study design to gather information to the research questions posed. This is followed by a discussion of the sampling, the data collection and analysis techniques used, as well as the issue of trustworthiness and ethics.

Chapter Six provides descriptions of the three primary schools where the study was conducted and provides an understanding of the context from which data was collected, analysed and interpreted.

Chapter Seven presents the research findings and the discussion thereof, re-contextualised in the literature.

Chapter Eight, the final chapter, concludes the study by providing conclusions and implications of the findings, the limitations of the study, and recommendations for further research. Here I also theorise the contribution of the study to the body of knowledge on teachers providing education support through collaboration within ILSTs.

1.13 CONCLUSION

In this chapter I introduced the study which I approached with several assumptions. I believed that teachers were familiar with the philosophy, rationale and purpose of inclusive education. More importantly, I thought that they understood and were acquainted with the implications for the provision of educational support at the school level. It was anticipated that teachers' knowledge and acceptance of the policy and its implementation as well as the establishment of ILSTs would be influenced by how much information and training they had been exposed to through in-service training workshops provided by the District officials. It was my understanding that their experiences would be determined by their interactions with other teachers, and during ILST meetings. Keeping such expectations in mind, the next chapter examines the transition to inclusive education.

CHAPTER TWO

TOWARD INCLUSIVE EDUCATION SUPPORT

Inclusiveness is no new idea – it involves an ideology that liberates people from their own prejudices and short-sightedness. In the process other people are therefore also freed from the "imprisonment" of their prejudices, and everyone is included in a liberated community.

(Landsberg, Kruger & Nel, 2005, p. v)

2.1 INTRODUCTION

To understand the change from *special needs education* to *inclusive education* in South Africa, it is important to provide a background and history of the movement. This chapter provides the background, and charts the various discourses that have shaped the beliefs, values and attitudes of teachers to learners who experience barriers to learning. These discourses have and continue to exert an influence on how education support is provided to learners experiencing barriers to learning.

I first explain the international shift towards inclusive education. This is followed by the South African shifts which have followed similar trends to that of developed countries. However, apartheid has added a further complexity to the state of educational support services. I discuss this situation and explore the ineffectiveness and inefficiencies of the previous support system, the transformation efforts, and the challenges experienced.

2.2 INTERNATIONAL MOVEMENTS TO INCLUSIVE EDUCATIONAL SUPPORT SERVICES

Special needs education has been a subject of debate for many years. Traditionally, learners were identified and categorised along notions of "normality" (Howell, 2000, p. 92; Pienaar & Raymond, 2013). If learners did not need additional support or intervention they were regarded as 'normal' and eligible to be placed in the ordinary education system. Learners who experienced barriers to learning, or were likely to experience barriers to learning, by virtue of disability, within the mainstream system, were generally referred to as those who had 'special needs' (DoE, 2001, 2002a;

Engelbrecht, et.al., 1996; Fulcher, 1989; Howell, 2000; Pienaar & Raymond, 2013). They would require some form of specialised intervention to enable them to take part in the school curriculum. This practice of differentiation of learners led to separate systems of education.

Teachers, school managers, parents and society in general make decisions and have certain understandings about learners and barriers to learning, based on their beliefs about disability and barriers to learning and what causes it. Whatever decisions they make lead to particular ways in which they provide teaching, learning and educational support and this could limit student possibilities or facilitate greater opportunities (Bechtold, 2011). The use of language is not just a way of transmitting meaning, but it constitutes what teachers do and how they do it. Gee (1996) defined discourse as, “a socially accepted association among ways of using language, other symbolic expressions, and artefacts, of thinking, feeling, believing, valuing and acting that can be used to identify oneself as a member of a socially meaningful group or social network” (p. 131). For that reason using the concept “barriers to learning” must be done clearly and consistently. Is it simply a new code for “disability”?

Discourses in the field of special education needs are extensive and complex (Bailey, 1998; Barton & Oliver, 1992, Boyle, 2006; Clough, 2000; Engelbrecht et al., 1996; Engelbrecht & Green, 2007; Fulcher, 1989; Howell, 2000; Naicker, 1999), and many of the earlier ways of understanding it still persist in the structures and culture of institutions, for example in the language that is used and the attitudes to difference that it reflects (Corbett, 1996). Therefore, it is important to trace the origins of special needs education to understand where teachers are currently positioned, since this understanding has significant bearing on how teachers provide support in schools.

These discourses have also influenced education support services in South Africa and have left behind a trail which informs teachers' perceptions of barriers to learning and disability, and methods of teaching and providing educational support to learners. I present four main discourses identified by Engelbrecht, Green, Naicker & Engelbrecht (1999); Fulcher (1989) and Naicker (1999), namely: medical, charity, lay and rights discourses. The medical discourse is dominant and infiltrates the lay and charity

discourses. More recently, a rights discourse has emerged and challenges all three traditional discourses (Corbett, 1996; Du Toit, 1996; Engelbrecht & Green, 2007; Fulcher, 1989).

2.2.1 Traditional discourses influencing teacher provision of education support

'Special' education began, first in the medical (Fulcher, 1989; Vlachou, 1997), and then later moved to the psychological domain (Bailey, 1998; Clough, 2000). According to Bailey (1998, p. 49) in the medical discourse defines disability as

a professional orientation which is highly focused on pathology, not normalcy, on sickness, not wellbeing, on the nature and aetiology of the presenting problem itself, not on the individual who has the problem, on dealing with the specific pathology in a centred way, not on the social or ecosystem which surrounds the problem, that is, the patient, his or her family, social and financial circumstances, values and attitudes.

The South African special education system too was influenced by the medical model which locates the deficit in the learner resulting in intervention as curative. The medical doctor finds out “what is wrong” with people and how to “fix them” (Swart & Pettipher, 2011, p. 5). According to this discourse disability is viewed as a personal tragedy and impairment is linked to disability (Fulcher, 1989; Naicker, 1999; Pienaar & Raymond, 2013; Vlachou, 1997). Fulcher, as far back as 1989, concluded that because the medical discourse has dominated for such a long time, “[p]olicies which attempt to challenge medical dominance and the professional discourses which draw some of their status from aligning with medical discourse have met strong resistance” (p. 6). Consistently, societies, including teachers, are still strongly influenced by the medical discourse, displaying its dominance in teachers’ beliefs and understandings of inclusive education.

In the past, support was provided by removing the child from the ordinary class for specialist help (Ainscow, 1998; Bailey, 1998). Support was provided through learner assessment (Clough, 2000), and diagnosis and classification of the child's disability (Pijl & Van den Bos, 1998; Swart & Pettipher, 2011). The assessment was normally conducted by a single professional (doctor, psychiatrist, or psychologist) directly

(Bailey, 1998) with the learner. The 'diagnosis' was mostly based on intelligence and personality tests used to establish whether it was necessary to move the learner to a special school. Learners were classified into categories, labelled and placed in schools which specialise in supporting particular disabilities (Bailey, 1998; Swart & Pettipher, 2011). There was minimal teacher- parent collaboration. The professional controlled the future of learners experiencing barriers to learning by placing them in segregated settings (Bailey, 1998). This kind of thinking led to 'compartmentalised' approaches by specialists and specialised training programmes in the educational and non-educational disciplines (Pijl & Van den Bos, 1998). It also led to separate schools for particular categories of disability.

Furthermore categorisation of learners in the medical discourse has led to teachers labelling them as 'blind' or 'deaf' or some other disability, and excluding them from ordinary schooling as well as from economic and social life as a result. Other concepts in the medical discourse include "special educational needs, handicap, disability, defect, deficiency, remedial, diagnostic, cases, prognosis, prescriptive, segregation, and exclusion" (Swart & Pettipher, 20011, p. 5).

The medical model thus framed and influenced the perceptions and practices of teachers and professionals, and the segregated structure of the education system, in ordinary and special needs schooling. Teacher training qualifications were divided into 'ordinary' (ordinary teachers) and 'special' (special education teachers) skills to teach special needs learners in special classes and schools resulting in the teacher with 'special' skills referred to as the 'expert'. Ordinary teachers perceived special education teachers as being the knowledgeable ones in assessing, identifying and supporting learners experiencing barriers to learning, their role was considered indispensable, and any remedy for the learner was dependant on this professional (Swart & Pettipher, 2011). Ordinary teachers were subsequently led to believe that they did not have the capacity to teach learners who experience barriers to learning, and that it had to be done by specialist teachers. The consequence of such thinking sets challenges to the implementation of inclusive educational support. Teachers influenced by this frame of reference would view educational support as providing an individual learner with extra

lessons (Ainscow, 1998) outside the ordinary class and also that only learners with disability have such needs.

Despite the advent of inclusion, the medical discourse, which is discriminatory and limiting, remain entrenched in the mind-set of teachers. For example, Mittler (2000, p. 3) is of the opinion that “... it is still part of the general consciousness of almost everyone who works in education.” It remains deeply ingrained in the minds of generations of teachers, parents, professionals and legislators. Swart and Pettipher (2005) and Boyle (2006) maintain that it is not going to change rapidly. Furthermore they agree that traces of the medical discourse are still evident in current educational and psychological policy, practices and attitudes. For change to happen there is a need for a counter-discursive element through the means of communication.

Boyles' (2006) work in the area of emotional distress and alternative discourses, posits three things about the medical discourse. Firstly, it has extraordinary psychological and social power, and it is therefore difficult to persuade people to accept alternatives. Secondly, there is a certain group of people who have professional, financial, or personal interests vested in maintaining medical discourses. Thus any attempt at alternatives results in resistance and failure. Thirdly, there are people who are not presented with alternate ways of thinking, or who may find it difficult to understand, or who may fail to realise its significance due to lack of training. However, the argument is not that we need to dispense of the medical discourse since medical and psychological information cannot be ignored and is still necessary. What we need to do is re-conceptualise it within a broader framework that includes sociological and ecological factors.

A second traditional discourse (Corbett, 1996; Du Toit, 1996; Engelbrecht & Green, 2007; Fulcher, 1989; Swart & Pettipher, 2011), is referred to as the charity discourse. Theorists assert that special education in most countries (Fulcher, 1989) including South Africa (Naicker, 1999), was provided by missionaries who felt pity for excluded learners and started it on grounds of humanitarianism. Individuals with disabilities and their families were expected to be grateful for the support they received. This discourse was “translated into practice through curricula that focused on compliance and normalization advocating training in acceptable behaviors” (Corbett, 1996, p. 12).

Learners who experience barriers to learning are therefore perceived as in need of assistance, are regarded as incapable, require sympathy, and eternally dependant on others and helpless (Fulcher, 1989; Naicker, 1999).

The third traditional discourse identified by Corbett (1996), Fulcher (1989) and Naicker (1999) is the lay discourse. People with impairments are understood as being inferior, dependent and childlike. Disability is viewed as something to be afraid of. This is characterised by themes such as prejudice, fear, pity and ignorance. These themes promote social and teaching practices that are exclusionary and discriminatory. Fulcher (1989) asserts that this perception leads for example, to ignoring and devaluing learners who have less control of their body movements than other learners. It promotes practices of paternalism and maternalism which treat those with obvious disabilities as “child-like and less than fully responsible” (p. 29). Naicker (1999) describes it as the isolation of people who deviate from normal physical appearance. Corbett (1996, p. 12) further elaborates on the “language of patronage that is consistent with the idea of ongoing dependency - the person with special education needs is seen as requiring training that will make them useful and so avoid being seen as nothing more than a burden”.

However in the late sixties and early seventies the medical discourse exhausted its usefulness (Clough, 2000). In response to the medical perspective, the sociological response saw special educational needs as the outcome of social processes (Clough, 2000). The rationale for special education, and the professional roles associated with it, was challenged. Sociologists introduced a political dimension to special educational needs and Slee (1998) suggests that it reinvented itself. Furthermore, Slee (1998) posits that with the growth of the sociology of special education many researchers such as Booth (1981), Tomlinson (1987) and Barton and Tomlinson (1981), exposed and critically scrutinised the conventional theories of special educational needs and practices. Barnes (1996), speaks on the “politics of theory making” and states that:

Since the politicisation of disability by the international disabled people's movement...a growing number of academics, many of whom are disabled themselves, have re-conceptualised disability as a complex and sophisticated form of social oppression (Oliver, 1986) or institutional discrimination on a par

with sexism, heterosexism and racism... theoretical analysis has shifted from individuals and their impairments to disabling environment and hostile social attitudes (p. 43).

Sociologists' main concerns are therefore issues of inequality, disadvantage and the role of institutions in reproducing differences. As such the identification of barriers to learning depends more on the values, beliefs and interests of those making the judgements (Clough, 2000). Due to the inadequacies of the medical, the charity and lay discourses, developing an inclusive educational system which subscribes to human rights and social justice was proposed. This will be addressed in the following section.

2.2.2 The social rights discourse

In the 1960s “normalisation” was introduced. This is defined as “making available to all handicapped people patterns of life and conditions of everyday living which are as close as possible to the regular circumstances and ways of life of society” (Nirje, 1976, in Swart & Pettipher, 2005, p. 6). This meant that learners experiencing barriers to learning have the right to normal homes and school circumstances, respect from others, as well as the right to economic and environmental standards (Du Toit, 1996) equal to that of others.

Internationally, opposition to separate special education gained momentum with the adoption of UNESCO's Salamanca Statement (Engelbrecht & Green, 2007; UNESCO, 1994). Its guiding principle stated that all children must be accommodated in ordinary schools irrespective of barriers to learning they may experience. Learners have a right to be educated with others of their own age; to share their experiences with them and be allowed to have a plan suitable for his/her need with the required support brought to them rather than them being taken to it. As a result of political changes in South Africa, complemented by the influence of the Salamanca Statement, EWP6 proposes to shift the discourse from a medical to a social rights discourse.

The social rights discourse emphasises equal opportunities and independence (Engelbrecht & Green, 2007; Fulcher, 1989; Naicker, 1999). This implies that educational support must be available for learners in all ordinary schools and

classrooms, irrespective of differing educational needs and outcomes (SAND, 1997; 2001; Dyson & Forlin, 1999; Engelbrecht & Green, 2007). Thus the assumption is that all teachers should develop their capacity to support a variety of learners in the same classroom. Realistically, this means that educational support should be systematically brought to learners, rather than learners being taken out of the class for educational support provision. It also suggests that all learners have the potential and ability to learn if appropriate educational support is provided for them. It was the concept of normalisation that gave rise to the social rights discourse, which led to mainstreaming, integration and inclusive practices in education (Du Toit, 1996; Dyson & Forlin, 1999; Swart & Pettipher, 2011).

The principles of normalisation, integration, and mainstreaming suggest a movement along a number of dimensions (e.g. social, instructional, educational, and location) from the most atypical, specialised, segregated setting to the more normal, general and integrated environment (Bailey, 1998). The concepts of 'mainstreaming' and 'integration' are often used as if they mean the same thing (DoE, 2001; Engelbrecht et.al., 1999; Swart & Pettipher, 2005), this however is inaccurate. What follows is an attempt to highlight the principles of mainstreaming and integration as set out in the literature.

Mainstreaming pulls learners out of the ordinary class for support and then they have to prove their potential to 'fit into' the ordinary class again. Support is provided in special environments or resource rooms. There are no changes to the school and classroom to accommodate the learner. Mainstreaming, as such, maintained and reinforced the medical discourse by focussing on the barriers within the learner as a problem, as different, and in need of repair (Swart & Pettipher, 2005; 2011). This discourse has been criticised for not providing sufficient support to learners to benefit from regular education (Ainscow, 1999; Dyson & Forlin, 1999). It has been referred to as "mainstreaming by default" (DoE, 2001, p. 5).

In developing countries such as South Africa it is suggested that progressive mainstreaming or progressive inclusion (Bailey, 1998) is a more viable option, where learners are supported outside the ordinary class, but not at a separate institution such

as a special school (DoE, 2001; Du Toit, 1996). Since the publication of EWP6 (DoE, 2001), twelve years ago, progress in including learners who experience barriers to learning into ordinary schools has been mixed with evidence of resistance to inclusion and non-implementation of inclusive policies (Walton, 2011). Between 2007 and 2012 the DBE plans to complete the conversion of 35 ordinary schools to full-service schools (Motshekga, 2010). However, as at 2010 only 10 of those schools have been physically upgraded and in line with the principles of inclusive education (Motshekga). Progressive inclusion is when a learner is moved from the most segregated to the most normal setting on a progressive basis, suggesting regular review and consideration for the learner's progress and needs. It recognises the importance of more specialised, even separate settings within the ordinary school.

Full inclusionists propose an “eradication of special education with no more special education placements, no more special education students, no more special education teachers or special teachers providing educational support to learners experiencing barriers to learning” (Bailey, 1998, p. 50). Total mainstreaming or full inclusion (Bailey, 1998; Pather, 2011), is also seen as a desirable long-term option, however given the existing lack of support professionals, resource centres, continuous scepticism and lack of confidence displayed by teachers, it could be extremely challenging in the South African context (Du Toit, 1996; Pather, 2011; Walton, 2011; Geldenhuys & Wevers, 2013). Pather (2011), Walton (2007) and Pienaar & Raymond (2013) all agree that given the shortage of specialist support and trained personnel for education support in South African schools “the capacity of ordinary schools to meet diverse learning needs must thus be enhanced” (Walton 2007, p. 106).

The goal of integration is to ensure that learners experiencing barriers to learning be considered equal in school and society. Integration involves more extensive and holistic participation of learners in school. However, significant instructional time in separate settings is still maintained. Within integration some special services follow the learner to the ordinary school (Swart & Pettipher, 2005; 2011) and the learner still has to “fit in” (DoE, 2001; 2002a; Frederickson & Cline, 2002, p. 65).

Inclusive education has developed globally challenging existing exclusionary strategies and traditions, and has become the preferred way to cope with increasing range of learners in the ordinary schools. Many theorists argue that inclusion has different meanings depending on the context in which it is applied (Booth & Ainscow, 1998; Engelbrecht & Green, 2007; Green, 2001). Due to the changes in the political climate in South Africa a different principle for education support emerged, characterised “by talk of an inclusive society and a stakeholder society which replaced the earlier ethic of individualism” (Swart & Pettipher, 2011, p. 8).

Language, too, reflects a particular discourse and is a powerful tool that influences teachers' discourses. Therefore to facilitate the change to inclusion, the terminology used by teachers need to reflect the vision of inclusion and contribute to its realisation. Accepted language within the inclusion discourse includes concepts such as “*barriers to learning*” instead of special needs, “*learning support*” as a preferred term to remedial education and “*systems changes*” as opposed to changes within the individual (DoE, 2001; Swart & Pettipher 2005, p. 9).

Superseding the use of the ‘right’ language, inclusive education requires teachers to rethink issues of theory, pedagogy, practice, race, class, gender, and disability. Teachers need to make radical shifts in their understanding of barriers to learning (DoE, 2002a). For example, they should be able to reflect:

- A shift from pathological medical/individual explanations to understanding system deficiencies located within an understanding of barriers to learning. For example, interpreting a Deaf learner’s difficulty to engage with the curriculum as a lack of responsiveness of the curriculum rather than a problem within the learner.
- A shift from organising services according to category of disability towards determining level of support needed.
- A completely new approach towards admissions, based not on category of disability but on whether learners really require high levels of support.

- A shift from standardised tests, mainly psychometric tests, to predominantly teacher-produced diagnostic tests that determine the learner's learning potential and identify how it can be improved.
- A shift from the Special Education Act to the South African Schools Act.
- A shift from a pedagogy of exclusion to a pedagogy of possibilities that takes into consideration barriers to learning, different intelligences and learning styles
- An end to discriminatory admission procedures which impede access to schools on the basis of language, race and severity of disability. (DoE, 2002a, pp. 22-23)

Inclusion and educational support services are thus, multidimensional and challenging, and a deep understanding of the elements of inclusion is necessary (DoE, 2001; 2002a; Engelbrecht et al., 1999; Ntombela, 2006; Swart & Pettipher, 2005), in order to successfully implement an efficient educational support service in schools.

This study is underpinned by the notion that primary school teachers require adequate and appropriate professional development and support in the shift towards the new rights discourse. Failing this, the *status quo* of marginalising learners experiencing barriers to learning will remain intact. Professional development and support should adequately allow teachers to reflect on their previous practices and perceptions and the consequences thereof, and help them to understand why the required shift to inclusion is essential. If this is not successfully addressed, then the further implementation of inclusive, collaborative educational support services in primary schools remains a challenge rather than a possibility. A paradigm shift is necessary that involves a reconceptualisation away from the identification of categories, labelling, and placement of learners, towards the removal of systemic barriers to learning and participation within society. This shift is key for teachers as it also suggests, as EWP6 does, that all learners have needs and all need support. The next section explains the South African transition to an inclusive educational support service.

2.3 THE SOUTH AFRICAN SHIFT TO INCLUSIVE EDUCATIONAL SUPPORT

In order to understand existing views of educational support within a philosophy of inclusion, it is imperative to have an overview of what special education support means and how it has developed in South Africa. Bundy (1993) draws attention to the importance of looking at the past:

People make their own history, but not in a circumstance of their own choice; they act in an arena shaped by the past. Accordingly, to understand the present conjuncture in South Africa, it is essential to have a sense of its history, and to reflect on the constraints and the possibilities created by history (p. 49) .

Since the political transition to a democratic system of governance in April 1994, there has been a commitment to improving the quality of life of all South Africans. EWP6 (DoE, 2001) states that the establishment of an inclusive education system will require an integrated and collaborative approach to educational support services. It also requires the establishment of appropriate district and school-based support services. The overall aim of the transformational policies is to provide social justice through inclusive environments that cater for diversity among all children and especially for those in marginalised groups.

The National Education Policy Investigation (NEPI, 1992), under the leadership of the National Education Crisis Committee, can be considered the first attempt at reforming special education needs and support services, and it highlighted a number of concerns regarding the provision of support. Educational support for learners with severe special needs education has been of good quality for whites and less developed for Indians and coloureds, with it only being developed for blacks since 1990, remaining inadequate to the present day. The National Education Crisis Committee found that in white schools special education was well established, they had school clinics, and remedial assistance was fairly extensive. The Panel for Identification, Diagnosis and Assistance (PIDA) system was the only support mechanism provided in black education in urban areas and even worse is that this system had minimal effects on learners (NEPI, 1992). The provisions of support services for learners with intrinsic needs were offered outside the ordinary school, in special schools, and revealed a pattern of

unequal provision. School guidance was the only form of educational support that a large proportion of South African learners were exposed to (Mashile, 2000). It evolved in white education as early as 1967, was introduced in Indian and coloured schools in 1973, and in black schools only in 1981.

The investigation revealed that the provision of educational support services was marginalised from ordinary education, lacked integration, and was unequally provided according to race groups (Pienaar & Raymond, 2013); barriers to learning were inadequately conceptualised; there was inadequate and inappropriate assessment of learner needs; negative attitudes among teachers and society were prevalent; educational support services were disjointed; there was centralised and non-participatory decision-making on behalf of learners; and educational support services lacked clarity and focus. It was recommended that future support services be accessible to all South African children of school going age; the nature of these services should reflect equality of provision; priority must be given to learners who need the services most; the services should be non-discriminatory; and that the administration and control of the services should foster unification and equality while allowing for the participation of relevant interest groups (NEPI, 1992).

Following the NEPI report, some of the research team members of the NEPI investigation in the Western Cape felt that further debate and specific policy options needed to be developed (De Jong, Ganie, Lazarus, Naidoo, Naude, & Prinsloo, 1994). They felt that educational support services had traditionally been marginalised, and therefore needed to be taken more seriously by all stakeholders. They were furthermore concerned about the limitations of the NEPI process and product. Some of the limitations included lack of input in the NEPI process from school social services, educational psychology, and school health services in the Western Cape. Disability organisations and parents started to show resistance to the system of support services and were calling for reform of the system.

The development of a single education system for ALL was made clear, however reform efforts were difficult to implement due to a lack of political will, and a lack of infrastructure. It continued to be overshadowed by policies that distributed resources

using race as a criterion. This was evident in budgetary allocations and teacher education (NEPI, 1992). For example, government expenditure on support services was estimated to be approximately 3% of the total education budget, which was mostly allocated to whites. Donald (1993) argues that the massive inequities in provision of support for black learners were exacerbated by the state's practice of relegating special needs education to the "periphery of educational reform" (p. 139).

The Constitution of South Africa provided the basis for transforming special education and educational support services. The aim was "to heal the divisions of the past and establish a society based on democratic values, social justice, and fundamental human rights" (Republic of South Africa, 1996, p. 33). The democratic shift toward inclusive education led to a greater acknowledgement that inadequate educational support led to many learners being excluded from the education system (DoE, 2001). Policy frameworks began to recognise how the overall environment of the learner and interrelated factors affecting educational experiences were key elements in developing effective educational support services. The government committed to addressing the range of learner population and to provide a variety of support services to assist with the development of inclusive schools.

EWP6 (DoE, 2001) recognises that the previous individualised, direct service delivery was insufficient and calls for a community-based approach to support. This collaborative community will support learners, teachers and the school as an organisation. This conceptualisation of educational support means that all learners may at times require support, that education systems should be prepared to provide support as part of their daily activities, that a preventative approach needs to be taken, and that the welfare and educational success of all learners should be the goal (Engelbrecht & Green, 2007).

Educational support services are important because schools provide access over prolonged periods of time to a large number of learners during their formative years. Schools can also provide support services in a natural setting, thereby minimising the likelihood of separating children with difficulties from their peers, and reducing the stigmatising effects inherent in mental health practices and special facilities. If learners

require educational support but are left unattended, it is often likely that they will end up as troubled adults. Support services are also important in the process of social transition, especially with the de-racialisation of schools in South Africa. If no support is provided, 'weak' learners drop out in early grades, leaving the 'stronger' ones to proceed to higher education. Finally, given the current concern about human resource development, all aspects of development including career guidance, are necessary. Support services are also necessary since there is a clear absence of sensitive responses to contemporary national issues (e.g. violence and the AIDS pandemic) (SAND, 1997).

Since the publication of EWP6 in 2001, policy implementation has begun, and some of the envisaged structures have been put into place. The policy outlines a system of educational support that depends on effective management, policy, planning, and monitoring capacity within the National DoE and the nine provincial departments of education. With a well-integrated national policy, the two key educational support structures are the DBST and the ILST (DoE, 2001; 2002a; Engelbrecht & Green, 2007). DBSTs are to be developed as per district in each province. Educational support will be infused throughout a redesigned system (Pienaar & Raymond, 2013) and they will consist of:

Ordinary schools – will be upgraded by professional development, adapted physical environments and a flexible curriculum for learners requiring low-levels of educational support,

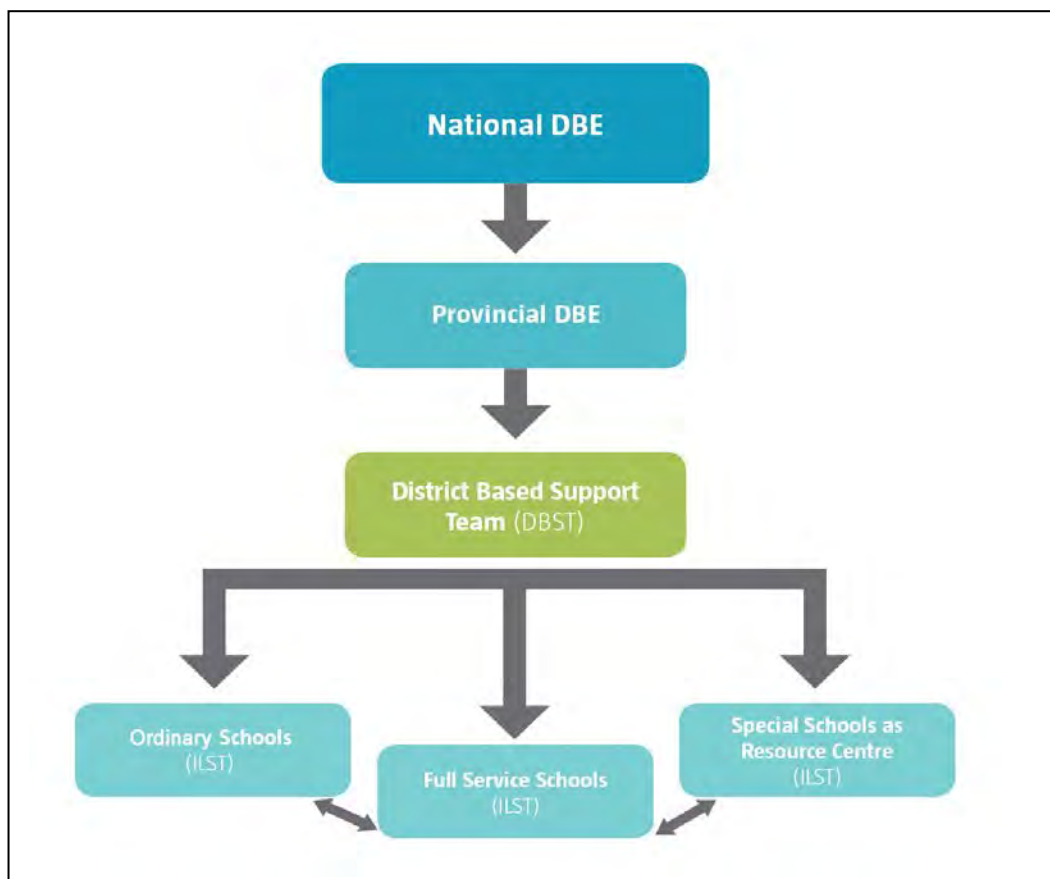
Full-service schools – need to be created by upgrading selected ordinary schools for learners with mild to moderate levels of educational support, and

Special schools as resource centres – special schools need to be upgraded for serve learners needing moderate to high levels of educational support (DBE, 2010; DoE, 2001; Pienaar & Raymond, 2013).

The barriers to learning and identified needs of learners cannot be met in one type of school therefore, a new system, consisting of ordinary schools; full-service schools and

special school as resource centre, is envisaged as appropriate (DoE, 2001; Pienaar & Raymond, 2013). All schools are to have ILSTs as a school-based support structure, as illustrated in Figure 2. 1.

FIGURE 2.1: The structure of educational support services



In the following section I discuss the support structures at district and school levels, as set out in EWP6 (DoE, 2001).

1. District-based support team (DBST)

Membership of the DBST includes staff from provincial and district offices, special schools, government officials from various departments, and community members, depending on the need. The DBST is tasked with:

...the development and ongoing support of local institutional-level support teams in schools, colleges, early childhood and adult learning centres... A second key focus of these teams is to link these institutions with formal and informal support systems in the surrounding community so that these needs and barriers can be addressed. The main focus for district-based support teams would be to provide indirect support to learners through supporting teachers and school management, with a particular focus on curriculum and institutional development, to ensure that the teaching and learning framework and environment is responsive to the full range of learning needs... to provide direct learning support to learners where institutional-level support teams are unable to respond to particular learning needs. (DoE, 2002a, p. 103; DoE, 2005)

A number of issues about support arise from the excerpts. The focal point of the DBST is to provide indirect support to learners by supporting teachers, school management and the school system (DoE, 2005). The focus thus moves from a direct service to indirect support. This leads to more focus on educational systemic support to improve the school's capacity to deal with learners experiencing barriers to learning. ILSTs are to be established at all schools and DBSTs should oversee the functioning of them (Pienaar & Raymond, 2013).

2. Institutional-level support team (ILST)

An ILST is a school-based support team and is responsible for identifying and addressing barriers to learning as well as supporting teachers in implementing inclusive education effectively at the school level (Pienaar & Raymond, 2013). These teams identify school-specific, learner, teacher and institutional needs and coordinate efforts to prevent and address these within their own schools. Support is provided using collaborative teaming (DoE, 2001; 2002a; 2002b; 2008; Bornman & Rose, 2010) and is composed mainly of teachers in the school but can include parents, learners, and other community members, depending on the need. The focus is on enabling teachers to develop preventative and intervention strategies, and on building skills to address specific barriers (Engelbrecht & Green, 2007). Their critical goal is the development and participation of all learners in education. These are demanding tasks required of teachers. However, research, internationally and in South Africa reports that very few ILSTs are functional and operational at schools (Bailey, 1999; Benn, 2004; Duncan, 2005; Gugushe, 1999; Geldenhuys & Wevers, 2013).

Therefore, developing a new professional identity is required of ordinary teachers as well as the school as an organisation. Teachers have to change their values, attitudes, and beliefs about who is responsible for the provision of educational support and how it is to be provided. For example learners experiencing barriers to learning will not be referred to experts for support (Engelbrecht & Green, 2007) since the central notion of the EWP6 (DoE, 2001) is that all learners should be able to access the curriculum and be supported and accommodated at their schools. These requirements challenge teachers to re-conceptualise their roles, change their practices, and take on new responsibilities which require ongoing support.

According to EWP6 (DoE, 2001), the key factors identified as barriers to teaching and learning in the South African context, that teachers have to respond to, are:

- Factors relating to specific individuals. In the education system this refers specifically to the learners (e.g. relating to specific learning needs and styles) and educators (e.g. personal factors as well as teaching approaches and attitudes);
- Various aspects of the curriculum, such as: content, language or medium of instruction, organisation and management in the classroom, methods and processes used in teaching, the pace of teaching and time available, learning materials and equipment, and assessment procedures;
- The physical and psychosocial environment within which teaching and learning occurs. This includes buildings as well as management approaches adopted;
- Dynamics and conditions relating to learner's home environment, including issues such as family dynamics, cultural and socio-economic background, socio-economic status, and so on.
- Community and social dynamics which either support or hinder the teaching and learning process. (DoE, 2002a, p. 94)

Given the severity of barriers to learning that may affect the educational performance of learners, the DoE deems it necessary that a collaborative structure such as ILSTs be implemented at every school to better address the need to improve learning (DoE, 2001; 2002a). The success of inclusive education hinges on how effectively ILSTs are functioning (Pienaar & Raymond, 2013). Thus, ILSTs have a “critical responsibility”

which has to be executed in a sensitive and thoughtful manner (Pienaar & Raymond, 2013. p. 253). EWP6 makes the following assumptions about the implementation of educational support structures:

- A structure called the ILST will be established at every school, plus a district based support team (DBST), at district level
- These structures will take the form of collaborative teaming
- Teachers will take up the roles of providing educational support through collaboration
- Leadership will be distributed/collaborative/participatory, and
- A general systems theoretical framework within an eco-systemic perspective will be used for implementation (DoE, 2001).

However, the success of policy implementation for educational reform, in particular that of support teams, depends on teachers' understandings, capacity, and will (Fullan 2001; McLaughlin, 1987; Pather 2011) to enact policy.

EWP6 (DoE, 2001) acknowledges that ILST members will require additional training in a range of issues such as

understanding and working with the process of change; understanding the challenges of providing support; knowing what support is available within education and other government departments, and within local communities; understanding the concept of inclusive education, including the attitude changes that this requires; understanding what the barriers to learning and development are, within a systemic understanding of problems and solutions; developing knowledge and skills to address barriers to learning at the level of the learner, the educator and the institution; adult education skills to pursue the various training roles required at this level; networking skills and learning to 'work together' through team effectiveness training and ongoing support; basic management and leadership development, including project management skills. (DoE, 2002a, p. 116)

It is evident that massive attention is paid to transforming educational support services through policies. These efforts also created tensions which were visible in the disparities between the policy imperatives of EWP6 and the provision of funding and service delivery in practice. The problem areas relate to issues of public funding and service delivery for inclusive education. I draw on an executive summary of the Institute

for Democracy in South Africa (IDASA), which reported on initial service delivery information from provincial education departments in all nine provinces of South Africa (Wildman & Nomdo, 2007).

According to Wildman and Nomdo (2007) the provincial funding for inclusive education was influenced by various budgetary constraints at the time. The increase in the number of teachers employed during the 1996 to 1998 period, caused teacher salaries to become a burden to the state and led to control of wage costs in public schools. Implementing a national conditional grant for the special needs education sector was delayed and there were no funding norms and standards. Funding for inclusive education projects continues to be absorbed by other budgets in different provinces. Lack of funding continues to hamper the provision of inclusive education and simultaneously support services, and therefore remains the most vulnerable sector in provincial budgets.

Provinces also report (Wildman & Nomdo, 2007) run-down infrastructure and delays in the physical adaptation of schools. Many special schools are using funds from their operational budgets to cover costs for assistive devices, which mean sacrifices in other areas such as transport. Human resource capacity development is another area of concern teachers required to be the implementers of inclusive education do not have the requisite skills and knowledge to engage in their new and overwhelming responsibilities (Engelbrecht, Oswald & Forlin, 2006; Pather, 2011; Walton, 2011), while the need for non-teacher support has been underestimated. Together with poor funding, service delivery for implementation of the EWP6 is proving to be a struggle for provincial education departments (Wildman & Nomdo, 2007).

The conversion of sixty public primary schools and special schools to full-service and resource centres, has been delayed (Motshekga, 2010). This is due to the lack of buy-in from provincial implementers who have identified sites that required significant infrastructure development and funding. It has also become evident that attempts at intersectoral collaboration are proving to be difficult (Wildman & Nomdo, 2007). The executive report aptly concludes that instead of ending fragmentation with the implementation of inclusive education and support services, the implementation frames

“what gets done” as a function of available resources. In doing so, it becomes part of the very disconnectedness that it was meant to overcome (Wildman & Nomdo, 2007, p. 32).

ILSTs are one of the main mechanisms at the school level that is responsible for promoting inclusive education principles and practices.

2.4 CONCLUSION

The post-apartheid government established in 1994 inherited a complex education system, riddled with inequalities. The Constitution reconstituted the educational landscape, simultaneously expanding the role of the teacher and the vision of schooling. The important point to note is that while the domain of national standards was the domain of the national DoE, implementation is a provincial matter (Harley & Wedekind, 2004). Harley and Wedekind (2004) argue that this arrangement reflects a structural representation of the classic divide between policy and practice. The implementation of the EWP6 reflects similar trends. While policies serve a particular political agenda, they translate into little substance if the agents of implementation and their institutional contexts are not adequately considered.

As discussed in this chapter, discourses play a pivotal role in establishing norms in terms of beliefs, attitudes, and practices of teachers. Sufficient and adequate training and support is required to ensure that teachers are provided with opportunities to be reflective about dispositions of the past and the beliefs they hold about supporting learners. Failing such an exercise may result in teachers being unable to make the necessary shifts in thinking required for inclusive educational support practices.

Have teachers been adequately prepared for the setting-up and implementation of ILSTs? What kind of training has been provided? Has the training succeeded in developing the essential beliefs, attitudes, and skills to accomplish the requirements of being members of structures such as ILSTs? Has it allowed teachers to be reflective about the change that is required? If it has not been successful in addressing these areas of concern, it is likely that EWP6 will reflect what Jansen calls *political symbolism* (Jansen, 2001), settling policy struggles rather than being concerned with the area of

practice. How serious are policy intentions in bringing about change? I assume that teachers in this study, through their membership in the ILST have received professional development and should be sufficiently prepared and motivated to make the necessary shifts in their practices and beliefs to provide educational support through collaboration to enable learners who experience barriers to learning to be appropriately supported at school. Chapter Three will review the related literature on collaboration.

CHAPTER THREE

COLLABORATION WITHIN INSTITUTIONAL-LEVEL SUPPORT TEAMS

3.1 INTRODUCTION

It has become a trend in some countries that schools implement school-based support teams to address barriers to learning experienced by learners, teachers, and the school with the aim of indirectly improving the academic achievement of learners. Prior to 1997, in the United States, these pre-referral were not required by legislation but were present in schools (Slonski-Fowler & Truscott, 2004). In South Africa, there is strong promotion of collaborative teaming, and the DoE mandated that schools establish educational support structures, initially in primary schools.

In this chapter I review the related literature on collaboration, a key concept central to this study. First, I offer an exposition of various conceptualisations of collaboration. Second, the chapter examines the promises and pitfalls of collaboration, followed by a discussion on the dimensions of collaboration. The last section in the chapter explores the collaborative educational support structures found in schools.

3.2 CONCEPTUALISATION OF COLLABORATION

In keeping with international trends, South Africa has adopted a strategy of school-based teacher collaboration in most school improvement efforts and is now also applying it to educational support services. Despite its frequent use, few clear definitions of collaboration are available (Engelbrecht, 2007). Generally, the concept “collegiality” is widely used in the literature by some authors (e.g. Campbell & Southworth, 1992; Hargreaves 1992a; 1992b; 1994; Little, 1982) while “collaboration” is the preferred choice of others (Benn, 2004; Bornman & Rose, 2010; DoE, 2001; 2002a; Engelbrecht & Green, 2007; Fullan & Stiegelbauer, 1991; Fullan, 1993a, 2001; Snell & Janney, 2005). Sometimes these words are used interchangeably yet they mean different meanings.

Additionally, within the context of educational support, collaboration and consultation have been used synonymously (Engelbecht, 2007), but “collaborative consultation breathes a different spirit” (Pienaar & Raymond, 2013, p. 234). Consultation only becomes collaborative when teachers believe that they equally share the problem and potential for its solutions. In a collaborative consultation process, a consultant, and a consultee or client, work together in a combined effort to address identified needs (Dettmer et al., 2005), relinquishing any form of power relations in education support services (Pienaar & Raymond, 2013). Friend and Cook (1992) provide a useful distinction between collaboration and consultation. They describe collaboration as styles or approaches to relations that occur during the consultation process. Furthermore, they recommend that collaboration be used in a flexible way and not necessarily all the time, depending on the circumstances and the people concerned. In their view, similar to that of Hargreaves (1994), collaboration must be voluntary, with teachers assisting each other to address barriers to learning.

Since collaboration is difficult to define (Wood & Gray, 1991), Welch and Sheridan (1995, p. 28) merge important characteristics of it and define collaboration as

...a dynamic framework for efforts which endorses interdependence and parity during interactive exchange of resources between at least two partners who work together in a decision making process that is influenced by cultural and systemic factors to achieve common goals.

Fullan (1993a, p. 87) too, suggests that the purpose of collaboration is “to extend the [teacher’s] circle of ideas and contacts”. Wenger (2006) defines collaboration as occurring in communities of practice, which are groups of people who have a common purpose and team up regularly, to improve their performance.

Given the complexity of defining collaboration in education in a concise manner, various researchers (Datnow, 2011; Friend & Bursuck, 2012; Friend & Cook, 1992; Hargreaves, 1994a; Kochhar-Bryant & Heishman, 2010; Knackendoffel, 2005; Pienaar & Raymond, 2013; Snell & Janney, 2005) have identified the following as characteristics of collaboration:

- Collaboration is voluntary; individuals can make it collaboration in a true sense, and they regularly form close but informal collaborative affiliations with each other.
- Collaboration is spontaneous.
- Collaboration is pervasive across time and space.
- Collaboration requires parity among participants who should have equal value and power to make decisions, otherwise it is not collaboration.
- Collaboration requires shared goals which must be clear to participants and be significantly adequate to sustain their joint interest.
- Participation and decision-making is shared during collaboration and a convenient division of labour, depending on the participants' expertise in particular cases, is required.
- Individuals who collaborate share resources such as time, knowledge of providing educational support, and access to information regarding other service providers that will assist in accomplishing the goals.
- Liability for the outcome of the intervention, whether the results are positive or negative, is shared by all the collaborating teachers.

There are several assumptions about collaboration in an educational context and they include: that teachers will collaborate with their colleagues (SAND, 1997; 2001; 2002a; Friend, 2000); that parents and other professionals will also provide educational support to learners; that teachers “know what collaboration means and how it is practised; and that collaboration actually happens” (Welch, 1998, p. 27). However, Fullan (1993a, p. 82) argues that “collaboration is one of the most misunderstood concepts in the [educational] change business”. Teachers have certain social skills to work with each other spontaneously. However, collaboration implies a more scientific endeavour than simple social cooperation (Pienaar & Raymond, 2013).

Teachers are accustomed to working independently, autonomously, and in privacy (Evans, 1996; Fullan, 2001b; Hargreaves, 1994a; Rosenholtz, 1989; Sarason, 1996). Collaborative efforts therefore pose a threat to their deep-rooted habits. Furthermore, most collaborative efforts are established as add-ons to teachers' activities and responsibilities (Evans, 1996), and is, according to Hargreaves (1994) perceived as

work intensification by teachers. For example, if ILSTs are expected to meet after school, adding on to a pre-existing schedule of meetings, they may thus be regarded as more work rather than an opportunity for professional development. Another challenge for collaboration is that teachers are “conflict avoidant” (Evans, 1996, p. 4; Lencioni, 2003) and generally want to be liked.

It is therefore necessary to understand the complexities of collaboration (Kochhar-Bryant & Heishman, 2010; McKenzie, 2009; Welch, 1998), else ineffectiveness in the provision of educational support may result. Thus far teacher education programmes did not include content which explores the complexity and practices of collaboration (Friend & Cook, 1990; McKenzie, 2009; Welch, 1998). Friend and Cook (1990) assert “that teachers are being set up to fail because they enter the teaching profession with content expertise and method, but without the skills to work effectively with their colleagues” (p. 77). Since most education reform movements (e.g. White Paper 5; EWP6; Norms and Standards for Educators) promote collaboration, it is necessary and the right time to explore whether collaboration does exist in practice and if so, what teachers’ understanding of providing educational support through collaboration in the context of inclusive education are.

Next I present what the literature claims to be the dimensions of collaboration.

3.3 DIMENSIONS OF COLLABORATION IN THE PROVISION OF EDUCATIONAL SUPPORT

Collaboration places demands on teachers. It consists of four dimensions reflecting the purposes and application of collaboration to problem-solving and change within education support services. Collaboration in this study is used as a mechanism to create change in knowledge or understanding, and in relationships among teachers and practices with regard to providing educational support to learners who experience barriers to learning. The dimensions include discovery, synthesis of ideas, development of practice, and building a professional community in educating the whole child (Kochhar-Bryant & Heishman, 2010). The same authors claim that a collaborative initiative must typically include a blend of two or more of the four dimensions.

First, discovery refers to using collaborative structures to construct new knowledge about educational support through teamwork, or to transfer knowledge between and among teachers. For example, teachers develop a team, such as an ILST, which aims to explore strategies and interventions to support learners who experience barriers to learning.

Second, in order to guide decision and actions, redefine or solve problems, or develop new policies and processes collaboration should connect the thinking and knowledge of different disciplines, units, or groups within a school. That is, collaboration is used for the purpose of synthesising the ideas of many professionals, such as teachers, resulting in collaborative decision-making. For example, ILST members are meant to combine the thinking of many teachers, counsellors, and related outside agencies, to solve immediate learner challenges.

Third, collaboration is used to develop practices to analyse, develop, or make more effective education and support practices and role relationships among teachers. For example, ILST members develop practices of teamwork, that is, they analyse learner challenges, brainstorm various ideas, and finally come up with effective solutions in the best interest of the learners. The consequence is improved relationships among teachers within the team.

Fourth, collaboration should result in building professional communities. This means that collaboration, if used creatively, is capable of connecting teachers within the school, with teachers from surrounding schools, external support agencies, parents, and the community. This means bringing the professional community into the school to facilitate change. It also creates broad sustainable change within the school and learners experiencing barriers to learning will ultimately benefit from this practice. Examples include linking with education officials and professional associations to connect teachers with surrounding resource centres, and forming university partnerships to enhance the school's capacity to improve learning for all children. Building professional communities may also involve the use of collaboration to link new knowledge creation, develop practice, and strengthen collaborative decision-making.

3.4 COLLABORATION: PROMISES AND PITFALLS

Why is collaboration used so frequently today? On the one hand, some researchers assert that policy makers promote (Kochhar-Bryant & Heishman 2010, p. 110) improvement of collaboration among professionals, between schools and community agencies, and between professionals and parents (Bahr & Kovalski, 2006; Bedward & Daniels, 2005, DoE 2001; 2002a); Fullan, 1992; Hargreaves, 1994a; Rosenholtz 1989; Senge, 2007). On the other hand some researchers question the merits of collaboration (Allen & Hecht, 2004; Fullan, 1993a; Lavié, 2006; O'Neill, 2000; Sinclair, 1992). The merits of collaboration in the context of schools have been given prominence internationally through the results of school effectiveness research, school improvement research, and policy imperatives (Campbell & Southworth, 1992).

School effectiveness studies identify collaboration as one of the key process factors, and school improvement proponents believe that “schools cannot be improved without people working together” (Campbell & Southworth, 1992, p. 61). Simultaneously policy statements from central government imply that collaboration is a discourse of good management practice.

The impetus for institution-level collaborative teaming (Bornman & Rose, 2012; Snell & Janney, 2005) has historically been linked with special education (Bahr & Kovalski, 2006; Gresham, 2002; Kochhar-Bryant & Heishman, 2010). The reason for this link is that many learners, who experience challenges in learning have been erroneously placed in special education, through diagnosis by a single professional without collaborating with parents or teachers. This incorrect identification and placement has made it necessary to shift toward a collaborative and problem-solving approach which might avoid such mistakes.

In the United States, for example, Chalfant, Pysh, and Moultrie (1979) identified five major problems that motivated the need for teachers to collaborate in teacher assistance teams. These included,

1. That ordinary teachers lacked training, confidence, and experience in dealing with learners who experience barriers to learning.

2. The high costs of employing sufficient numbers of supportive special service personnel meant that the burden of modifying programmes of instruction would be the responsibility of teachers.
3. Ordinary teachers lacked immediate classroom support as special education personnel were too busy with serious cases to assist them with classroom instruction.
4. Large numbers of learners per class intensified the teacher's dilemma;
5. Some ordinary teachers felt that learners who experience barriers to learning were the problem of special education and thus provided limited individualised attention for these learners in their classrooms.

The number of learners who experience barriers to learning has increased in regular classrooms due the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act of 1990 in the United States (Bahr & Kovalski, 2006; Kochhar-Bryant & Heishman, 2010; Safran & Safran, 1996), and the implementation of EWP6 in South Africa (DoE, 2001). These policies mandated that previously unidentified learners with disabilities should receive free appropriate public education. As a consequence, a large number of learners were left unidentified in the United States as the state was unable to address the referrals in a timely manner and teachers were unable to determine what constituted appropriate referral to special education (Kochhar-Bryant & Heishman, 2010; Safran & Safran, 1996). Consequently additional learners required more than standard programming, although not necessarily special education assistance. The situation made it necessary to create a support system to help teachers deal with learning and behavioural problems in the classroom, and it became known as Teacher Assistance Teams (TATs) (Chalfant et al., 1979).

However, in the United States, many years later, the problem persisted and large numbers of learners continued to display significant academic difficulties (Bahr & Kovalski, 2006). This led to the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001, which mandated that schools show improvement and an annual increase in the number of learners who reach proficiency (Bahr & Kovalski, 2006). This necessitated a further call for ongoing daily teacher support rather than traditional in-service or pullout models to appropriately meet the needs of learners who experience barriers to learning. A thorough, focused,

and purposeful intervention system was required and the TATs, a university/school district collaboration programme, offered a collaborative teaming model to address the needs of teachers.

In their anxiety to support learners, teachers have also been found to use learning materials and teaching practices that have no practical value (Bahr & Kovaleski, 2006). Therefore there is a call for reliable and suitable instructional practices to improve the achievement of all learners. Teachers clearly need assistance and support to learn, and structures like ILSTs can be useful. The merits of collaboration as a mechanism to support teachers, is well documented (Bahr & Kovaleski, 2006; Bedward & Daniels, 2005; Chalfant & Pysh, 1989).

Individualism and non-interference (Hargreaves 1994; Rosenholtz 1989) are claimed to limit the possibilities of improving student learning while collaboration encourages development in teaching and learning, supports implementing effective change, and provides possibilities for professional development (Bornman & Rose, 2010; Fullan, 1993a; 2000; Hargreaves, 1994; Lavié, 2006; Senge, 1990; 2007). Hargreaves suggests that collaboration:

- Provides moral support in that it strengthens resolve, permits vulnerabilities to be shared and aired, and carries people through those failures and frustrations that accompany change.
- Increases efficiency in that it eliminates duplication and removes redundancy.
- Improves effectiveness in that it improves the quality of student learning by improving the quality of teachers' teaching.
- Reduces overload in that it permits sharing of the burdens and pressures that come from intensified work demands and accelerated change.
- Establishes boundaries in that it reduces uncertainty and limits excesses of guilt by setting commonly agreed boundaries around what can be reasonably achieved.
- Promotes confidence in that it strengthens teachers' confidence to adopt externally introduced innovations, the wisdom to delay them, and the moral fortitude to resist them.

- Promotes teacher reflection in that collaboration in dialogue and action provides sources of feedback and comparison that prompt teachers to reflect on their own practice.
- Promotes teacher learning in that it increases teachers' opportunities to learn from each other, and
- Leads to continuous improvement in that it encourages teachers to see change not as a task to be completed, but as an unending process of continuous improvement. (Hargreaves, 1994a, pp. 245-246)

Thus collaboration is seen as an emerging and accepted strategy to assist policy implementers, teachers, and schools in policy implementation for the professional development of teachers, in promoting change and in school improvement efforts. The emerging evidence on school-based collaboration in the United States suggests four conclusions about collaboration (Idol, Nevin & Paolucci-Whitcomb, 1994; Villa & Thousand, 1996).

1. Learners who experience barriers to learning can benefit when teachers collaborate about teaching practices and coping mechanisms.
2. Knowledge, skills, values, and attitude towards collaboration among teachers can be developed.
3. The solutions resulting from collaboration are of a better quality than when they are made individually.
4. "... effective collaborators can expect positive changes at three levels: (a) changes in schooling systems (e.g., more team teaching among general and special educators); (b) changes in the skills, attitudes, and behaviours of adult collaborators; and (c) improvements in the academic progress and social skills of learners with barriers to learning".(Villa & Thousand, 1996, p. 176)

Discourses on collaboration thus far have been perceived as positive, however there is evidence that the corporate sector does not support its potential (Allen & Hecht, 2004; Cordery, 2004; Lencioini, 2003; Paulus & Van der Zee, 2004; Sinclair, 1992) for facilitating the process of change and professional development. O'Neill (2000, p. 19) too maintains "that at the abstract or normative level, teacher collaboration is accepted as uncontroversial and likely to attract universal endorsement", but there are also some

challenges (Lavié, 2006). In addition, relevant literature from the business sector also indicates that there is a lack of observed support for team-based organisational outcomes.

Two decades ago, Sinclair (1992) argued that “teamwork has become ideologically entrenched in organisations and that beliefs about the benefits of teams occupy a central and unquestioned place in organisational reform” (p. 611). More recently Allen and Hecht (2004) coined the term ‘romance of teams’, which they define as “a faith in the effectiveness of team-based work that is not supported by, or even consistent with, relevant empirical evidence” (p. 440).

Lencioni (2003), a management consultant and executive coach who has worked with many executive teams and CEOs in the corporate sector to strengthen teamwork, argues that every executive staff member he has come across believes in teamwork, yet few make it a reality in their organisations. The reason for is that they underestimate the power and complexity of collaboration. He argues that most leaders have made teamwork unconditionally desirable and promote the idea to keep abreast of current trends in management practice (Lencioni, 2003; Cordery, 2004). Allen and Hecht (2004) assert that “many organisations implement teams because they are perceived to be fashionable” (p. 444). The influence of globalisation pressures and keeping up with first world countries could be another force which encourages teamwork. Lencioni (2003) asserts that leaders favour teamwork and call for its implementation without really understanding it:

...many of today’s leaders champion teamwork reflexively without really understanding what it entails. Pump them full of truth serum and ask them why and they’ll tell you that they feel like they have to promote teamwork, that anything less would be politically, socially, and organisationally incorrect. (p. 2)
In other words, teamwork is used as a signal of the organisation’s culture, values, and intentions in the public domain.

Cordery (2004) contests the assumption that employees’ positive experiences in teams can be credited to collaboration, since not every employee regards teamwork positively. For example, Allen and Hecht (2004) illustrate this by showing the failure of a

brainstorming group to generate innovative and better solutions to problems. Paulus and Van der Zee (2004) echo this sentiment and maintain research shows that “groups do not perform better - they even do worse - than comparison groups of individual brainstormers” (p. 475). Fullan also cautions us of the danger of ‘group think’, and the “uncritical conformity to the group, unthinking acceptance of the latest solution, suppression of individual dissent” (Fullan, 1993a, p. 34). Other writers caution against uncritically accepting the taken for granted goodness of increased teacher collaboration. Similarly in education, Timperley and Robinson (2000) found that collaboration rarely succeeds because teachers are not used to providing critical support to their colleagues. Nonetheless, collaboration remains popular in the business sector and education, suggesting that the interest in it remains strong (Allen & Hecht, 2004).

Having discussed some of the complexities of teamwork, researchers are not proclaiming that teamwork is not a worthy goal. However, they caution leaders and enactors to carefully consider the complexities of real teamwork prior to the decision to team (Allen & Hecht, 2004; Cordery, 2004; Lencioni, 2003). Lencioni (2003) further asserts that building a team is difficult and what exacerbates the development is that “it demands substantial behavioural changes from individuals who are strong-willed and often set in their ways, having already accomplished great things in their careers” (p. 2). Teachers, when working collaboratively to make decisions about identification of barriers to learning or possible interventions, could respond in a similar fashion by trying not to question their colleagues’ competence about providing educational support services.

In the next section an overview of teacher support structures in schools internationally is provided.

3.5 TEACHER SUPPORT STRUCTURES IN SCHOOLS

Worldwide changes in education over the past few years have led to increased demands on school teachers. The introduction of inclusive education in South Africa has clearly positioned schools’ and teachers’ responsibilities towards learners who experience barriers to learning, in the context of a general legislative commitment towards greater

inclusion in ordinary schools. Inclusive education requires the development of ILSTs in every school. These structures make very specific new demands on teachers. Implementing inclusive structures, such as ILSTs, depends on collaboration amongst teachers, parents, and external support services. However collaborative teaming does not imply that the role of specialists are no longer required, but rather that it will equip teachers to better manage all learners (Bornman & Rose, 2010). It means that teachers too need to be able to work in environments that require knowledge and skills such as collaborative teaming, assessing learners, problem solving, and the ability to develop preventative programmes.

Common to all school-based problem-solving models is a series of stages that direct and focus problem-solving inquiries between team members and referring teachers. It is anticipated that various forms and models of these teams are likely to emerge in South Africa (SAND, 1997; 2001; Muthukrishna, 2001). The form it takes will depend on contextual factors in school communities. However, Johnson (1999) warns of some weaknesses in the approach of international models of ILSTs, i.e. the approach has traditionally been largely problem-oriented and the roles of team members predetermined. She suggests that South Africa should allow a more flexible approach to accommodate different school contexts. Internationally, various problem-solving models have emerged as a strategy for providing educational support for learners and teachers. These models are discussed in the next sections.

In 1987, the Department of Education in New Zealand established Support Teams within schools and their purpose was to assist and support regular teachers providing educational support for learners who experience barriers to learning in the ordinary class (Moore, Glynn & Gold, 1993). The ordinary teacher remained in control of curriculum delivery, with the Support Team providing collaborative assistance in assessing learners' needs, developing a suitable curriculum, implementation, and evaluation thereof. The team also served as a mechanism for collaboration amongst all school stakeholders. The Support Teacher was the key person of the Support Team and was allowed time away from classroom to manage Support Team requirements. Their main purpose was to empower teachers so that they could deal more effectively with learners who experience barriers to learning.

Moore, Glynn, and Gold (1993) conducted a survey exploring the integrity of established Support Teams in New Zealand schools. The survey reported that participants valued the presence of the Support Teacher and the Support Team. However, teachers' experiences revealed a number of barriers to implementation. The following trends in implementation were inconsistent with the model proposed: Support teachers were not democratically selected; one third were receiving no training for the position and had no regular meetings to support their work; many teachers were providing a pull-out system, lack of parental involvement was a challenge (Moore, Glynn & Gold, 1993). The authors believe that the Support Teams in New Zealand, "appear to play a vital part in preventing the Support Teacher consultation role from being eroded into pupil withdrawal and one-to-one remedial tutoring, often the preferred option of mainstream teachers" (Moore, Glynn & Gold, 1993, p. 201).

In the United States, the need for problem-solving teams using collaboration to provide support to teachers and learner management challenges are well documented (see Bahr & Kovalski, 2006; Chalfant & Pysh, 1989; Safran & Safran, 1996). Consequently many forms of school pre-referral consultation and intervention assistance teams have emerged (Bahr & Kovalski, 2006; Leonard & Leonard, 2003; Pugash & Johnson, 1989; Safran & Safran, 1996).

Chalfant, Pysh, and Moultrie (1979) were pioneers and developed the Teacher Assistance Team (TAT) concept. TATs were not mandated by policy but rather placed "the initiative for action squarely in the hands of the classroom teacher" (Chalfant et al., 1979, p. 88) which "emphasized collaborative problem solving, mainstream teacher ownership and immediate classroom assistance" (Safran & Safran, 1997, p. 195). Questionnaires completed by 96 first-year teams across the states were analysed, and the results showed that there was a reduction of referral and identification rates for special education eligibility, and that overall learner progress was positive. Most teachers found that teams were very or moderately effective. Principal support and team attributes were seen as the most important influences affecting team efficacy. Insufficient time, lack of useful intervention strategies, lack of readiness to initiate teams, and insufficient impact on learner performance were listed as constraints to teamwork (Chalfant & Pysh, 1989).

In contrast, pre-referral intervention teams (PITs) of the early 1980s emanated from mandated policy in the United States, and district office personnel provided the necessary direction for schools and teachers (Leonard & Leonard, 2003; Safran & Safran, 1996). TATs on the other hand, preferred a more flexible approach focusing on collaboration and the empowerment of teachers. PIT functions included providing educational support to teachers to cope with learners who are difficult to teach, and to prevent incorrect special education identification of learners. Similar to the TATs, several variables were identified as critical for change: principal support, availability of resources, sufficient time, openness to change, and consultation expertise (Safran & Safran, 1996; Sindelar et al., 1992).

In a qualitative study, Slonski-Fowler and Truscott (2004) found evidence that pre-referral intervention teams (PITs) were not accomplishing the goals prescribed for them, and not functioning as they should. Teachers lacked common purpose and training; they withdrew from the process when they felt their input not valued or if feedback was inadequate, unclear or inappropriate; or they experienced minimal follow-up after PIT meetings.

Research on Mainstream Assistance Teams (MATs), which are a form of pre-referral consultation, was conducted by Fuchs (Fuchs & Fuchs, 1990; 1992). The project was marked by a limited offering of interventions and a more prescriptive approach using written scripts to guide the consultants' verbal behaviour. It provided a predefined, limited choice of interventions. Findings revealed that this approach produced positive student gains and supported the effectiveness of the prescriptive approach. The results also suggested that teacher participation should be voluntary and that long-term and on-going staff development is critical. The consultants participating in both TATs and MATs received extensive training and technical assistance while resources were available as required. Safran and Safran (1996) argue that "without these elements, mandated pre-referral programs are an educational reform void of substance" (p. 7).

It becomes apparent that support structures in the literature vary in terms of how they are named. In addition, the services provided are influenced by the particular philosophical preferences of the advocates of each model (Safran & Safran, 1997). The

advocates of the TAT approach, for example, prefer teachers to take ownership of the process and the collaboration (Pugach & Johnson, 1989), while pre-referral intervention teams stress holistic and intervention effectiveness (Fuchs & Fuchs, 1992). Pre-referral is seen as a mandated step in the special education eligibility process while TATs prefer a less formalised teacher-helping-teacher approach, bringing in school managers and professionals only when necessary (Chalfant, Pysh & Moultrie, 1979; Safran & Safran, 1996). What remains common to all structures is the principle of collaboration. In South Africa, ILSTs are similar to PITs in that they are mandated by EWP6, and ILSTs take on a more formal approach than TATs. It becomes apparent that the role of ILSTs covers a spectrum of issues in which two or more heads are considered to be better than one.

3.6 CONCLUSION

Learners who experience barriers to learning, have now become the responsibility of the whole school community. In other words it has become a 'public issue' and is no longer a 'personal trouble' (Engelbrecht et al., 1996). Educational support structures are to be implemented at various levels, according to the EWP6 (DoE, 2001), and the ILST is one such structure established at all institutions, with the proposed operational approach being that of collaborative teaming. This chapter presented a review of the literature on collaboration in education. It also examined the conceptualisation of collaboration, the rationale for collaboration, and the teacher support structures found in schools.

Collaboration is frequently used and has been applied to educational support services in South Africa. However, it lacks a clear definition and is a misunderstood concept. Therefore, various characteristics and dimensions are merged in an attempt to define collaboration. The assumption that all teachers will spontaneously collaborate is problematic. Collaborative practices pose a threat, as teachers have not been adequately developed, are in the habit of working in isolation and perceive it as work intensification. Dissatisfaction with the practices of special education and the advent of education for all learners led to the beginning of teacher collaboration within the ambit of inclusive education. Notwithstanding its perceived positive effects, the potential of collaboration is challenged since it lacks consistent, and relevant empirical evidence to

support it. It was argued that collaboration is a worthy goal but it rarely succeeds due to the complexities of real teamwork. Various models and forms of teacher support structures in schools have emerged internationally. In South Africa it is referred to as ILSTs. Research suggests that teachers value the presence of support teams, however experienced a number of implementation challenges and most teachers did not take ownership of the process.

The next chapter explores relevant theories of change, teacher culture, and reculturing to frame teachers' provisioning of educational support in ILSTs in the context of inclusive education.

CHAPTER FOUR

RECURTURING FOR INCLUSIVE EDUCATIONAL SUPPORT

Policy ideas in the abstract...are subject to an infinite variety of contingencies, and they contain words of possible practical applications. What is in them depends on what is in us, and vice-versa. (Majone & Wildavsky in Spillane, Reiser & Reimer, 2002, p. 387)

4.1 INTRODUCTION

The previous chapters provided the rationale for the shift to inclusive education in South Africa. This study explores how teachers make sense of and experience ways of providing educational support through collaboration within the context of inclusive education. In this chapter I first provide a brief explanation of what a theoretical framework is, and its application to research. I then provide a brief on restructuring and change, teacher culture and reculturing.

Collaboration or collegiality is presumed to be a remedy for teacher uncertainty and is meant to assist teachers to cope with the complexities of multiple innovations. Like inclusion and support, most reform efforts promote the development of collaboration. I argue that this attempt ignores one very important aspect, namely the traditional culture of existing school structures which favours individualism. Also, not all collaborative efforts bring teachers together as some can actually divide, while others take the form of contrived collegiality as opposed to collaboration.

4.2 WHAT IS A THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK?

Every researcher enters fieldwork with some pre-existing ideas about a phenomenon being studied. Flinders and Mills (1993) assert that few researchers claim that they “...enter the field *tabula rasa*, unencumbered by notions of the phenomenon we seek to understand” (xi). For example, I have been working as a trainer and facilitator in the development and support of ILSTs at various schools in KwaZulu-Natal. This means that I have some previous experiential and philosophical knowledge about ILSTs which I bring into this study. It helps me decide where I will find the information, who are the

people that will provide the information, what is relevant to observe, and how what is going on, is to be named. What I bring into the study implicitly or explicitly affects all aspects of my study (Anfara & Mertz, 2006).

Theory, however, is a system of ideas that inform the research and represents a particular view of the world. Theory is used to explain and predict (Kerlinger, 1986; Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2007) why things happen as they do (Anfara & Mertz, 2006; Henning et al., 2004). Strauss (1995) notes that theory provides a map of why the world is the way it is. It is developed by using concepts, constructs, and propositions, and relating them to each other (Anfara & Mertz, 2006; Cohen et al, 2007; Henning, Van Rensburg & Smit, 2004). Anfara and Mertz (2006) define concepts as “words that we assign to events” (p. xv). At the most concrete level concepts cluster to form units of thought known as constructs. Expressions of relationships among many constructs are called propositions. Researchers use sets of propositions (not just one) that are logically related. It is the relationship of propositions that develops a theory. A useful theory is one that gives new insights and broadens understanding of a phenomenon.

A theoretical framework also positions research in a discipline or subject in which a researcher is working. A theoretical framework is like a lens through which the researcher views the world and the phenomenon under study. A theoretical framework “anchors your research in the literature” (Henning et al. 2004, p. 26) and facilitates the dialogue between the literature and the study. Various theoretical frameworks informed this study. They include restructuring (Deal & Peterson, 2009; Fullan & Stiegelbauer, 1991; Fullan 1992; 1993a; 1993b; 1996; 2000; 2001a; 2007), teacher cultures (Hargreaves, 1992a; 1992b; 1994), and reculturing (Doyle, 2001; Giles & Yates, 2011).

4.3 RESTRUCTURING AND CHANGE

I draw on Fullan & Stiegelbauer (1991) and Fullan’s work on school restructuring (2001a; 2007) in order to theorise the findings of my study. Restructuring includes “organisational arrangements, roles, finance and governance and formal policies that explicitly build in working conditions that, so to speak, support and press for

improvement” (Fullan & Stiegelbauer, 1991, p. 88). Fullan and Stiegelbauer list time for individual and team planning, staff development policies, defining new roles and school improvement procedures as examples of structural change at the school level which are conducive to improvement. They believe that while there is a strong conceptual rationale for restructuring schools, there is not much empirical evidence of its positive effects.

The introduction of inclusive education in South African schools implies a change in the way schools and schooling, learners and learning, teachers and teaching and educational support are perceived. Since 1996, South Africa has used conventional policy processes (i.e. top-down approaches), to bring about change in the education system. Attempts at restructuring involved a move from the previous separate and unequal education system to a single and equal education system for all. The limitations and impact of a dual education system for learners who experience barriers to learning led to the introduction of inclusive education, where the structures, strategies and people, especially teachers, are compelled to change.

Change in the entire schooling community is therefore crucial and any attempt at promoting inclusion will not succeed unless change is prioritised. EWP6 is underpinned by a theory of systemic educational change. Creating collaborative teams which is an essential feature of inclusive schools therefore means change in terms of restructuring, reculturing, and assigning new roles to all school stakeholders so that the needs of all learners are accommodated (Engelbrecht & Green, 2007). Collaboration should include teachers, parents, education support professionals, principals, education officials, and learners. They should be seen as equal role-players (Engelbrecht & Green, 2007; Hargreaves, 1994a; Snell & Janney, 2005; Sands, Kozleski, & French, 2000) and focus on collaborative partnerships, shared decision-making, planning, assessment, and learning.

Inclusive education research reveals that many proposals such as the establishment of ILSTs remain untried, get altered in the process, or are simply resisted (Dalin, 2005; Geldenhuys & Wevers, 2013). One important question is constantly asked: How can change best be brought about? The focus of this study is on implementation of ILSTs. Implementation is defined as a change from existing practice to a new practice (which

involves new material, new educational support practices, and new norms and values) in order to achieve better results in education (Fullan & Stiegelbauer, 1991; Fullan, 1993a). For learners who experience barriers to learning this means providing collaborative educational support.

The success of initiatives such as the establishment of collaborative structures is dependent on teachers' understanding and perceptions of it. Some may accept the change while others resist it. Corbett (2000, pp. 149-150) cites what two Canadian advocates for inclusive education said in an interview:

Inclusion is about change. Change is terrifying – for all of us – Change upsets us. It's scary. It's unpredictable. But since the issue is one of survival – about the Human Rights of individuals, we must do it anyway. We do not have the right to exclude anyone. Our fears are simply an obstacle to overcome. They cannot and must not be a reason to deny any person their rights.

This is equally applicable to the provision of educational support by teachers to the school community. However, change in providing educational support is complicated by differing contexts, and influenced by teachers' understanding of educational support within inclusion.

The approach to providing educational support requires more than a shallow shift; it involves a deconstruction and reconstruction of deep-seated assumptions, values, customs, and practices of the previous education system to one that promotes reform of the provision of educational support services (Doyle, 2001; Giles & Yates, 2011; Oswald, 2007). According to Slee (2004) it is imperative that teachers understand inclusive education to be much broader and not only about disability. Thus the provision of acceptable levels of education to all learners is not only dependent on the restructuring of schools, but also calls for the reculturing of teachers. This is even more significant to members of ILSTs who have to take on additional roles of providing educational support to the school community via a collaborative approach. The main focus of this study is teachers' understanding of the change process, their understanding of the policy shifts with regards to educational support, and the conditions for and barriers that shape the functioning of the ILSTs. Attempts at change are initially always resisted and are therefore a complex, challenging, and difficult task. How willing are teachers to

implement and accept inclusion? How willing are they to accept change in their roles and responsibilities? Will they be able to adequately provide support within the context in which they work?

To understand the success or failure of establishing a collaborative model of educational support in the three primary schools in this study, I reviewed the literature related to the nature, perspectives and context of change, and teachers as change agents in providing educational support through collaboration.

4.3.1 Nature, perspectives and context of change

The nature, perspectives, and context of change are provided to which collaboration within ILSTs is applied. I reviewed the literature on change as a means of explaining the success or failure of using collaborative teaming (Snell & Janney, 2005) in providing educational support to learners who experience barriers to learning in the three primary schools. This study assumes that the nature, perspectives of change, and school cultures in which it is implemented, influences the consequences, either positive or negative, of establishing collaborative structures such as ILSTs within the context of inclusive education (Evans, 1996; Fullan, 1993a). As a means of gaining insights about the possible challenges that teachers may experience in their efforts to implement ILSTs, it is important to understand the nature of the change itself, the perspectives of change, and the school culture and teacher cultures that may exert influences on the outcomes of restructuring efforts.

Educational change includes both organisational and human elements and involves transforming teachers' beliefs, commitments, and allegiance towards the change (Evans, 1996; Fullan, 2001b). Hargreaves (1994) defines the process of change as "the practices and procedures, the rules and relationships, the sociological and psychological mechanisms which shape the destiny of any change, whatever its content, and which lead it to prosper or falter" (p. 10). Most researchers agree that there are three phases involved in the process of change, i.e. initiation, implementation, and continuation (Fullan, 2001b; Stoll & Fink, 1996). Initiation prescribes what should happen in practice

while implementation and continuation are the degrees to which change actually happens and is sustained (Fullan, 2001b).

Change may seem like it is easily attained and straightforward; however, Fullan (1993a) speaks of the change process as complicated and challenging. He describes eight lessons learnt:

1. You Can't Mandate What Matters (The more complex the change, the less you can force it).
2. Change is a Journey, not a Blueprint (Change is non-linear, loaded with uncertainty and excitement and sometimes perverse).
3. Problems are Our friends (Problems are inevitable and you can't learn without them).
4. Vision and Strategic Planning Come Later (Premature visions and planning blind).
5. Individualism and Collectivism Must Have Equal Power (There are no one-sided solutions to isolation and group think).
6. Neither Centralization Nor Decentralization Works (Both top-down and bottom-up strategies are necessary).
7. Connection with the Wider Environment is Critical for Success (The best organizations learn externally as well as internally).
8. Every Person is a Change Agent (Change is too important to leave to the experts, personal mind-set and mastery is the ultimate protection). (Fullan, 1993a, pp. 21-22)

An additional component of the complexity is that people may promote for change and yet resist it. The notion of teachers as change agents (Evans, 1996; Fullan, 1993a, 1993b; Hanson, 1996) is presented in the next section.

4.3.1.1 The nature of implementing change

When planning and preparing for the implementation of changes such as collaboration, there are some essential elements that need to be considered to ensure that the

majority of teachers will accept rather than resist them (Evans, 1996; Fullan, 1993a; 2001). The literature on educational change suggests that attempts at restructuring are unsuccessful due to features associated with the nature of the change. Fullan (1993a; 2001) explains that the most successful way to begin implementation is to consider the relevance (interaction between need, clarity, and utility) and readiness (capacity and need); otherwise it will only be partially successful or not successful at all.

The first point is that the proposed change must be congruent with the prioritised needs of the schools in which the change is to be implemented. Teachers and other stakeholders often do not see the need for the proposed change as they are satisfied with what they are doing. Teachers may accept change more readily if they understand the negative aspects of what they have been doing (Evans, 1996). Through my experience as a researcher in the DANIDA pilot projects, for example, I found that the teachers recognised the need for a collaborative structure such as an ILST, although, in practice there was a lack of deep and meaningful interactions among and between teachers, which posed a barrier to collaboration.

The second point is that a lack of clarity or understanding of the innovation may become a problem when implementation occurs. Policies frequently translate into a general framework which does not provide sufficient guidelines and details for implementation. Sufficient professional development and clear communication about the changes should be provided for teachers. This study therefore explored the extent to which teachers understood providing educational support through collaboration. Given the way teachers were previously professionally developed and socialised into separate ordinary and special education roles I speculated that they would lack the capacity to provide educational support using a collaborative teaming approach.

A third characteristic which influences implementation is that change is easier when it is not too complex (Fullan, 1992; 2001; Senge, 1990). Providing educational support through collaboration requires major paradigm shifts for teachers. For example, they need to unlearn their previous practices that were informed by a medical perspective which promoted individualism, and shift their philosophy toward a new inclusive perspective that promotes collaboration. Teachers are also required to change their

perceptions about their roles within schools, their attitudes and beliefs about learners, and their skills in providing educational support. Unless teachers are provided with sufficient, adequate, and appropriate professional development they may find this task too complex.

The next section explains the different perspectives of understanding change.

4.3.1.2 Perspectives of understanding change

There are many perspectives of change in the literature (Dalin, 2005). However, three ways of understanding teachers' responses to change and reform offered here are technical, cultural, and political (Hargreaves, 2004; House, 1981; House & McQuillan, 1998). According to House (1981), the technological perspective assumes that teaching and innovations such as ILSTs are technologies with predictable solutions that can be transferred from one situation to another. The focus of this perspective is on the innovation itself, on its characteristics and component parts, and on its production and introduction as a technology. The fundamental theory of the technological perspective is that all teachers share a common interest in promoting the change (House, 1981).

Technical innovations such as ILSTs are seen as mechanical (Dalin, 2005; Hargreaves, 2004). In educational support reform, the technical perspective points to issues of establishment, organisation, guidelines, and skills in developing new ways of providing educational support. Moving from a medical perspective of providing educational support to inclusive education, one requires teachers to believe that working collaboratively provides more informed decisions than working individually and acquiring expertise in, for example, identification of barriers to learning, finding appropriate solutions, and critically reflecting on progress through collaboration within the ILST.

The political perspective emphasises issues of power, authority, and competing interests (House, 1981) that influence the veracity and appeal of the change process as well as the impact the change has on those they affect, such as teachers (Hargreaves, 2004). It broadens the focus to include interactions between an idea and the

organisations and environments that are taken up with it, rather than only paying attention to the quality of a particular innovation (Dalin, 2005).

According to House (1981), the cultural perspective allows an investigation of how innovations are interpreted and integrated in the social and cultural context of schools. He suggests that the innovation process is actually an interaction of cultures. House and McQuillan (1998) add that values and norms are crucial to the policy implementation process. The cultural perspective makes the assumption that group norms, rather than political or economic interests, determine the process of change unlike the political perspective which assumes a common set of values, presupposes a fragmented society, and assumes there is basic agreement on values within organisations and groups and less agreement between groups. The cultural perspective is useful in explaining how different teacher cultures affect the process of change and helps me understand how norms and values of the teachers in the study are formed, how their work is structured, how interpersonal relationships are developed and maintained, and how a particular idea for change is interpreted in the school.

Change which is initiated by teachers, from a felt need, has a chance to succeed; anything imposed on them without consultation could be rejected (Dalin, 2005). However, Hargreaves (1994) argues that the literature on change has largely been located within the cultural perspective which emphasises values, habits, norms, and beliefs. He identifies two problems in this position. First, it is presumed that all organisations have a culture. Second, the cultural perspective focuses on the content of shared beliefs and tends to neglect the patterns of relationships among its members. Hargreaves (1994) claims that, “[a] second perspective on human relationships that is less well represented in literature and research on educational administration is the micro-political perspective” (p. 190). He adds that it pushes people to differentiate between the different forms (cf. 3.4.1) collaboration can take. I therefore utilised a combination of micro-political and cultural perspectives in this study.

I utilised the micro-political framework to better understand the school culture which influences teachers’ perceptions, emotions, and practices regarding the change. Iannaccone (1975) describes *micro-politics of education* as taking into consideration the relationships and political beliefs of all the educational stakeholders within the school.

An important focus is how some individuals and groups can be disadvantaged by the advantaged group using control and pressure to fulfil their own interest (Hargreaves, 1994a; Hoyle, 1988). Hoyle asserts that teachers use formal and informal, explicit and implicit micro-political approaches in schools. Furthermore, Ball (1987) claims it is commonly found that there is more conflict among teachers than cooperation. Blase (1991) on the other hand, recognises that conflict *coexists* with cooperation within schools, and defines micro-politics as follows:

Micro-politics is the use of formal and informal power by individuals and groups to achieve their goals in organizations. In large part, political actions result from perceived differences between individuals and groups, coupled with the motivation to use power to influence and to protect. Although such actions are consciously motivated, any action, consciously or unconsciously motivated, may have political significance in a given situation. Furthermore, both cooperative and conflictive actions and processes are part of the realm of micropolitics. (p. 11)

This definition includes both formal and informal types of power (Blase & Blase, 2002). “Political significance includes both conflictive and cooperative-consensual behaviours and is reflected in individual and group behaviour as well as organizational structure” (Blase & Blase, 2002, p. 10). Political factors such as power due to position, policy, and cultural norms, can be consciously used by management to control or influence others.

Each of these perspectives provides useful lenses through which an innovation such as teachers providing educational support through collaboration can be explained in a way that is more critical, empowering, collaborative and reflective.

4.3.1.3 Context required for change

In South Africa, the local authorities of education include provincial and district offices. The provincial offices are tasked with leadership while the district office personnel are responsible for the management of change at school levels. Some district officials might however have insufficient understanding of the mind shifts required by the policies to be implemented. Fullan and Stiegelbauer (1991) argue that this results in frustration, wasted time, a sense of incompetence, a feeling of lack of support, and disappointment for teachers. Should teachers have negative experiences with previous attempts at

change, they are more likely to resist future attempts irrespective of the value of the new system. Teachers do not take change seriously unless education officials display, through their activities that it is. District officials are therefore key agents in demonstrating that they are serious about change, can provide the necessary support, and, very importantly, can monitor and evaluate progress in the attempts at change.

In their book titled, *Responding to challenges of inclusive education in southern Africa*, Engelbrecht and Green (2007) identify school culture, learning, relationships, leadership, emotions, support, monitoring, and evaluation as essential elements of educational change in the context of transformation towards inclusive education. These institutional factors, which include the culture of the school, play a crucial role in determining the extent to which ILST members can perform their work successfully or not. I add restructuring, agreeing with Fullan & Stiegelbauer (1991), that in any attempt at reform, altering the organisational arrangements and roles in schools, is essential. In the section that follows I present the elements that have a positive influence on change. School culture is an important building block for school improvement and change since it is deep-seated and dynamic and has powerful effects on teachers' thinking, feelings, and actions. Similarly, Sarason (1996) agrees that the force of the culture of a school is so strong that it can defeat efforts of change. Policy implementers, however, assume that cultures are the same in all schools, ignoring the dynamic nature of specific school cultures.

Implementing a new policy such as inclusive education requires many shifts in the thinking and practice of teachers. The teachers' roles are broadened to include a supportive role in addition to all the other roles they play in school. Inclusion thus requires further professional, personal, and organisational learning. A school that responds to change, such as inclusive education, and continually learns together and transforms itself within a supportive and self-created community, is referred to as a "learning organisation" (Dalin, 2005; Engelbrecht & Green, 2007, p. 109; Fullan & Stiegelbauer, 1991; Senge, 1990; 2007).

Senge (1990; 2007) mentions five essential elements of learning: systemic thinking, personal mastery, mental models, development of a common vision, and team learning.

Systemic thinking helps to understand the whole context in which teachers and schools are located, and not just bits of the whole. Senge (1990; 2007) describes personal mastery which refers to teachers being involved in deep and personal learning, as a positive influence for change. Mental models are the deeply entrenched understandings and assumptions that teachers possess which influence their perceptions and which could prevent them from choosing new alternatives. The development of a common vision is essential for learning. Team learning suggests a general learning situation in an organisation where members succeed in laying aside their own mental images, and think together. The process Senge (2007) has in mind is one in which there is a free exchange of opinions in team work which allows the group to discover new insights that no individual alone could achieve.

Professional development of teachers towards implementing educational support can be successful if it is combined with support and assistance during implementation (Fullan & Stiegelbauer, 1991). One-shot workshops are not very helpful. For example, during a comprehensive initiative (Resource and Educator Development Project, 2003) offered by the Danish government to develop 16 primary schools in the rural areas of KwaZulu-Natal, a cascade model was used. A small number of teachers and officials (members of ILSTs and district officials) were professionally developed, and then had to present the information to their colleagues. Unfortunately, in most schools and district offices this cascade approach was not successful (Ntombela, 2006). Problems emerged: the message was distorted as it got passed down and had a negative impact on the understanding and skills acquired by the majority of teachers. The major challenge is that ILSTs are established within the existing complexities of the way schools are managed i.e. they are individualistic, hierarchical, and operate under turbulent conditions. The nature of the support can include

.... direct classroom support, workshops and conferences; providing time for planning and consultation; continued teacher development and teacher learning (professional development); building of trust and an appropriate climate for shared and individual learning; recognition of development and celebration of successes; creating access to financial resources, equipment and materials; keeping staff informed of the latest research findings (sharing knowledge); providing opportunities to visit other schools and observe other teachers; providing positive and meaningful feedback; and using teachers' ideas to encourage colleagues. (Engelbrecht & Green, 2007, p. 116)

Teachers must be allowed the opportunity to work with the proposed change, and engage in critical reflection to develop new beliefs, expertise, and practices. It is only during implementation that teachers will experience specific doubts and concerns, and it is then when interaction is needed. Practicing a new idea, observing role models in action, meeting with implementers, and practising the new behaviour allows teachers to get the meaning of the change more clearly (Fullan & Stiegelbauer, 1991).

Change and emotion are inseparable, according to Hargreaves (2004). Emotions play an important part in the change process since change is about people. Day (2004) believes that passion gives teachers energy, enthusiasm, and commitment and is often associated with caring, inclusivity, and courage. Passionate, caring teachers will stay on course and focus on the purpose of the change. However, any change process brings with it uncomfortable feelings of panic, fear, inadequacy, frustration, loss, anxiety, and incompetence. Acknowledging and managing these feelings can lead to deep learning. If these feelings are not dealt with appropriately, they can become barriers to the change process. This is common when there are multiple innovations being implemented simultaneously. It becomes impossible for teachers to feel competent and in due course they lose energy and hope. Many teachers might then choose to remain in their comfort zones where they experience a sense of security. Building strong, positive relationships should help teachers deal with the emotional dimensions associated with change (Day, 2004).

Relationships in schools are multidimensional since they involve multiple systems such as school and teacher collaboration with other teachers, learners, parents, local communities, service providers, and education officials. Change on a relationship level requires improving interpersonal, intrapersonal, and social processes in the school. Hinde (2003) offers the following guidelines for fostering relationships among school personnel during the change process: teachers need to talk to each other about reform initiatives; teachers need contact with colleagues who are in similar situations and involved in similar reforms; collegial discussions should be facilitated keeping the focus on constructive, goal-oriented action; facilitators need to encourage relationships with and between supporters and detractors to confront difference early in the change process. Collaboration is the new kind of professionalism that connects individual

teachers with others in their school communities. The underlying assumption of collaboration is that different skills, viewpoints, and experiences add to the growth potential of the interactions. Collaboration will be dealt with in more detail in the section on 'teacher cultures'.

Many researchers (Fullan 1993a; 2001; 2005; Fullan, Cuttress & Kilcher, 2005; Hopkins, Ainscow & West, 1994; Leithwood, 2007) believe that leadership is the key to school improvement and change. In keeping with that, the policy on inclusion in South Africa also regards leadership as the key mechanism in the implementation process (DoE, 2002a). Current leadership theories such as transformational and distributed leadership challenge previous beliefs that principals are the only leaders in the school. The successful implementation of externally prescribed reform efforts such as inclusion requires transformational leadership. Transformational leaders inspire positive change in those that follow, are involved in the process and ensure that all that follow will succeed (Cherry, 2013).

Ironically Leithwood (2007) argues the problem is that while theory and evidence have begun to suggest transformational approaches to leadership are most suitable to the challenges teachers face, the policy environment in which they work largely supports the continuation of transactional practices. Transactional approaches are fixed in bureaucratic and hierarchical forms of organisation, designed to promote rational and transparent decision making. However, transformational leadership assumes that leadership should focus on developing learning capacity in a manner that encourages experimentation and learning from mistakes, and on changing the cultural contexts in which educators teach and learners learn (Engelbrecht & Green, 2007).

The success of implementation depends on effective gathering of information at both school and district levels, and evaluating how well or poorly (Fullan & Stiegelbauer, 1991, p. 87) a change is progressing. Louis and Miles (in Fullan & Stiegelbauer, 1991) state that in their research ineffective schools used superficial survival strategies such as avoiding the change, denying it, or delaying the implementation, while successful schools engaged in meaningful problem solving towards improvements, generating new roles, and providing extra support and time. In the early stages of implementation

people are usually wary of collecting information, but once it is underway they are keen to gather and examine the results of their efforts.

4.3.2 Teachers as enactors of change

Collaboration is difficult and often problematic (Hargreaves, 1995) to achieve. For example it could disrupt the interests, careers, and identities of teachers and possibly create conflict. However, conflict is a necessary part of change and leaders and teachers need to plan to find constructive ways to work through conflict for the sake of educational reform. The introduction of collaboration as a strategy of teacher development and school improvements calls for important changes in the context of teaching and teachers. Teachers are the primary agents through which collaboration can become a reality within the school context (Fullan, 2001b; Hargreaves, 1994a; 1995; Smit, 2001) and are on the 'frontline' of policy implementation which includes restructuring or transforming schools and classrooms. Grimmer (1995, p. 114) aptly describes the teachers' work context as "constantly in a state of flux and frequently subject to the competing emphases of policy that, in the final analysis, may be on a collision course".

To create a better understanding of the culture of teachers, it is important to turn to the socialisation of teachers in the South African context. This will assist in explaining how they respond to the current wave of restructuring efforts of the present democratic governance structures. From 1949 to 1960, teacher training colleges in South Africa were separated according to race and fundamental pedagogics was used as the organising principle (Abrahams, 1997). This promoted an education system based on Christian national education which perceived children as dependent, in need of help, and seeking help because they are incompetent, ignorant, unskilled, irresponsible, and undisciplined. The dominant value emanating from this kind of teacher training was authoritarianism. Hartshorne (cited in Abrahams, 1997) argues that they produced trained craftsmen, rather than educated men and women. Teacher education was separated into general and specialised education, with the provision of a second system for learners experiencing special needs (SAND, 1997; Walton, 2011) (cf. 2.4).

The 1990s saw the role of the teacher change to one of ‘reconstructionist’ and enactor of change. Outcomes-Based Education (OBE) required teachers to become curriculum developers. They were forced to plan learning programmes, be observant and insightful of learners’ contexts, and support learners appropriately so that all learners were able to achieve nationally regulated learning outcomes. This led to numerous organisational tasks which increased the workload of teachers. Continuous Assessment (CASS) required teachers to constantly follow the development of their learners as a way of providing them with ‘formative feedback’ about their learning (DoE, 1995). Teachers got so involved with ‘assessment’ and ‘portfolios’ that the job of ‘teaching’ was sidelined.

The Norms and Standards for teachers (DoE, 2001) introduced the roles of a South African teacher. It has subsequently been replaced by “The National Qualifications Framework Act: Policy on minimum requirements for teacher education qualifications” (DBE, 2011) which “retains the seven roles, but emphasises that the roles must be interpreted as functions carried out by the collective of teacher in a specific school” (DBE, 2011, p. 7). The seven teacher roles listed serves as a description of what it means to be a competent teacher:

- Learning mediator
- Interpreter and designer of learning programmes
- Leader, administrator, and manager
- Scholar, researcher, and lifelong learner
- Community, citizenship and pastoral role
- Assessor
- Learning area/subject discipline/phase specialist. (DoE, 2000, pp6-7)

These teacher roles expand the traditional ‘academic’ role to include a ‘social welfare’ role as well. Morrow (2007) contends that these seven roles ignore the contexts in which teachers work and thus result in exacerbating their workloads.

The discussion above provides insight into the changing context in which teachers find themselves which does not display promises for inclusive education (DoE, 2001). In addition to teachers becoming curriculum developers, they also have to function as providers of educational support in their school communities. Naicker (1999)

recognises the enormity of the task and acknowledges that a change of this nature will result in widespread scepticism among teachers as they work in an environment which lacks resources.

Policy implementation thus creates numerous demands on teachers in terms of knowledge, skills, and attitudes. In reality policy cannot mandate the most important factor supporting change; what matters is the will to embrace policy objectives and the capacity of teachers to implement the planned change (Fullan, 2001b; McLaughlin, 1990). Furthermore, it is the teachers who make choices about how to translate policy imperatives into practice through subjective realities of their understanding/interpretations and experiences which determine the outcomes. Bowe, Ball, and Gold (1992, p. 22) elaborate on this:

Practitioners do not confront policy texts as naive readers; they come from histories, with experience, with values and purposes of their own, and they have vested interests in the meaning of policy. Policies will be interpreted differently as the histories, experiences, values, purposes and interests which make up the arena differ. The simple point is that policy writers cannot control the meanings of their texts. Part of their texts will be rejected, selected out, ignored, deliberately misunderstood, responses may be frivolous.

In addition teachers' "...responses will be the result of contested interpretations" (Bowe et al, 1992, p. 23) or reconstructed, and different from the forceful position of policy change (Smit, 2001). Research conducted by Weatherly and Lipsky (1997) on the implementation of an innovative special education law in the state of Massachusetts also reveal that implementers of policy must be aware that teachers exercise discretion in setting their work priorities. It was found that teachers used coping mechanisms to manage the demands of their jobs and they felt constrained, and distorted the implementation of the special education law. It is essential to understand the subjective world of teachers as this is what influences their understanding, through assumptions and perceptions, and experiences of the intended change (Fullan, 2001b). This has repercussions on the potential for realising the educational goals created by policy. The powerful role of teachers in the process of educational change cannot be underestimated by policy makers.

In this section on restructuring as a theoretical framework, I have discussed the nature of change, the perspectives of understanding change, the context required for change, and teachers as change agents. In the next section I discuss teacher cultures.

4.4 TEACHER CULTURES

A second framework I draw on to theorise the findings is that of teacher cultures, particularly according to Hargreaves (1994). Teacher cultures provide a context in which certain approaches to teaching and educational support are developed, continued, and chosen over a period of time. Teacher cultures are “made up of beliefs, values, habits and assumed ways of doing things among communities of teachers who have had to deal with similar demands and constraints over many years” (Hargreaves, 1994a, p. 165). These cultures frame what teachers do in terms of their preferences and strategies, for example providing educational support. How they provide educational support is powerfully affected by their attitudes, principles, practices, and ways of doing things with other teachers with whom they work. Reculturing needs to occur before or simultaneously with changing the way teachers work with each other.

In exploring the realities of school support teams using teachers’ experiences at primary schools, I take a critical stance in order to understand and show that collaboration as a 'culture' can take many forms. Internationally theorists have included collaboration as an important concept in the features of successful inclusive reforms (Bornman & Rose, 2010; DoE, 2001, 2002a; Iano, 2002). Similarly, collaboration is the main approach proposed by policy imperatives in South Africa. Hargreaves (1994, p. 165) notes that “If we want to understand what a teacher does and why the teacher does it, we must therefore also understand the teaching community, the work culture of which the teacher is a part.”

4.4.1 A continuum of forms of teacher cultures

Forms of teacher cultures consist of distinguishing “patterns of relationship” and “forms of association” as expressed in associations between teachers and their colleagues. Hargreaves (1992a; 1992b; 1994) categorises forms of teacher cultures along a

continuum into four broad types: culture of individualism, culture of balkanisation, culture of collaboration, and culture of contrived collegiality.

4.4.1.1 Culture of individualism (non-collaborative)

Research illustrates that in schools where individualism is the norm, teachers have little interaction with their colleagues (Little, 1982; Hargreaves, 1994a). The organisation and structure of schools may also strengthen the isolation of teachers (Hargreaves, 1994a; Kutsyuruba, 2008). Individualism is understood “as a shortcoming, not a strength; a problem, not a possibility; something to be removed rather than something to be respected” (Hargreaves, 1994a, p. 171). Strong opposition to individualism remains intact in the education sector by proponents of school effectiveness and school improvement movements. Hargreaves identified three determinants of individualism in a preparation time study which was conducted in a range of schools in two districts in Ontario, Canada. Preparation time provided teachers with the opportunity to meet and consult with colleagues during the school day to plan their teaching. The determinants were identified as constrained, strategic, and elective individualism.

Constrained individualism occurs when teachers choose to work alone because of organisational or contextual limitations which may present obstructions to collaboration. These limitations include authoritarian management style, separate classrooms, lack of and inadequate space in which teachers can collaborate, lack of substitute teachers, excessive number of learners in classrooms, and tightly structured timetables which do not provide space for collaboration (Hargreaves, 1994a).

Strategic individualism may be the result of teachers’ workloads in which case it is tactical; teachers choose to remain in their classrooms because of the demands for accountability, and for changes in the way they organise their teaching with regard to the growing number of learners experiencing barriers to learning in ordinary classrooms (Hargreaves, 1994a, p. 172).

Elective individualism explains “patterns of working that are preferred on pedagogical and personal grounds more than on grounds of obligation, lack of opportunity, or efficient expenditure of effort” (Hargreaves, 1994a, p. 173). Elective individualism

comprises three closely interrelated themes: *personal care, individuality, and solitude*. These themes are often unseen and misunderstood, and are perceived as individualism. They provide useful ways for understanding the reasons for teacher choice to work alone rather than to collaborate with colleagues.

The first reason why teachers prefer individualism is personal care, which is caring for and working with children. This provides the greatest satisfaction for primary school teachers (Hargreaves, 1994a). Gilligan (1982) calls this an *ethic of care* which is commonly present in female teachers, but not limited to them. This commitment to the ethic of care also attracts female teachers to primary school teaching. When structural changes are required, Hargreaves (1994) asserts it should be presented to teachers in a way that represents an ethic of care rather than an *ethic of responsibility*, which is perceived as being imposed rather than for the benefit of learners.

In Hargreaves' (1994) preparation time study, when teachers were required to collaborate with special education resource teachers, they felt that for the time to be well spent there had to be people who had the required skills and knowledge to share ideas with. The teachers also displayed anxiety that learners' work would be disrupted and that they might lose contact with them. In addition they perceived working with learners more profitable use of time than collaborating with colleagues. The challenge lies in convincing teachers that working with colleagues can be beneficial to learners and useful to them as well.

According to Hargreaves (1994) individuality is the second reason why teachers prefer to work in isolation. Individuality also accounts for *elective individualism*. Individuality surfaces when teachers feel that their ability to make decisions about learners is threatened. It is therefore important to ensure that opportunities for independence and initiative on the part of teachers is not threatened during teamwork and collaboration as this will cause them to resist rather than embrace the latter. When teachers are forced by legislation to implement innovations that are not clearly understood by them, they also feel a sense of incompetence and ineffectiveness. For example, Hargreaves's preparation time study revealed that teachers expressed frustration when important questions regarding an innovation were not addressed at in-service training workshops.

One teacher described the way in which a principal of her school acted autocratically and which posed a threat to her sense of competence and professionalism – as opposed to the principal in her new school who appreciated her independence and judgement by recognising that she can make valuable contributions. She felt that the latter trusted her professionalism.

The third reason why individualism is preferred is *solitude*. Some teachers just enjoy being alone, while others work better when collaborating. Hargreaves (1994) argues that an inclination toward solitude displays qualities of intellectual maturity. Hargreaves however declares that if most teachers in a school have a preference for isolation, this might indicate a problem in the system where teachers are withdrawing from unsatisfactory working relationships. On the other hand, if isolation is preferred by a few teachers and not all the time, it should not be viewed as negative.

4.4.1.2 Culture of balkanisation

Balkanisation is the kind of collaboration that can divide (Hargreaves, 1994a). It has negative consequences for student and teacher learning. It is a teacher culture where teachers “attach their loyalties and identities to particular groups of their colleagues” (Hargreaves, 1992a, p. 223). For example in South Africa, teachers in primary schools work in learning area committees, special needs units (ILSTs), or junior primary phases. These groups have strong status associations that can give rise to hostility and competition between teacher groups. This is referred to as balkanisation. It separates teachers into protected and competing sub-groups within a school. An interesting finding from research conducted by Gut, Oswald, Leal, Frederiksen and Gustafson (2003) confirms that traditional departmental barriers exist in higher education and suggests that a more collaborative atmosphere of shared decision making and open communication is required for inclusion. This is equally applicable in primary schools. Hargreaves identifies four characteristics of balkanisation: “low permeability, high permanence, personal identification, and political complexion” (pp. 213-214).

Balkanisation consists of sub-groups whose existence and memberships are defined with clear boundaries between them, giving these sub-groups low permeability. Once

established, the sub-groups become permanent and few teachers move between groups. Within balkanised cultures, teachers nurture a particular culture which may be restricting and distinct from other small committees. Socialisation into particular sub-groups constructs teachers' identities in particular ways and adds sets of assumptions, widely shared in the sub-groups, about the nature of learning, about workable strategies, and about student grouping. This singular identification with particular sub-groups undermines the capacity for empathy and collaboration with others. Finally, balkanised cultures have a political complexion and promote competition for resources and status among teachers. Teachers of some subjects are allocated more resources than teachers of other subjects. Whether they are visible or not, the dynamics of power and self-interest are major determinants of how teachers behave as communities (Hargreaves, 1994a).

When innovations are introduced, teachers are often divided into supporters who will benefit and opponents who will suffer. Teachers are schools' best resources for change and balkanised departmental structures tend to deplete resources by insulating and isolating them (Hargreaves, 1994a). For example, Hargreaves explains the case of special education teachers whose classes are located in a distant part of the school. The teachers are marginalised and rarely socialise with others in the staffroom. This has implications for change towards effective inclusion of 'special needs' students into the ordinary life of the school. It is also a barrier to informal staff relations and understanding which support the formal business of consultancy between special needs teachers and their colleagues as schools try to make inclusion work.

4.4.1.3 Culture of collaboration

Collaboration and collegiality are seen as fostering teacher development and supporting implementation of change initiatives from the Ministry of Education (Hargreaves, 1992b; 1994). The drive for collaboration has never been greater in schools than today. With the inclusion of learners experiencing barriers to learning, ordinary teachers are supposed to consult with a large network of adults to provide programme support for students. Thus the work of teachers becomes considerably more skilled and complex.

Hargreaves (1994) further draws a distinction between collaborative cultures and contrived collegiality.

Collaboration is said to occur in two different formats, namely “sit-down” or “on-the-fly” meetings (Snell & Janney, 2005, p. 57). A sit-down meeting is referred to by Hargreaves (1994, p. 186) as “contrived collegiality”. Contrived collegiality according to various researchers and policy displays the following characteristics, work is done on accepted mandated initiatives; time, meetings, and planning sessions are scheduled; agendas are planned; written notes e.g. minutes are taken; it is a problem-solving process, and it is less often scheduled (DoE, 2001; 2002a; Hargreaves, 1994a; Snell & Janney, 2005).

On the other hand, teachers also work together in brief yet frequent informal encounters (Hargreaves, 1994a), in what Snell and Janney refer to as on-the-fly-meetings which is characterised by collaborations that develop from and are maintained by the teachers. According to Hargreaves these meetings can be described as, teachers managing the process; teachers working together to develop their own initiatives, and teachers deciding to collaborate on their own without external pressure. Hargreaves as well as Snell and Janney (2005) agree that the following are common to the ways in which they conceptualise on-the-fly meetings, times and locations are not fixed; the agendas are informal; no written minutes required; they are scheduled more often.

Snell and Janney (2005) suggest that both formats are necessary, and promote 'on-the-fly' meetings as complementary to 'sit-down meetings'. The main focus of the meetings should typically relate to checking on learner progress and the implementation of team decisions. 'Sit-down' and 'on-the-fly' meetings share common characteristics, namely teachers must be encouraged to make contributions and suggestions, there must be positive interdependence and mutual respect between members, and teachers must develop a sense of trust so that they can interact freely. The success of the collaborative effort lies in the attainment of the abovementioned requirements.

Hargreaves (1992b) and Scruggs, Mastropieri, and McDuffie (2007) state that existing research suggests the culture of collaboration in schools is a rarity, that it is difficult to

create, and even more difficult to sustain. This is a result of clashes with all the pressures and constraints that come with teachers' work (Little, 1982). The preferred cultures of teaching are not compatible with the existing context of teachers' work, which restricts the possibilities and scope of collaborations.

Traditionally, teachers have no scheduled time away from their classes to work and plan with their colleagues. Consultations occur after school, or casually between classes, at recess, or over lunch. Such conditions are not conducive to sustained collaboration. Where it has been achieved, it is through tremendous investments of energy and commitment. Leadership also plays an important role as can be seen from principals' actions: frequent praise, providing their staff with incentives, issuing personal notes and being visible around the school, teaching classes, making time available for collaboration, willingly giving and asking for advice when needed from teachers, and bringing the school and community together (Hargreaves, 1994a). Dispersion of leadership and responsibility also helps; playing down formal differences of status and showing trust in the skills, expertise, and professional judgement of all teachers. Collaborative cultures are slow to evolve, but patience helps to make it possible (Hargreaves, 1992b).

In circumstances such as these, a particular culture of collaboration develops. Hargreaves (1992b; 1994) calls this 'bounded collaboration' or 'comfortable collaboration'. Bounded collaboration is collaboration which is restricted in scale, frequency, or persistence, and does not change teachers' values, beliefs, or practice. This kind of collaboration is fleeting and to the detriment of bringing about more permanent attempts at collaboration. It limits the extent of teachers' efforts at collaboration and can be symbolic and shallow with teachers not engaging with each other in any meaningful way (Fullan & Hargreaves 1996; Kutsyuruba, 2008; Little, 2002).

The common route that schools adopt to move from an individualised or balkanised teacher culture to collaboration is one which Hargreaves (1992a; 1994) calls contrived collegiality.

4.4.1.4 Culture of contrived collegiality

Contrived collegiality occurs where policy makers, not teachers, determine the form of collaboration (Hargreaves 1992a, 1994b; Kinsler & Gamble, 2001). Collaboration becomes compulsory and teachers are required or “persuaded” (Hargreaves, 1994a, p. 195) to execute the directives of others e.g. the principal, school district, or Ministry. In these cases collegial cooperation is closely bound up with managerial cooptation.

In contrived collegiality teachers’ work is limited to take place at specified time and places. It is a way in which cooperation is secured by contrivance and control over its purposes, and regulation of the times and placements which are designed to increase the predictability of teacher collegiality as well as its outcomes. Hargreaves (1994) describes the experiences of teachers who had to consult with special education resource teachers at particular times each week. It was seen by many teachers as unhelpfully inflexible, and as unresponsive to the changing needs of the students, the programme, the teachers, and the classrooms. They emphasised the importance of meeting when there was a need to meet, and when there was a purpose for meeting. Some teachers felt that setting aside time was useful and convenient, but most felt that they should only meet if and when the need arises. This situation points to the heavily contextualised nature of teachers’ work. Consultations should thus be set for tasks rather than at regular times. This creates greater flexibility and discretion regarding how and when teachers meet.

In contrast to collaboration, contrived collegiality displays the following features:

- Working together does not evolve spontaneously but results from administrative regulation
- Teachers are required to work together to meet the mandates of others
- Takes place at particular times in particular places
- Control over purposes and regulation of time are designed to produce highly predictable outcomes. (Hargreaves 1994, pp. 195–196)

In other words, contrived collegiality “replaces spontaneous, unpredictable, and difficult-to-control forms of teacher-generated collaboration with forms of collaboration

that are captured, contained, and contrived by administrators instead” (Hargreaves 1994, p. 196).

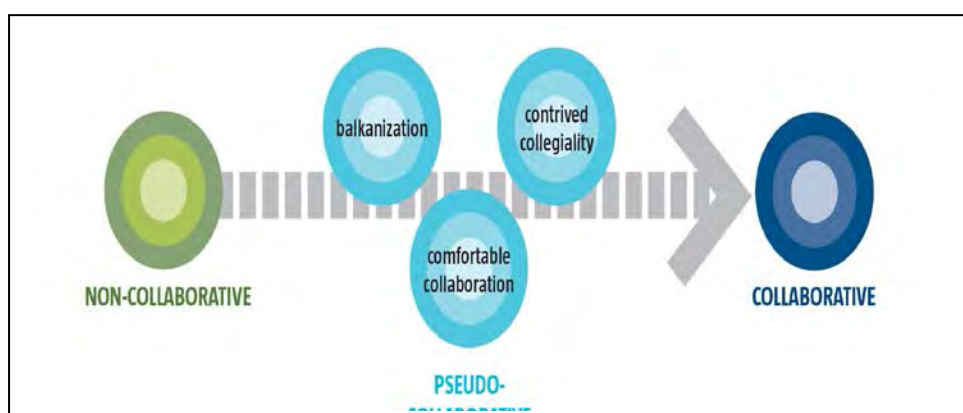
Contrived collegiality is commonly found in political systems that impose change on teachers, and that task them with implementation, while bureaucrats preserve the responsibility for the development of change initiatives. In other words, planning remains separated from implementation. The issues underlying contrived collegiality need to be addressed by school systems and education systems at the highest level. Attempts at restructuring will result in little success unless teachers are acknowledged as part of the process of planning and implementing change (Hargreaves, 1994a).

Hargreaves (1994) suggests that the expertise of members of a collaborative team must not be seen as sharing among the skilled and the less skilled, but among communities of professionals committed to continuous improvement. Consultations about learners who experience barriers to learning should be set for the task rather than the time, creating greater flexibility and discretion regarding how and when teachers meet. Contrived collegiality may not necessarily encourage significant and more rewarding loyalty found in collaborative settings (Kutsyuruba, 2008); however, it is useful as an initial stage in setting up more lasting collaborations among teachers.

Kutsyuruba (2008), in his study used Hargreaves’ (1994) forms of teacher cultures and imposed collaboration over it to illustrate types of school culture. He illustrates non-collaborative and collaborative as two ends of a continuum, with pseudo-collaborative culture containing features of both. I have adapted Katsyuyruba’s (2008) illustration to demonstrate collaboration within cultures of teaching.

FIGURE 4 2: Forms of teacher cultures

Adapted from Kutsyuruba (2008, p. 72)



Non-collaborative cultures: Lortie (in Kutsyuruba, 2008) and Hargreaves (1994) describe non-collaborative cultures as preferring individualism with little interest in change. This type of teacher culture reflects little, if any kind of collaboration.

Pseudo-collaborative cultures: Pseudo-collaborative cultures could contain features of non-collaborative and collaborative cultures. “The mere existence of collaboration should not be mistaken for a thoroughgoing *culture* of it” (Fullan & Hargreaves, 1996, p. 52). Teachers in pseudo-collaborative cultures may interact more with their colleagues however they still lack meaningful collaboration. These types of teacher cultures pose threats to efforts at collaboration.

Collaborative cultures: Collaborative cultures are the preferred type of teacher cultures to work toward. Collaborative cultures are effective and contain the following features: teachers share a common intention, the stress is on sustainable development, and they promote groups of professionals who share problems, information, resources, and solutions (Kutsyuruba, 2008). True collaborative cultures maintain meaningful interactions between school stakeholders.

4.5 RECULTURING

A third theoretical framework useful to this study is that of reculturing, which is described as a

...process of developing new values, beliefs and norms. In particular for systemic reform it involves new conceptions about instruction (e.g., teaching for understanding, portrayal of student performance), and new forms of professionalism for teachers (commitment to continuous learning and problem solving through collaboration). (Fullan, 1996, p. 9)

What this means is that teachers need to change the way they think about schools, their roles, providing educational support, and student abilities and performance. Reculturing involves changing the dynamics of groups and the ability of individuals to self-assess and re-assess (Deal & Peterson, 2009; Doyle, 2001; Giles & Yates, 2011). Carrington and Elkins (2002) describe the process aptly when they affirm that:

The values and beliefs embedded in more inclusive practices create a new set of possibilities, expectations and commitments. This change will demand a series of deconstructions and reconstructions of beliefs and knowledge, rather than transformations of traditional beliefs, knowledge and practices. (p. 14)

The quote implies that inclusion requires more than mere transformation; it requires deconstruction and reconstruction of beliefs and knowledge about inclusion and the provision of support. This is a fundamental requirement given the way in which people, including teachers, have been socialised in terms of their belief systems about how support gets provided to learners, who provides the support, who takes ownership of the problem, the perceptions of learning difficulties, the barriers to learning and development, and learning disabilities. Schools need to adapt to change through continuous learning for teachers and learners.

This notion of reculturing is used to explore whether teachers, through their professional development, have been able to unlearn their previous understandings and assumptions which may or may not have been compatible with the philosophy of inclusion and the provision of support.

Developing 'collaborative teaming' as required by inclusion is an innovation that restructures schools using systemic reform strategies (DoE, 2001; 2002a) to ensure that learners experiencing barriers to learning become an essential part of ordinary education (Fullan, 1996; Doyle, 2001). However, efforts at restructuring have been marked with mixed success. The literature on theories of change (Deal & Peterson, 2009; Doyle, 2001; Fullan & Stiegelbauer, 1991; Fullan, 1993a, 2001; Giles & Yates, 2011) indicates that reculturing is as important as restructuring. Fullan (1993a) contends that when reculturing occurs, restructuring follows, but the opposite is not always true. A school's culture is formed by the assumptions, values, and beliefs that prevail among its teachers and defines how things are done (Bolman & Deal, 1991). Educational leaders need to re-culture their contexts (Deal & Peterson, 2009; Fullan & Stiegelbauer, 1991; Fullan, 2001b; Giles & Yates, 2011) which involves: "transforming the culture – changing the way we do things around here" (Fullan, 2001b, p. 44). It should be "a particular kind of reculturing ... that activates and deepens moral purpose..." (Fullan, 2001b, p. 44) and not just superficial change in structures (Fullan, 1993a; Doyle, 2001; Giles & Yates, 2011).

School change is systemic (Engelbrecht & Green, 2007; Morrison, 1998; Sarason, 1996). According to Sarason the systemic perspective avoids blaming individuals and groups as if they have willed the situation in which they find themselves. In keeping with systemic thinking, Engelbrecht and Green concur that what happens in one part of the education system (e.g. the school district) influences another (e.g. the school). Therefore all systems need to be understood and considered before attempting to change a school or teacher culture. They add that sometimes a reculturing of the school district may be required as well as the school personnel. For any change to be successful Engelbrecht and Green's view that the cultures of the district, the school, and the teachers must be aligned, holds true. This will help facilitate the change process and support it.

Furthermore, one of the lessons learnt from systemic reform is to find ways that will encourage the majority of teachers toward change (Fullan, 1996). He argues that systems however, tend to maintain the *status quo* instead of changing it. Research reflects that trying to bring about change through restructuring only, does not work (Deal & Peterson, 2009; Fullan, 1996; Doyle, 2001). Systemic educational change

recognises the interrelatedness of all parts of the education system (DoE, 2001; 2002a; Donald, Lazarus & Lolwana, 2010; Engelbrecht & Green, 2007; Fullan, 1996; Morrison, 1998; Mphahlele, 1999; Sarason, 1996). Restructuring and reculturing should occur simultaneously. A reculturing approach that promotes cooperative relationships between teachers and fellow teachers, teachers and learners, teachers and administrators, and teachers and parents is necessary. Additionally, centralised organisation should be replaced by team organisation, autocratic leadership by shared leadership, centralised control by autonomy with accountability, compliance by initiative, one-way communication by networking, and representative democracy by participative democracy (Mphahlele, 1999, p. 7). Thus complete reform is useful for developing coherence, collegiality, and direction in restructuring processes such as the development of ILSTs in primary schools. However, the impact of change cannot be underestimated; it is complex and requires developing teachers' capacity for change. Implementation of educational innovations might be simple but it is a socially complex process (Fullan, 1992).

Reculturing is therefore viewed as a strategy that will bring about change in large numbers of teachers as it takes the individual at the level of implementation into consideration.

4.6 TEACHER CULTURES AND CHANGE

An individualistic teacher culture, it is argued, is still the most persistent of all forms of teacher cultures (Deal & Peterson, 2009; Giles & Yates, 2011; Hargreaves, 1992a; Sarason, 1996). In individualised and balkanised cultures teachers work in separate and sometimes competing groups; this is a kind of collaboration that divides. Most teachers work in schools where these two forms of cultures coexist. They may plan and develop in their subject departments but rarely co-operate on issues that threaten their classroom autonomy, or issues that may open up their practice to intrusive inspection. The combination of individualism and balkanisation offers little opportunity for educational change and professional development. It also inhibits teachers' responsiveness to externally imposed innovations. Teachers tend to protect their classrooms and departmental domains which new programmes often appear to

threaten. This combination of cultures does not suit either the top-down or bottom-up models of change. Hence the unanimous support for developing greater collaboration and collegiality among teachers, as it is believed to enhance the potential for both school-centred innovation and externally imposed implementation. However, the intentions and effects are very different in both cases. On the one hand, school-centred innovation is interested in teacher professionalism, and supports professional empowerment of teachers. On the other hand externally imposed innovation is more suited to policy implementers who regulate and reconstitute teachers' collegial relations in line with bureaucratic purposes. This situation de-professionalises and disempowers teachers into uncritically implementing the decisions of policy makers (Hargreaves, 1992a).

Collaborative cultures provide the most suitable environment for change. They promote virtues of honesty, trust, and support between teachers and their colleagues. Additionally they recognise all stakeholders, making the boundaries between teachers, parents, service providers, and the community more permeable. Collaborative cultures are slow to evolve, and they are therefore unattractive to policy makers who look for speedy implementations. The consequences of collaborative cultures are also unpredictable. Hargreaves (1992b) argues that true collaboration requires the devolving of power to teachers to give them something significant to collaborate about - this is a responsibility that policy makers are unwilling to surrender.

4.7 CONCLUSION

In this chapter I showed that my thesis is set up to move from the simple belief that ILSTs will be established and function as per policy imperatives, to an understanding that illustrates the complexities of implementation. I have detailed the theories that contextualise and frame the complexities teachers have to work with when providing educational support through collaboration.

Through a multi-site case study of three primary schools in KwaZulu-Natal, this study focuses on exploring the ways in which teachers understand and experience providing educational support using collaboration in the context of inclusive education.

The next chapter presents a description of the research design and methodology that were utilised in the study.

CHAPTER FIVE

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

5.1 INTRODUCTION

Chapter Four explored the salient theories used to establish a framework to explore the understanding teachers have of collaboration and providing educational support in the context of inclusive education. In this chapter I discuss the methodological approach used in my study. First, the chapter begins with re-stating the research aims and questions that the study addresses. I then explain the research design, located within a qualitative research approach, using an interpretive paradigm which is exploratory and contextual in nature, which I chose in order to arrive at answers to the research questions posed. The chapter proceeds to explain the research methodology which is a multi-site case study using interviews, observations, and document analyses as the chosen methods of data collection. This is followed by a description of the data analysis procedures that I adopt and finally, the chapter concludes with a discussion of some ethical considerations, the verifications for the study, and how I address them.

5.2 RESEARCH AIMS

The primary research aim of this study is:

To explore Institutional-Level Support Team teachers' understanding of the provision of education support through collaboration within the context of EWP6.

The secondary research aims are:

- To explore ILST teachers' views in the provision of education support.
- To explore ILST teachers' understanding of providing education support through collaboration.
- To explore ILST teachers' experiences of providing education support through collaboration.

- To explore possible enabling factors for providing education support through collaboration.

5.3 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The primary research question can be formulated as follows:

How do teachers in Institutional-Level Support Teams understand the provision of education support through collaboration within the context of EWP6?

The secondary research questions can be formulated as follows:

- How do ILST teachers view providing education support?
- How do ILST teachers understand providing education support through collaboration?
- What experiences do ILST teachers have of providing education support through collaboration?
- What are possible enabling factors for providing education support through collaboration?

5.4 RESEARCH DESIGN

Considering that my study is exploratory and contextual in nature, a qualitative approach (Creswell, 1994) is considered most suitable for exploring teachers' experiences and understanding of collaborative teaming and inclusion in three primary schools in KwaZulu-Natal. According to Creswell (1994) a qualitative study is defined as "an inquiry process of understanding a social or human problem. It is based on building a sophisticated picture, using words to report participants' views, and is conducted in a natural setting" (p. 1). The aim is to provide an interpretive understanding (Babbie & Mouton, 2001) of a specific phenomenon of collaboration to provide educational support through ILSTs.

The following are the main characteristics of this qualitative study:

- The study is carried out in the typical setting of the participants and district officials, i.e. schools and district office.
- The focus is on process rather than outcome. For example, the study looks at how teachers are working within collaborative teams in providing educational support rather than the impact on learners or the school.
- The perspectives of the participants, i.e. the teachers are of primary interest.
- The emphasis is on understanding educational support and collaboration in the context of the teachers.
- The research takes on an inductive approach.
- The researcher is seen as the primary instrument in the data collection (Babbie & Mouton, 2001; Creswell, 1994).

Collaborative structures, such as school management teams, fund-raising, sport, finance, safety and security, whole school development, phase, grade and parent-teacher committees currently exist in schools, but their focus is on the management and administration of school affairs. Some of these committees are formed as the need arises. An ILST is different in that it provides indirect support, is a continuing educational support structure, and focuses on educational as well as psycho-social educational issues experienced within school communities. Under the new educational dispensation and EWP6, ILSTs have a certain collaborative structure and purpose and have to be developed in every institution in South Africa. Given that it is a new structure, it is essential to explore how teachers understand the process of setting up and maintaining such a structure, which is meant to fulfil its functions through collaboration.

I assume that teachers' subjective experiences and understanding of the implementation of a collaborative teaming strategy in an effort to provide educational support are real, and should be taken seriously. Reality is seen as subjective and I want to understand and listen to the teachers' experiences of the implementation of ILSTs in schools. In other words I want close interaction with the teachers who are directly involved with the process of setting up and maintaining the functioning of ILSTs (Creswell, 1994). Close interactions with the teachers and listening to what they tell me

makes it possible to comprehend their understandings. I focus on how teachers negotiate their understandings within the school environment. The main attraction to qualitative research is that it recognises that research should be done with people and not on people (Williams, 2002). It thus has a collaborative element that closes the gap between the researcher and the researched.

Advocates of the interpretive paradigm believe that the aim of research is to understand people (Babbie & Mouton, 2001) and that reality is socially constructed by individuals who participate in the study (Willis, 2007). Therefore their understanding is that there are multiple realities in which educational support and collaboration are played out (Babbie & Mouton, 2001; Bailey, 2007; Willis, 2007). Interpretive researchers take the view that teachers can determine their own behaviour (i.e. they have free will or have voluntary control over their behaviour). Furthermore, they assume that the beliefs of groups of teachers (e.g. teams in schools such as ILSTs) arise from individuals interacting in groups (Willis, 2007). Of interest to me were meanings, symbols, beliefs, ideas, and feelings about a phenomenon such as ILSTs, held by participants in the setting (Bailey, 2007). This paradigm does not emphasise objectivity and the belief is that what I find out from participants also depends on their individual position, qualities, morals and practices (Bailey, 2007).

Explorative studies are suitable when researchers examine a new interest or an innovation such as the development of ILSTs at primary schools. They aim to find out how people get along in a particular situation, what meanings they give to their actions, and what issues concern them. For example, in this study the focus was on exploring the phenomenon of providing collaborative educational support services in primary schools which is a new development in South Africa. Therefore I was interested to learn how teachers understand this innovation in the context of their schools.

Interpretive research encourages work in the authentic environment of teachers (Babbie & Mouton, 2001; Willis, 2007), i.e. at school, and posits that an understanding of a situation in which any research is conducted is key to the interpretation of the information collected (Willis, 2007). Submerging ourselves into the context we want to

explore and considering teachers past experiences and knowledge (Babbie & Mouton, 2001; Willis, 2001), assist in getting to the essence of a phenomenon.

My previous experience as researcher in the implementation of policy, required constant critical reflection and observations which prepared me to accept ambiguity in the research process (Creswell, 1994). The nature of the problem investigated in this study also led to the choice of a qualitative study.

While the results may not be generalisable, a qualitative approach enabled me to deeply examine the experiences of the teachers in the new programme and how they integrate the information within their school contexts (Marshall & Rossman, 1999). In addition, while this study is not a programme evaluation (Bogdan & Biklen, 1992), exploring teachers' understanding of the collaborative teaming effort in providing educational support to the school community can help to refine the model, as set out in EWP6, and also facilitate future implementation of similar models. Willis (2007), for example, states that proponents of qualitative interpretive designs argue that conclusions from any specific programme could be wrong and that we should all be aware of this and be open to findings from other perspectives and traditions.

Thus my choice of adopting a qualitative approach within the interpretive paradigm in an exploratory and contextual nature was influenced by the purpose and questions posed in this study.

5.5 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The foci of research methodology are on the research processes and the kinds of tools and procedures used, as well the steps in the research process (Babbie & Mouton, 2001). In this section I present the strategies and research process chosen for this study.

5.5.1 Multi-site case study

Yin (1994) provides a useful technical definition of a case study. He defines it as “an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context; when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident; and in which multiple sources of evidence are used” (p. 23). A case study is also seen as an in-depth analysis of a bounded system (Creswell, 1998; De Vos et al., 2004; Stake, 2000). Rule and John (2011, p. 4) define it as “a systematic and in-depth investigation of a particular instance in its context in order to generate knowledge.” The case being studied can be a process, activity, event, programme, individual, or several individuals (De Vos et al.). This study case is “bounded” by the activity of providing educational support to school communities (Creswell, 1994, p. 12).

A multi-site case study investigates a current phenomenon that is common to two or more naturalistic settings. It also offers a means of understanding an individual, event, policy, program, or group via multiple representations of that phenomenon. In other words, by illuminating the experiences, implications, or effects of a phenomenon in more than one setting, wider understandings about a phenomenon can emerge. Typically, the research design in a multi-site case study is the same across all sites. This means the same unit(s) of analysis or phenomenon is studied in light of the same key research questions. In addition, the same or similar data collection, analysis, and reporting approaches are employed across the sites (Bishop, 2010).

It is a multi-site case study, set in three primary schools. They are bounded in the sense that they are located in the same geographic location, that they are part of the same cluster of schools, and that they all belong to a pilot project initiated by the district office. Thus all three schools share a common goal of spearheading the process of implementing EWP6 with the assistance of ILSTs.

The schools were purposively selected because it is believed that exploring the sample will lead to an enhanced appreciation of a larger collection of cases (Stake, 2000). Each school and the teachers within the school are treated as a site; therefore it is a collective

case study (Creswell, 1994; 1998; Stake, 2000; Yin, 1994). A collective case study allowed for the possibility of identifying features that might be unique to individual sites and their participants. It also allows an opportunity to generalise across the sites when similarities are found.

5.5.2 The research process

This section presents a detailed account of the procedures followed to gain access to the schools, the selection of the samples, and the various data collection methods utilised in the study⁶.

5.5.2.1 *Gaining access*

Neumann (2000) defines a gatekeeper as “someone with formal or informal authority to control access to a site” (p. 52). According to Delamont (2002), negotiating access is an essential element of the data collection process and should be properly documented. Furthermore, Flick (1998) states that gaining access to the field deserves special attention in qualitative research as it requires close contact and intensive interaction with the participants. In this study the field refers to the three primary schools in Durban, South Africa. Research projects are generally an intrusion on school life. The challenge a researcher faces is securing the participation and collaboration of participants and also ensuring that it leads to solid interviews or other data required (Flick, 1998). When researching in institutions, the researcher has to gain access from different levels, i.e. at the central level from people responsible for authorising the research, and also at the level of those being interviewed and/or observed.

For example, in this study I obtained permission and cooperation from various gatekeepers. Gatekeepers have a habit of referring researchers to other authorities (Terre Blanche & Kelly, 2002), which can be frustrating. When gaining access it is important to know the order of consultation. First, I had to submit a letter of application for permission to the Provincial Superintendent General of the Department of Education, who is the highest officer of education in the province of KwaZulu-Natal, and to whom all district office personnel and schools report. Permission to conduct research

at the three schools was granted (See Appendix 2). Permission was then sought from the District Office under whose jurisdiction the three participating schools fall (See Appendix 3). Third, permission from the respective schools and the participating teachers was also sought (See Appendix 4 and 5), and gained.

I also had to negotiate participation with the personnel from the District Office, the two members of the district who were responsible for the setting-up and development of the ILSTs in the sample schools. These discussions were mainly about their roles in the implementation of ILSTs in the cluster, of which the three schools are a part. I felt that I was able to convince them of the value and importance of my study as well as the contributions they could make to the successful future implementation of ILSTs.

I presented the letter from the Superintendent General and informed all principals of my communication with the district officials. After several visits and negotiation I convinced them of the value of their contribution to my study and they agreed. Once I gained the acceptance of the participating principals, gaining access to the teachers was somewhat easier.

The meetings with teachers were carefully orchestrated to convince them of the important role they would play in contributing to change within their school contexts. In addition, since the three schools chosen for the study is part of the Townpine (pseudonym) pilot project, I emphasised the value of the information that they would provide. Since the implementation of ILSTs is new in the South African context and very little is known about such teams, I emphasised how their participation could influence future implementation plans. As pioneers in the field of inclusion, they were convinced that they could make valuable contributions. From these discussions it emerged that the teachers had a lot to share about their experiences as ILST members and this provided a platform for them 'to tell their stories'.

From the above discussion it becomes evident that the selection of participants played a crucial role in this study. This is discussed in the next section.

5.5.2.2 Selection of sample

A critical aspect of any study is the decision about what and who to include as participants. Sampling is a process of selecting suitable sources to provide relevant information to answer the research questions of a study (Babbie & Mouton, 2001). Sampling techniques allow us to determine and/or control the possibility of particular individuals being selected for a study. Two techniques characterise sampling. The first is probability sampling which involves random sampling and allows a researcher to generalise findings to a much larger population. The second is non-probability sampling. Qualitative researchers try to get the maximum amount of information from and about the context by purposively selecting sites and participants according to certain criteria (Babbie & Mouton, 2001; Rule & John, 2011). Such situations call for non-probability sampling, such as purposive sampling techniques.

In purposive sampling (Strydom, 2005) it is appropriate to select a sample that can shed most light, or different lights, on a phenomenon (Rule & John, 2011). The following factors according to Babbie and Mouton (2001) should also be considered:

- The researcher's knowledge or the expert knowledge of others in the relevant field
- The specific elements of the study, and
- Finally, the purpose of the study.

In this study, a purposive sampling technique was adopted to assist with the identification of relevant and appropriate sites and participants for data collection. In order to explore teachers' understanding of providing educational support through collaboration, I purposively selected primary schools in the Townpine district of Durban, KwaZulu-Natal where a pilot implementation project of EWP6 was in progress. The choice of the three schools was based on their proximity to each other, which is less than two kilometres apart, therefore also a convenient sample, and easily accessible. I selected schools that I did not have a relationship with to enhance objectivity.

5.5.2.3 The Townpine district office

I was in a fortunate position in that my relationship with the district officials were well established prior to this study due to our interactions from initiating other pilot projects in the area of inclusive education. Information sought via conversations with district officials about my need to find schools that have established ILSTs, led me to the Townpine district office.

The Townpine district is the only district in KwaZulu-Natal that has taken the initiative to spearhead the process of implementing ILSTs. Within the district office two key personnel were identified as instrumental in the development and management of ILSTs in the KwaMashu circuit as a pilot project. I interviewed both officials in order to understand the context in which these ILSTs were being implemented.

TABLE 5.1: Demographic information of Townpine district officials

District Official	Gender	Race	Position	Working experience in years	Inclusive Education Experience
1	Female	White	First Education Specialist (FES) (PGSES)	15	Extensive Training
2	Female	Indian	Deputy Chief Education Specialist (DCES) (PGSES)	20	Extensive Training

Both district officials are female, one is white and the other is of Indian origin. The first official had a position of first education specialist and the other was in a more senior position of chief education specialist. Both are qualified educational psychologists. They received extensive training and experience through provincial and pilot initiatives in the implementation of EWP6 in the district. They have been working in the district office for 15 and 20 years respectively.

5.5.2.4 The schools and teachers

All three schools serve learners from similar socio-economic backgrounds. I refer to the schools in pseudonyms, namely, Primary School 1; Primary School 2, and Primary School 3. Prior to 1994 all three schools were public primary schools in the Townpine district, located in a middle class suburb reserved for Indians. Since 1994, the community has been changing towards a majority of working class people of all race groups. It is from these three schools that the sample of teachers, all part of the ILSTs, was selected.

TABLE 5. 2: Demographic information of ILST participants

Teacher	Gender	Race	Position	Teaching (in years)	Inclusive Education Experience
1	Female	African	Teacher	11	ILST Training at School
2	Female	Indian	Teacher	10	ILST Training at School
3	Female	Indian	Teacher	21	District ILST Training
4	Female	Indian	Deputy Principal & Coordinator	25	District ILST Training Research
5	Male	Indian	Principal	28	District Training on IE
6	Female	Indian	Teacher & Coordinator	20	District ILST Training
7	Female	Indian	Teacher	15	None
8	Female	Indian	Intern psychologist	1	University
9	Male	Indian	Principal	30	District Training on IE
10	Male	Indian	Teacher	9	None
11	Female	Indian	Principal	30	None
12	Female	Indian	Deputy Principal & Coordinator	30	Extensive Training
13	Female	Indian	Teacher	24	None
14	Female	Indian	Teacher	25	None
15	Female	Indian	Teacher	25	None

Fifteen teachers (including principals) participated in the study. The teachers were members of ILSTs at each school, and therefore met the criterion for inclusion of teachers in the sample.

The majority of the participants were female and Indian. Two deputy principals took on the role of ILST coordinator and in the third school a remedial teacher was tasked with this position. The years of teaching experience show that eleven teachers had been in the profession between 20 and 30 years, 3 teachers between 10 and 15 years, while the intern psychologist was just starting out and had one year of experience. The majority of the teachers had little previous experience with inclusive education. They received training through a district pilot project. Two principals claimed to have some knowledge due to advocacy programmes run by the Townpine district office, while one principal said she had no experience of inclusive education at all. At the same school three teachers said that they had also received no training at all. One deputy principal stood out as she had been proactive in researching the subject, especially with regards to implementation successes in other countries.

5.5.2.5 Data collection methods

The data collection period spanned the 2007-2009 school years. Data collection was staggered due to disruptions such as a teachers' strike which brought the schools to a halt for a period of time.

Triangulation is central to ensuring the quality of field research (Bailey, 2007). There are several types of triangulation, namely method, theory, and data triangulation (Terre Blanche & Kelly, 2002; De Vos et al., 2004; Flick, 1998). In this study I utilise all three types of triangulation.

Triangulation of method means using various methods in collecting and interpreting data. It involves using multiple interviews, document analyses, and observations (Babbie & Mouton, 2001; Bailey, 2007; Rule & John, 2011), and so on. One way of doing this is to use multiple sources of evidence which enables the researcher to explore a phenomenon using various techniques and obtaining perspectives from different

participants. This study used a multi-method approach to data collection (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005); involving individual and focus group interviews, observations, and document content analyses.

Data triangulation is useful in that it provides the researcher with a way to overcome the limitations of any one particular method of data collection. It also helps the researcher to 'hone in' (Terre Blanche & Kelly, 2002, p. 128) on a thorough understanding of a phenomenon by approaching it from different angles (De Vos et al., 2004). I therefore had interview data, observation data and document analysis data.

Theoretical triangulation occurs when a researcher uses several points of view (De Vos et al., 2004) to bring diverse theories to bear on a common problem. As explained in Chapter Four, the theoretical framework for the study draws on different theories to collect and make meaning of the data. These theories are educational change (Christie, 2008; Engelbrecht & Green, 2007; Fullan 1992; 1993a; 2001a; Fullan & Stiegelbauer, 1991; Senge 1990; 2007), teacher cultures (Hargreaves 1992a; 1992b; 1994), and reculturing (Doyle, 2001; Fullan, 1993a; 1993b; Giles & Yates, 2011). This framework assisted me in preparing for data collection in terms of what kind of information I needed to answer the primary and secondary research questions.

Interviews

Interviewing is the most common and powerful (Fontana & Frey, 2000) way of data collection in qualitative research (Babbie & Mouton, 2002; Bailey, 2007; De Vos et al., 2004). Interviews provide the researcher with an opportunity to get to know people intimately and to get to understand how they think and feel. Terre Blanche and Kelly (2002) and De Vos et al. (2004) agree that a qualitative interview attempts to understand a phenomenon from the participants' perspective, unfolding the gist of their understandings and practices as they live it. An interview can take many forms.

Kvale (1996) views the interviewer as a "*miner*" or "*traveller*". The miner believes that the participant has particular information and the interviewer's job is to excavate it. The traveller, on the other hand,

... wanders through the landscape and enters into conversations with the people encountered. The traveller explores the many domains of the country, as unknown territory or with maps, roaming freely around the territory...The interviewer wanders along with the local inhabitants, asks questions that lead the subjects to tell their own stories of their lived world. (p. 3-5)

To address the research questions posed in this study I used two types of interviews, i.e. individual and focus group interviews. Both interviews are of the unstructured type, referred to as open-ended or in-depth interviews.

All interviews were tape-recorded once I obtained permission from the participants. I also gave them the option to request that I stop recording if they thought it necessary to tell me anything they felt should be 'off the record'.

As opposed to using structured interviews which use pre-established categories to explain a phenomenon, I used unstructured interviews to understand collaboration within ILSTs without imposing *a priori* categories that may limit the study (Fontana & Frey, 2000). As a method of answering the research questions for this study, unstructured individual interviews were held with two district officials, the three school principals, and the ILST co-ordinators. The question for the district officials was 'Tell me about your understanding in setting-up and maintaining ILSTs at the three schools'. All other participants were asked about their understandings of providing educational support as ILST members (See Appendix 6 & 7).

Most researchers agree that at one level, interviews are seen as simple conversations (Bailey, 2007), but at the same time they are also highly skilled performances (Terre Blanche & Kelly, 2002; De Vos et al., 2004), especially in unstructured interviewing. De Vos et al., (2004) caution that researchers should see themselves as knowing very little about the phenomena under study, and in keeping with such advice, I asked the question and left the participants to answer. During the interviews I found that I had to use prompts to get participants to express their ideas clearly, open up, explain, and elaborate on particular ideas; or to redirect the interviews back to the question posed (De Vos et al., 2004). For example, in one instance, the participant provided me with a great deal of information about the learners themselves. Since that was not the focus of

the study I had to redirect by acknowledging the importance of the information she provided, but for the purpose of the study I needed to hear about the participant's personal experiences as a member of the ILST.

Fontana and Frey (2000) further signal that we should not consider interviews as a taken-for-granted activity. What this means is that each interview context is "one of interaction and relation" (p. 647), and that one must therefore consider the contextual, societal, and interpersonal elements. The disposition of the interviewer can thus shape the amount of information participants are willing to divulge.

I requested that all interviews be held in a venue with the least amount of disturbance. In most cases my request was granted. In some cases there were unavoidable disturbances; all part of the busy schedule of schools. Disturbances included parents arriving unannounced, telephone calls, and urgent school matters.

I had two individual interviews with district officials and six individual interviews with the principals and ILST coordinators at the schools. Most interviews were held at the school, in the principals' offices, classrooms, or district officials' offices. One teacher and one district official indicated that it would be less disruptive if the interviews were held in their homes, and I tried as much as possible to take heed of the advice provided by De Vos et al. (2004), who maintain that the interview setting must be agreed upon by both parties. They go on to say that the setting must provide privacy, be comfortable, and be a non-threatening environment. It was a way of ensuring that I got maximum participation from the participants in the study. I also had many informal interviews (casual chats) with the principals, ILST coordinators, and teachers every time I visited a school. These meetings provided useful information and were recorded as part of my field notes. I also made sure that I kept to the specified time limits. Most interviews were between forty five to sixty minutes.

The number of participants to be interviewed was restricted by my research focus, which was to explore the understanding and experiences of collaboration of teachers as ILST members. I was satisfied that I had sufficient data when I found that I was

beginning to hear the same information repeatedly. It is what is referred to as data 'saturation' in the literature (De Vos et al., 2002; Babbie & Mouton, 2002).

In conducting the interviews I started with 'introductory pleasantries' (De Vos et al., 2004 p. 300) which included among other things, introductions, the purpose of the study, the role that the interview plays, the time required, discussing confidentiality, and obtaining permission to audio record the interview. All participants agreed to the recording of information. Making the participants feel comfortable served well as an 'ice-breaker' since it helped to establish rapport (Fontana & Frey, 2000) and trust (Terre Blanche & Kelly, 2002). I ensured throughout the interviews that I was listening and interested and showed understanding and respect for what they were saying. I accomplished this by acknowledgement, asking for clarification, or asking to hear more about something. Furthermore I tried as much as possible to remain neutral, friendly, directive, and impersonal (Fontana & Frey, 2000).

A focus group interview is a simultaneous discussion with many participants (De Vos et al., 2004; Fontana & Frey, 2000) with the researcher facilitating the process (Rule & John, 2011). The process is similar to that of individual interviews (Babbie & Mouton, 2001) but the focus group has a different dynamic. It is a useful data collection strategy in that a large amount of information can be gathered in a short space of time.

My need to explore teachers' understanding of collaboration made focus group interviews an appropriate tool. The teachers are rich sources of information as members of ILSTs, bringing about change in the schools. I created a non-threatening environment to encourage participants to share experiences, points of view, successes, and challenges of being members of ILSTs. The procedure followed was similar to that of the individual interviews discussed above, asking one question: 'Tell me about your understanding of providing educational support through collaboration, as an ILST member' (See Appendix 7). Some participants saw the interviews as providing a platform for them to air their views about their role functions.

In two schools, the focus groups consisted of five teachers who were members of the ILST. A total of 10 teachers participated in the focus group interviews. Each group was interviewed for approximately one hour. In one school it became an impossible task to

schedule a common time for all teachers to be interviewed. To overcome this challenge I interviewed 5 teachers individually when they were available.

There are various reasons why researchers use focus groups. In this study it was used as a means of triangulating data collected in various ways. It is considered useful in that it provided a means of exploring what teachers really think and feel about the collaborative process of providing educational support. It also allowed me the opportunity to capture the interactions between participants which resulted in a richer exploration of collaboration among and between them.

Observation

The main aim of this study was to explore teachers' understanding of educational support through collaboration. The emphasis was thus on methods of research that remain close to the participants, "to capture and portray the liveliness and situatedness of behaviour" (Rule & John, 2011, p. 67), and observations provided such an opportunity. Observation can be described as a qualitative research procedure that helps study the natural and everyday context of a particular community, such as a school (Babbie & Mouton, 2001).

Researchers tend to use different terminologies, determined by the role the researcher takes when classifying an observation. Babbie and Mouton (2001, p. 292) refer to it as "simple observation" and "participant observation", while others like Adler and Adler (1994); De Vos et al. (2004) and Flick (1998) prefer to define it along a continuum of the role the researcher intends to take. The researcher can assume a role from complete observer to complete participant, or participant (researcher acts as part of the group being studied), and non-participant (researcher observes with differing degrees of involvement in-between). In this study I observed the teachers at work without interfering or participating in any way, which positions me as a non-participant observer.

One of the advantages of observation is that it restricts the extent to which a researcher can intervene. An observation also occurs in a natural setting, so it draws the researcher into the complexity of the world of those being observed. Information such as trends,

patterns, and styles of behaviour are recorded. During observations researchers are also not limited by fixed categories but are free to search for concepts or categories that appear meaningful to the participants.

In this study, in addition to unstructured interviews, I used video recordings as a method of enabling my non-participant observations of the ILST meeting and focus group interviews. This helped to capture detailed information which is impossible through writing alone. The recording also allowed me to see aspects that could have gone unnoticed or ignored. The participants' actions and reactions (verbally and behaviourally) provided rich sources of data for the study. For example, detailed aspects of collaboration could be recorded. While the presence of the video recorder and me as an observer seemed to be obtrusive in the initial stages, the effect wore off as time progressed (Babbie & Mouton, 2001). Interviews were useful but did not allow me to observe the actual practices of collaboration and the provision of educational support. The subsequent viewing of the recording helped me to establish a clearer picture of how the ILST works and whether teachers collaborate or not (Flick, 1998).

An observation is a fundamental element of qualitative research but also has disadvantages (De Vos et al., 2004). One of the criticisms levelled against observation is that the results are not always reliable. To overcome this I used other methods, interviews and documentary analysis, to make the results more reliable and valid. The video recordings were viewed and transcribed word for word by me and validated by the teachers for confirmation. The limitation of using visual methods is that there is no specific method for analysing filmed data (Flick, 1998). In this study I used an observation schedule to observe what was happening in the ILSTs (See Appendix 8). The events observed were ILST meetings. As mentioned earlier, the purpose of the observations was to witness in practice, how teachers engage with each other in collaborative ways, or not, to provide educational support.

Document analysis

Rule and John (2011) suggest that document analysis is a useful place to start data collection. Documents can be a primary source (author's own experiences and

observations) or a secondary source. Document analysis in this study was informed by the concepts of educational support and collaboration. I investigated all the circulars, i.e. primary source, from the district office to the schools with regards to inclusive education and ILSTs. Additionally I analysed the content of many documents to learn how the schools were progressing toward a philosophy of inclusion, for example the mission and vision statements of the schools which reflected the extent to which the schools had made necessary shifts toward inclusion. I also analysed the activities of the ILSTs by examining how learners who experience barriers to learning were identified, the problem-solving process and possible intervention programmes, and decisions about learners by looking at learner profiles, misdemeanour files, discipline files, attendance files, and minutes of ILST meetings. Analysing these documents was helpful since they were produced independent of this study or the researcher (De Vos et al., 2004) which means the information could verify or challenge the interpretations based on the observations and interview data that were likely to be influenced by the presence of the study (Merriam, 1988).

Most documents were made available to me although acquiring the minutes of ILST meetings proved to be a challenge. Initially the school management were adamant that these documents were strictly confidential and did not readily want to share them with me. After discussions and reaffirming my promise to keep the records safely stored and to use them only for the purposes of my study, they agreed.

5.6 DATA ANALYSIS

Bogdan and Biklen (1992) define qualitative data analysis as a process which involves identifying themes, and building propositions (ideas) suggested by the data, and attempting to demonstrate educational support for these themes and propositions. Data analysis is the process of analytically examining and arranging observational field notes, interview scripts, and other information a researcher has gathered during data collection. Organising and analysing the data consists of various processes and requires that the researcher be comfortable with developing categories, drawing comparisons, and making contrasts (Creswell, 1994).

Many research theorists such as Bogdan and Biklen (1992), Braun and Clarke (2006), Creswell (1994; 1998), and De Vos et al. (2004), propose that data analysis be conducted simultaneously with data collection. Taking this advice, whilst in the data collection phase, I conducted analysis in-the-field. Secondly, I conducted an after-data collection analysis, away from the field. This process allowed for possible revisions to subsequent data collection strategies and procedures, as required.

Some concrete manual activity on the part of the researcher is required during the data analysis phase (Braun & Clarke, 2006; De Vos et al., 2004; Rule & John, 2011). I used the thematic approach to analysis suggested by Braun and Clarke. Ely, Vinz, Downing and Anzul (1997) argue that the language of “themes emerging”,

...can be misrepresented to mean that themes 'reside' in the data, and if we just look hard enough they will 'emerge'...if themes reside anywhere, they reside in our heads from our thinking about our data and creating links as we understand them (p.205).

Thematic analysis was useful in that it was flexible and could be used within different theoretical frameworks. Thus my choice for thematic analysis was driven by my research questions and the broader theoretical framework used in the study. There is no agreement about the definition of thematic analysis and how to go about doing it (Braun & Clarke, 2006), however, it is agreed that it is a method for identifying, analysing, and reporting patterns or themes within data. At the most basic level it helps with relating the data in rich detail (Braun & Clarke, 2006). When using thematic analysis it is important to make explicit a number of choices the researcher has to consider. Braun and Clarke (2006) discuss the following issues that need consideration when using thematic analysis:

- What counts as a theme? It is up to the researcher to decide what a theme is. The validity of the theme depends on whether it relates to the research question.
- The researcher needs to determine the type of analysis and the claims to be made in relation to the data collected. The focus of this study was on exploring the teachers' understanding of providing educational support through

collaboration. I provide a rich description of information from the teachers to answer the research questions.

- Inductive versus theoretical thematic analysis? Inductive analysis was used since it is a process of coding the data without trying to fit it into a pre-existing framework, or the researcher's bias. This form of thematic analysis is driven by the data. In this study inductive analysis is utilised.
- Semantic or latent themes? The semantic approach focuses on what the participant has said and nothing beyond that. The data is organised to show patterns and then summarised. In contrast, the latent theme goes beyond and starts to identify the underlying issues, assumptions, and knowledge. This study utilised semantic themes.
- The research epistemology of essentialist/realist versus constructionist thematic analysis? The epistemology guides what the researcher can say about the data, and informs theorising meaning. The essentialist/realist approach assumes a simple, unidirectional relationship between variables and I chose to use the constructionist thematic analysis.

In conclusion thematic analysis involves searching for meaning across interview scripts, focus groups, observations, or documents, to find repeated patterns. In the next section I provide the process followed in conducting thematic analysis as discussed by Braun and Clarke (2006).

As mentioned earlier, analysis is not a linear process; it goes back and forth as needed, throughout the phases. Table 3 below describes the procedure I followed in generating codes and identifying themes during the process of data analysis.

TABLE 5.3: Phases of thematic analysis

PHASE		DESCRIPTION OF PROCESS
1	Familiarising myself with the data collected	Transcribed the audio and video-tapes verbatim. I ensured that the transcripts retained the information from the verbal account and that it stayed 'true' to its original form.
2	General initial codes	Interesting features that assisted with answering my research focus were coded.
3	Searching for themes	Assembled codes into possible themes, gathered all data relevant to each possible theme.
4	Reviewing themes	Checked if the themes worked in relation to the coded extracts and the entire data set. This paved the way to generate a thematic 'map of the analysis'.
5	Defining and providing names for themes	Continued analysis to refine the specifics of each theme, and the overall storyline, generating clear definitions and names for each theme.
6	Producing the final document	Selected vivid, compelling extract examples, completed the final analysis of selected texts, and related it back to the research questions and literature. Finally produced the document

5.7 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Prior to embarking on data collection I took heed of Mertens' (1998) warning that it is the duty of the researcher to ensure that a valid research design is in place. Poorly designed research does not contribute to the well-being of the participants and tends to waste their time (Lankshear & Knobel, 2004). Research literature adds that the researcher must make sure that the entire study runs in an ethically correct manner (Creswell, 1998; De Vos et al., 2004; Rule & John, 2011). As the principal researcher I was aware of my ethical responsibilities throughout the life-span of the study.

In educational research, ethics is concerned with ensuring that the interests and well-being of the participants are not harmed as a result of the research being conducted (Lankshear & Knobel, 2004). It was therefore necessary to design a set of criteria and codes that fall within accepted professional practice (Creswell, 1998; De Vos, et al., 2004; Lankshear & Knobel, 2004; Rule & John, 2011). In order to fulfil the requirements with regard to ethical concerns, the study conforms to ethical considerations as set out in the Belmont Report (1979). Different authors identify different ethical issues (De Vos et al., 2004). The following issues informed this study: obtaining informed consent; ensuring privacy, confidentiality and anonymity; and minimising intrusion.

The first consideration was to obtain ethical clearance from the Research Office of the University of KwaZulu-Natal. Ethical clearance was granted with the stipulation that permission should be sought from the relevant authorities of the DoE, the respective school principals, and the research participants. This meant providing the credentials of the researcher; making the participants aware of the study and its purpose; stating how information would be collected, stored and used as well as providing the terms of participation. This was clearly elucidated in the form for the informed consent of participants. In addition, the participants were given the opportunity to ask questions regarding the study and the option to withdraw from the study without fear of negative consequences.

The second ethical consideration that informed my study was to ensure the privacy, confidentiality, and anonymity of the participants. Privacy implies personal privacy, which is the participant's right to decide when, where, to whom, and to what extent his/her attitudes, beliefs, and behaviour would be revealed (De Vos et al., 2004). The privacy of the participants was ensured by obtaining their informed consent regarding the use of the video camera and audio recorder for research purposes. In the case of the group interviews, participants were also requested to consent to the process.

Confidentiality implies that information will be handled in a classified manner (De Vos et al., 2004). During the course of the study, all the data was secured in a locked file cabinet. The videotaped material was viewed only by the principal researcher and after five years all the data will be destroyed. Furthermore, the participants were assured

that the data collected would only be used for the intended purposes and that they would be given an opportunity to object to its use. After writing up the data, I discussed and checked that it accurately reflected the viewpoints of the research participants. Anonymity was ensured by the use of pseudonyms for all the schools in the study so that even the researcher would not be able to identify any participant after completion (De Vos et al., 2004). Teachers were informed that their participation in the study was voluntary and that they were free to withdraw from the study at any point if they so desired.

Third, intrusion was minimised by ensuring that data collection did not occur during the working hours of the participants. Lankshear and Noble (2004), maintain that all research is intrusive. Given the sensitivity of the nature of the cases discussed by the participants, I requested that pseudonyms be used to indicate for the names of the learners involved. As a researcher I tried at all times to remain sensitive to the interpersonal exchanges between participants. This meant that when I got the impression that the timing of an interview was not conducive, although previously arranged, I was open to suggesting another time for the interview. It was important that participants felt comfortable about negotiating changes to avoid intrusions on their time (Lankshear & Noble, 2004).

In addition to the abovementioned ethical concerns, the study was also informed by what Lankshear and Noble (2004) refer to as respect for the research participants. This helped to maintain a trusting relationship with the participants so that they felt free to answer honestly. I showed respect and appreciation for their contributions. I respected their privacy by avoiding coercion and manipulation. This was done by asking participants to respond to one open-ended question during the interview process which allowed them to describe their experiences as freely as possible without undue influence from the researcher.

5.8 VERIFICATION FOR THE STUDY

Every researcher has to find ways to enhance the trustworthiness of their studies. In this qualitative study I drew on the influential work of Lincoln and Guba (1985) who

use the notion of trustworthiness as the key element (Babbie & Mouton, 2001; De Vos et. al., 2004) of rigour in research.

A researcher needs to persuade his/her reader that the findings of the study are worth paying attention to; this is trustworthiness (Babbie & Mouton, 2001). Lincoln and Guba (1985) operationalise trustworthiness by using principles such as credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability.

Credibility is achieved by prolonged engagement until data saturation occurs through persistent observation and data triangulation, by ensuring referential adequacy, and by conducting peer debriefing and member checks. I applied triangulation, independent coding, and member checks as means of verifying the credibility of the study.

I utilised data, method, and theory triangulation. In this study I collected information using unstructured individual interviews with district officials, the principals of the schools, and ILST coordinators, as well as the ILST members; focus group interviews with teachers who were members of the ILSTs; and observations through videotaping of ILST meetings. Thus I collected information from different sources and used a multi-method approach in seeking to understand the experiences and understanding of teachers in implementing collaborative teaming as a way of providing educational support to their school communities.

Since “...there is no single set of categories [themes are] waiting to be discovered, and there are as many ways of 'seeing' the data as one can invent” (Dey 1993, pp. 110-111), I contracted the use of an independent coder to check for agreement of codes and themes as a measure of ensuring the trustworthiness of my data analysis. The independent coder and I met to discuss and compare the results of her coding with that of mine. We reached consensus with regards to the codes and themes identified. This strong intercoder agreement ensured that the concepts identified were not just a fabrication of the researcher’s imagination (Sandelowski, 1995), and proved that the identified themes were valid. The assurance was gained due to the consensus reached (Ryan & Bernard, 2003).

Member checks were conducted to ensure that what the researcher had constructed from the data was actually what the participants had said (Babbie & Mouton, 2001). The aim was to assess the intentionality of the participants, to correct obvious errors, and to provide additional information. I took the written transcripts of the interviews with teachers and minutes of ILST meetings back to the relevant participants and provided them with the opportunity to read the transcripts and analysis to check for accuracy and errors.

Qualitative research is not primarily interested in generalisations. Lincoln and Guba (1985) discuss thick description and purposive sampling as strategies for achieving transferability. Since transferability depends on similarities between where the research is conducted and where the results might be used, I offer detailed descriptions of the context in which the schools are located and provided sufficient information about the participants, the schools, and the data collection and analysis, to allow judgements about transferability to be made by the reader (Babbie & Mouton, 2001). Dependability was provided by triangulation of the data and member checks.

Confirmability was addressed by declaring my role as a researcher. The research sites chosen for this study were not part of the group of schools I worked with in my capacity as researcher in policy implementation. The schools I worked with previously were located in rural areas and the teachers were mainly of African origin. The current study is conducted in an urban area and teachers are of Indian origin. I have had no working relationship with the schools or participants prior to this study. This criterion refers to the objectivity of the findings and whether the data confirms the findings.

5.9 CONCLUSION

In this chapter I described and explained the research design and methodology adopted for this study. It positions the study in a qualitative approach, using an interpretive research paradigm, and is exploratory and contextual in nature. The study is a multi-site case study exploring teachers' understanding and experiences of providing educational support through collaboration in the context of inclusive education in three primary schools in KwaZulu-Natal.

The next chapter provides a thick description of the research settings utilised in the study.

CHAPTER SIX

RESEARCH SETTING

6.1 INTRODUCTION

This study focused on exploring the provisioning of educational support through collaboration in the context of inclusive education. The main purpose of the study was to explore the ways in which the teachers at three primary schools in one cluster located in the Townpine district of Durban, KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa, understand providing collaborative educational support to their school communities. Descriptions of the three primary schools are important as it provides an understanding of the context in which the data was collected, analysed, and interpreted. The chapter begins with an explanation of the cluster system. It then addresses the context of the district office and the ILST programme that was developed. Finally, the chapter provides a description of each of the three primary schools chosen for the study, and discusses the development of their ILST programme.

6.2 THE CLUSTER SYSTEM

In Chapter One I explained that ILSTs were established at primary schools to spearhead the professional development of teachers in attempts to develop the quality of education offered to all learners by providing a collaborative educational support model. In Chapter Two I illustrated that the previous educational support system was inadequate (cf. 2.4) leading to some learners being incorrectly diagnosed and inappropriately placed in special education settings, and/or some learners not identified by teachers as experiencing barriers to learning. These learners remained in ordinary classrooms without the provision of the education support services required by them. The Townpine district office personnel introduced a pilot study in one circuit of the district with the anticipation of learning from the initiative to assist teachers with implementation on a broader scale within the district.

To facilitate and monitor the process of implementation, the District Office clustered 170 schools in the district into clusters with 10 to 12 schools per cluster. The three

schools chosen for the study are from one cluster. The reason for choosing these three schools as opposed to other schools in the cluster was that they were described as able to provide relevant data to inform my study, as they had implemented ILSTs.

The cluster system proved useful in some instances. For example, teachers found it helpful to share ideas with teachers from other schools about managing the process of providing educational support for learners experiencing barriers to learning. In other instances it was challenging for the district officials, for example, at the first planned ILST training 48 of the 170 schools did not attend. Follow-ups revealed the schools believed that the training was only applicable to schools that have remedial classes or provide pull-out programmes. District officials felt that they needed more support from the relevant superintendents of education management (SEMs) who have direct contact with the schools and who could influence the process of implementing ILSTs.

6.3 THE DISTRICT OFFICE

The coordination of the cluster activities of this circuit was designated to three district officials. Through interviews conducted and visits to the district office I gained important information that shed light on their roles and experiences within the pilot project. The district office is located in a very large building which was previously a school. The district officials' offices are small, open plan cubicles with thin divisions between them; it was previously a classroom.

The district officials' roles included the provision of support to teachers and learners such as crisis management, trauma management, placement of learners into special schools, and education for learners with special education needs (ELSEN) classes within the circuit. In addition they are responsible for capacity building of teachers, and managing the national and district pilot studies currently in progress. The setting up of ILSTs is a district pilot initiative (cf. 1.3) and this district office, especially two of the district officials, were the vanguards of the initiative.

The district officials displayed a positive attitude toward inclusive education and were keen to see it translated into practice with the expressed hope of improving educational support services provided to the school community. Their enthusiasm could be

explained by the fact that they felt confident due to knowledge and experience gained from training. Since EWP6 lacks clear guidelines for the setting-up of ILSTs, the district officials designed a programme using the policy as a framework.

From my observation of the district office, the space provided to the officials did not lend itself to dealing with sensitive and often personal issues raised by parents/caregivers, teachers and learners themselves, which forms the crux of educational support. Their offices lack the privacy necessary for handling school, teacher, or learner issues. Among other things I also examined some documents relevant to setting up and training ILST members. All the correspondence to the cluster schools, notices of training, and attendance records, were readily available for my perusal. Records of school visits were well organised and filed.

In terms of schools that did not attend training sessions, the district officials reported that there was no legal recourse to enforce attendance. To overcome this obstacle, district officials sought assistance and support from the relevant SEMs to motivate teachers to attend the next planned training session. During the interviews the district officials had both promising and sobering thoughts about the establishment of ILSTs at schools. Enabling factors are that district management provided the required support for making implementation decisions as district officials see fit, and this made them feel empowered and motivated. The district officials also felt that they had been sufficiently prepared to take on the task of implementing inclusion and establishing ILSTs at schools. In addition the senior education managers (SEMs) cooperated in ensuring that communication about ILST trainings reached the schools.

The barriers mentioned include that at district level ILST issues were not given the same priority as other programmes. For example, other programmes such as school functionality, exam monitoring, and last-minute provincial initiatives, are prioritised over attempts to support ILSTs. This kind of reactive behaviour also has an impact on the availability of transport to schools, meaning that even if meetings are scheduled, other programmes are given priority. Cluster ILST workshops have had to be cancelled due to challenges of this kind. Other challenges include: large numbers of schools allocated to district officials to monitor, insufficient time, long gaps between training

sessions which means lack of continuity for teachers, and lack of individual monitoring of schools as it was only done at cluster meetings and not all schools responded favourably to setting up ILSTs.

Given the context described above and some of the challenges experienced by district officials, it was remarkable to note the enthusiasm and commitment these officials displayed towards the programme of inclusion and more specifically towards setting up a collaborative educational support system. It can be concluded that there is sufficient will and concerted effort on the part of district officials with regard to the capacity building of teachers and establishing and maintaining ILSTs within the schools in the cluster. To this end they have developed an ILST programme, discussed next.

6.4 THE ILST PROGRAMME

The institutional-level support team (ILST) programme is a collaborative teaming and problem solving model (DoE, 2001; 2002a). Since EWP6 does not provide sufficient clarity on the process, district officials developed a programme that they considered worthy of trial in one circuit in the district. The schools in the circuit were notified by the district office of their intention to pilot test the model with the intention of reviewing its successes and challenges so that it could be implemented on a broader scale in other circuits in the district.

6.4.1 Purpose of the ILST

The Draft Guidelines (DoE, 2002a) for implementing inclusive education list the following as the core functions of institutional-level support teams:

- Co-ordinating all learner, educator, curriculum and institution development support in the institution. This includes linking this support team to other school-based management structures and processes, or even integrating them so as to facilitate the co-ordination of activities and avoid duplication. Collectively identifying institutional needs and, in particular, barriers to learning at learner, educator, curriculum and institutional-levels.

- Collectively developing strategies to address these needs and barriers to learning. This should include a major focus on educator development and parent consultation and support.
- Drawing in the resources needed, from within and outside of the institution, to address these challenges. Monitoring and evaluating the work of the team within an 'action-reflection' framework. (pp. 117-118)

The concept appears simple and easily understood on the surface. Implementation, however, requires a high degree of teacher commitment and careful introduction to the adaptation of operating procedures in each school (Benn, 2004; Johnson, 1999).

6.4.2 ILST membership

The composition of such teams (See Appendix 9) should be flexible and dependant on the issues being discussed (DoE, 2001; 2002a). EWP6 (DoE, 2001)

does not specify who should be on the team, but the Report on the National Commission on Special Needs in Education and Training and the National Committee for Education Support Services provide some guidelines (SAND, 1997). There should be two full-time members, mainly teachers from the school. The coordinator is the first member and he/she actually drives and sustains the process. He/she should preferably be a member of the school management team or someone with qualifications, experience, or interest in the remedial/special education/guidance field. The role of the coordinator is to liaise with staff members and to arrange and chair meetings. The second member is the secretary/scribe. The function of the secretary is to keep accurate records of meetings and plans of action for cases discussed. Other members of the team are determined by the case being discussed. For example it could be the class teacher and someone with experience/expertise who could make significant contributions to the discussion. In addition to the core members, other people in the community could be invited to assist with particular challenges.

6.4.3 ILST training

All schools, irrespective of whether they did or did not have remedial classes and/or ELSEN units at the time, were invited to an introductory training workshop in 2002. Participation in the Townpine pilot study was a mandatory requirement of the district. Two schools, Primary School 1 and Primary School 2 attended the first training workshop while Primary School 3 thought it did not apply to them and did not attend.

The first phase of training provided information on the establishment of ILSTs, membership, their role functions, and the process to be followed in terms of identifying and supporting learners who experience barriers to learning. There was a long delay between the first and second training workshop due to teacher strike actions. This caused the ILST efforts at all three schools to come to a halt. At the second training workshop it was found that membership of some of the ILSTs had changed and the district personnel had to start from the beginning, which proved to be time-consuming. The second workshop which I attended and observed was in the beginning of 2008 and focused on training teachers to conduct parent interviews and managing ILST meetings. The invitation (See Appendix 10) was extended to the coordinators and secretaries of each school's ILST. Teachers were reminded to bring relevant documents to the meeting, as indicated at the first meeting. The invitations also stated that each school should have conducted one parent interview and held an ILST meeting, and that the relevant documentation thereof should be brought to the meeting. An additional note was made to schools that did not attend the first training, which read as follows, "It is especially important that schools marked with an asterisk attend the workshop as records show that they were not represented at the previous workshop" (See Appendix 10). A listing of schools was attached to the invitation and those that did not attend the first workshop were marked with asterisks.

From my observation this training workshop was well attended; all three sample schools were there. It started with an explanation for the long gap between training workshops. The content of the training covered the procedure for conducting parent interviews, and then the district official provided a section on counselling strategies for dealing with parents. The teachers seemingly found the training very useful and were

also given opportunity to raise concerns regarding ILST matters. They participated and collaborated positively with teachers from neighbouring schools. Stories of successes and challenges were presented and solutions to challenges were suggested. Concerns raised included teachers' lack of capacity to complete the ELSEN 001 Form provided by the department; parents not disclosing relevant information such as the medication learners were taking; the barriers that learners were experiencing; and where both parents were deceased, caregivers were not willing to share information about the learners.

The third training workshop was more practical: ILST members had to bring actual cases and mock ILST meetings were conducted to illustrate the process and the established procedures to follow. I had completed my data collection by the time this workshop materialised and did not attend.

6.4.4 Issues for ILST discussion

The kinds of issues that can be presented to the ILST include cognitive, social, emotional, physical, and behavioural problems (DoE 2001; 2002a). Group issues such as absenteeism may also be presented.

6.4.5 The ILST procedure

According to guidelines provided by the district officials to the teachers in the training workshop, the course of action begins when a teacher refers a learner to the ILST as a case (DoE, 2002b). The teacher must show records that he/she has tried to resolve the problems by herself and/or with the parents prior to submission to the ILST.

The coordinator is the first point of entry into the process. A detailed referral report should be completed containing all the relevant actions taken by the teacher. An ILST meeting is convened and the relevant ILST members and referring teacher/s are invited to attend. The case is then discussed and possible interim strategies are identified. Accurate records must be kept and parents must be informed at all times. If the problem

persists, a referral form must be completed, parents informed, and the case is then presented at the DBST for assistance.

6.5 THE SAMPLE SCHOOLS

I gathered information about the schools through formal and informal discussions with district officials, principals and teachers, and through personal observations during my visits to the schools. The three schools are located in a very poor suburb, which lies 40 kilometres north of the central business district of Durban. All school structures are solid brick buildings, appropriately maintained, neat and tidy, and able to cater for the number of learners who attend the schools, except for Primary School 1 which is currently experiencing an increase in school enrolment figures. There were security gates and a security guard present at all three schools. The nearest hospitals, clinics, police station, and shopping centres are approximately five kilometres from the schools. They all have adequate electricity and water supplies. A striking commonality of all the teachers participating in this study is their sense of prioritising the need to implement inclusion, to provide educational support, and to set up ILSTs. Disappointingly I learnt from my observations and attempts at setting up interviews with teachers and having ILST meetings, that all other school activities took precedence over inclusion, for example, Integrated Quality Management System (IQMS) which monitors teacher appraisal, quality and development, the debutants ball, excursions, and sports activities.

6.5.1 Primary School 1

When I entered the school premises I was pleased by the attractive gardens with many trees and colourful seasonal flowers. Even within the administration blocks there were large water features and pots of plants found at different points.

The school is located less than one kilometre away from a busy highway. The school population at Primary School 1 is made up of 31 teachers and 1043 learners. The racial composition is 39% black and 61% Indian learners and the pupil-teacher ratio is 33:1 on average per class. There is only one black teacher in the school and 30 Indian teachers.

On my first visit to the school I felt a comfortable atmosphere. The secretary's office had teachers waiting, there were parents requiring attention, and I was in the thick of things yet all were politely dealt with. The school had a male principal who looked very busy but agreed to see me. Initially he declared his disappointment that I did not consult with him prior to gaining permission to conduct research from the Superintendent General, but he soon settled down and displayed a keen interest in my study and referred me to the deputy principal who was also the coordinator of the ILST, as he felt she would be better able to assist with my requirements. I saw him once only to conduct an interview and did not see him again during my subsequent visits to the school. He has very strong relationships with the surrounding community of the school and sometimes even makes house visits.

The deputy principal is female and also looked very busy, busier than the principal. My guess was confirmed when the deputy mentioned that she actually runs the school very much on her own as the principal is involved in union matters and therefore always out of school. Her office looked well organised with adequate resources such as a computer, telephone, and furniture. She has a special interest in inclusion and has been doing extensive research on implementation in other countries to find out what works and what does not, to assist her efforts at the school. This was very encouraging for me as she too expressed her joy about my study which made things easier, to some extent, for my future endeavours at the school. Interviews with teachers revealed that they receive extensive support from the deputy which they find very useful in their professional development.

The school is quite progressive and introduces new projects all the time. For example, during assembly teachers have to present moral lessons twice a week. In terms of teacher development, many workshops are arranged and conducted. There is a good system of ensuring that information, such as new policies, is cascaded to all staff members by those who attend workshops. The school also provides workshops for surrounding schools in the area. For example, the school recently offered a 'Systems Information and Filing' workshop, and also provides community support. Teachers and learners spend a lot of time raising funds to sponsor planned school events.

Initially this school had a system of total separation where learners requiring additional learning support were permanently placed in classes in the ELSEN unit. The ELSEN unit became necessary at this school as many learners came from dysfunctional homes, and displayed both academic and social problems. The school started networking with social and health services and opened an ELSEN unit. Due to the intervention of the ILST coordinator who recognised the disadvantages of such a system, a pull-out system was introduced. The pull-out system allows for learners to be integrated into ordinary classes for most of the time and then withdrawn to the ELSEN unit for areas in which they require additional support. To ensure ease of transition for learners who return to ordinary classes, the themes and phase organisers for the ELSEN unit were organised to coincide with that of the ordinary classes. The ELSEN teacher fetches the learners from the ordinary class, provides the support programme, and then takes them back to their classrooms.

The ELSEN unit has two classes with 93 learners in total and two teachers work with the learners. The areas of academic focus are literacy and numeracy. The two classes range from Grade 2 to Grade 7. One class caters for Grade 2 to Grade 4, and within this unit they have three groups categorised according to levels of support required. The other class consists of Grades 5, 6 and 7. There are 12 to 15 learners in a group at any point in time. Learners spend an hour a day in the ELSEN unit and then return to their ordinary classes. The timetables are arranged such that while the ELSEN learners are at the unit, the ordinary class is covering the same learning area. The support teachers collaborate with the ordinary teachers about the content covered so that there is continuation between the ELSEN programme and the ordinary classes.

The ILST was formalised at the beginning of 2006 as a result of departmental regulation. The ILST coordinator claimed that they had a system in place that resembled the ILST three years before the formal ILST concept was introduced to them, due to the existence of the ELSEN unit. They do not have formal ILST meetings, due to lack of time. However, issues that require attention are discussed by management members of the different phases at management meetings on a weekly basis. The ILST coordinator felt that the structure was not functioning in the way that she would like it to and believes that there should be ongoing, regular meetings and that referring teachers and team

members need to discuss issues of concern. There should also be follow-up and report-back which is not happening. This makes her feel that the team is not on 'top of things'. At the meetings the referring teachers typically receive minimal feedback in terms of the kind of support that can be provided for learners.

The ILST process, according to the training manual provided to schools has a particular protocol (see Appendix 11). At this school, class teachers are responsible for identifying barriers to learning as per EWP6, then trying to support the learners by implementing various strategies to overcome the barriers. Should the intervention prove successful the process ends successfully. The class teacher has to record all the details, from identification to intervention. If the barrier to learning persists, the teacher then refers the case directly to the ELSEN teacher for assistance and advice in terms of supporting the learner. One process for identification, according to the teachers at the school, is a book called a 'Misdemeanour File' which every class teacher has. This file lists the names of learners and the number of times they transgress the rules and regulations of the school and/or teacher. Examples of misdemeanours are: not doing homework, chronic absenteeism, misbehaviour, or poor academic performance. Once the learner has three misdemeanours, it is reported to the head of the department for the respective grade. The head of the department then refers the case to the ILST coordinator. She normally deals with the learner on a one-on-one basis. If the problem persists, parents are consulted about interventions. If the problem is still unresolved, it is then referred to the social worker or relevant social services. Another process of identification is when parents report certain barriers to learning at the time of admission to the school.

It is very difficult to have structured time to meet with teachers, and collaboration occurs more informally than formally. For example, the time when the support teachers go to the ordinary classrooms to fetch the learners, and take them to the special unit for short periods, is often used for information sharing with ILST members. Teachers find the procedure of filling in forms problematic and time consuming. The referring teachers are very supportive of the ILST members, and try to keep accurate and detailed records in case of ILST interventions. Support teachers at this school are given free time and reduced workloads to cope with the administrative requirements of the ILST.

6.5.2 Primary School 2

Primary School 2 is located approximately two kilometres away from the highway. This school has 951 learners, 29 teachers (all Indian) and one intern psychologist (part-time). The learner composition is 30% black and 70% Indian and the pupil- teacher ratio is approximately 32:1 per class.

I announced myself to the secretary on the first visit to the school. The atmosphere was a bit tense so I sat and waited for the principal to have the interview. The principal was male, and there was no time for any social pleasantries; the meeting had to be to the point and we had to get on with business. He too first discussed the issue of gaining access for my study and we settled that he would consult with the District Office and SGB before he allowed me to take the study further. Once that was settled he would allow me to come in when required. This principal saw inclusion as too much of a challenge. He has been a resident in the district for nearly three decades, and has immense support from the community. Most of the current parents of the school have passed through the same school and are ex-students whom he has taught. He therefore has excellent support from the community and so the school can manage with the least amount of funding from the department. He agreed to brief the ILST coordinator about my visit.

The ILST coordinator was female and was the previous remedial class teacher. Due to her position at the school she was seen as the ideal candidate for the position of coordinator of the ILST. It was a long walk from the reception area to her class as it was located a distance away, at the end of a long corridor, and secluded from the other classrooms. Unfortunately, she was not aware of my visit and politely arranged to meet me at another time. After several attempts at trying to set up an interview, we agreed to meet at her home. She was an energetic and charitable person who was sympathetic towards learners who experience barriers to learning. Her first experience with inclusive education and ILSTs was through departmental workshops and through networking with teachers from Primary School 1, and district personnel.

This school had a lot of success stories in the provision of educational support for learners who experience barriers to learning. They have used a multidisciplinary approach in solving barriers experienced by learners, and have collaborated with the intern psychologist, social workers, the policing forum, and district personnel. The coordinator and the principal are grateful for the presence of an intern psychologist who was serving her internship at the school, working twice a week. The teachers seemed to feel that the intern was going to solve all the challenges they were experiencing with learners in their classrooms. I got the impression that they were almost glad to pass ownership of the problem on to the intern psychologist. Another innovation was the use of a 'mentor teacher'- meaning that a learner experiencing barriers is attached to one teacher who acts as a role model and monitors the learner's progress closely. For example, a learner was being bullied during break times and the mentor teacher intervened immediately which resolved the problem. However, the principal believes that the best solution is to refer learners to relevant outside agencies as the ILST process encroaches on 'teaching time'.

Prior to the introduction of inclusive education this school had two separate special education classes. The one class was called a 'remedial class' which catered for learners with minor or mild learning difficulties and the emphasis was on literacy and numeracy. The other class, called a 'special class', provided support to learners with moderate and severe learning difficulties. The remedial classes were based on a pull-out system, where the learners would attend classes until they reached an 'acceptable standard' and would then be sent back to the ordinary classes. On the other hand, once a child was admitted to the special class they remained there until their exit from school. With the advent of inclusive education, the school set one classroom aside, known as the ELSEN unit. They included learners who experience barriers to learning, from Grade 2 to Grade 7, in one class, with one teacher. There are no learners with severe physical or mental disabilities in this school although there are learners who experience reading, writing, and numeracy barriers to learning.

The ILST is a relatively new concept in the school and was implemented in 2007 as an initiative of EWP6. The ILST is made up of the ILST coordinator, secretary, management, and the HODs of each phase. The members were chosen by the chairperson, according

to her, on the basis of their personalities and characteristics. Many teachers however questioned the appointment of the ILST coordinator and felt that there were better qualified candidates. There seemed to be some tension around the selection of the coordinator position. Furthermore, the principal during our interview mentioned that members were democratically elected while the ILST coordinator said she chose and nominated them on the basis of their capacity and personality to add value to the provision of educational support and the functioning of the ILST. However, other ILST members said that the positions were delegated to them by the principal, as was the case with previous committees in the school, as well.

The ILST process begins with the teacher identifying the barriers to learning experienced by the learner and reports to the head of department, who then reports to the principal. He then refers the issue to the ILST which convenes and gathers all the relevant information necessary to assist in supporting the learner.

6.5.3 Primary School 3

Primary School 3 had a population of 644 learners, comprising of 80% Indian learners, 18% black learners, and 2% learners of colour. The ratio of learners to teachers is 32:1. The total number of teachers is 20. There are two black and 18 Indian teachers. In terms of gender there is only one male teacher at the school. The school has basic resources such as water, electricity, and an adequate number of teachers. They do not have a library and use the neighbouring school's library.

The school principal is female and has been at the school for 15 years. Like the principal of Primary School 2 she too displayed a somewhat negative attitude about the possibility and success of the new collaborative educational support structure. She was introduced to inclusion in 2002, at a departmental workshop for principals after which, she claims, she still did not know what was expected of her. With regards to changing the way educational support is provided, the principal mentioned during the interview, that it is the responsibility of the teacher to make it successful. In 2007 an ILST professional development workshop was conducted and the ILST coordinators plus two representatives of each school were invited. However, Primary School 3 ignored the

invitation and did not attend. The principal explained that they thought they were excluded as they do not have remedial units in place as in Primary School 1 and Primary School 2. Subsequently a letter requesting the names of members of the ILST had to be submitted to the district office. It was only at this point that an ILST was formed at Primary School 3. This principal seems to feel that her school was not receiving the kind of support that Primary School 1 and Primary School 2 were receiving from the district officials and therefore opposed implementing ILSTs at the school.

The deputy principal was also the coordinator of the ILST and had started the programme. Teachers were requested to nominate possible members to the team. Since there was no response, the deputy principal volunteered to head the committee, and the heads of each department were included as members by virtue of the fact that all referrals have to be submitted to them. Two other teachers volunteered their services and the principal oversees the process of the ILST. When barriers to learning, for example incomplete or not doing homework, fighting, violent behaviour are identified, the teachers make every effort to resolve them. Where necessary, the case gets referred to the district office or parents. Some parents seek assistance privately and this is accepted as long as there is a report submitted so that the teachers have some kind of feedback to monitor progress.

ILSTs are perceived as 'very loose' structures and unlike other committees in the school, according to the teachers. The district office does not hold schools accountable for the minutes of ILSTs like it does with other committees and therefore there is a lack of seriousness about the business of ILSTs which filters through to the school level; not even the superintendents of education management (SEMs) monitor the progress of ILST development.

In 2006, the need for a remedial class and a remedial teacher was identified during an analysis depicting strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats of the school, during a staff development programme held with the school governing body. The governing body agreed to pay for the remedial teacher and the programme began in 2007. The deputy principal developed a timetable which allows for learners who experience barriers to learning to be removed from ordinary classes. They are taken to

the remedial room and receive one-on-one attention from the remedial teacher. The programme starts from the basics, for example with bonds, tables, and the four basic operations in maths. In English, it includes word identification and reading literacy. This process of remediation is closely monitored by the deputy principal. The remedial teacher also works closely with teachers to assist in supporting learners in the ordinary classes. There is not enough time, according to teachers, so ILST meetings do not occur in any structured way at Primary School 3.

There seems to be a systemic understanding that a pull-out approach is the best system in the current situation in schools. The district official who directed me to possible research sites cited Primary School 1 as being the most progressive school in terms of providing educational support, of the three schools chosen. The other two principals are of the same opinion. Primary School 2 also has a pull-out system, but the approach differs. In Primary School 1 learners are pulled out for short periods during school time, while in Primary School 2, once learners are placed in remedial classes, they remain there permanently. Primary School 1 is used as a *perfect example*. Primary School 1 continued use of remedial classes is indicative of the persistence of the deficit model. Furthermore, it shows how difficult it is to bring about change in practice and to re-culture the way teachers think and function. A further confusion arises when the people who are meant to be assisting with the implementation of ILSTs, namely some district office personnel, have not acquired the necessary shifts in their values, attitudes, and beliefs.

6.6 CONCLUSION

I was interested to explore the extent to which the nature of the different contexts of the schools, as described above, would facilitate or be barriers to setting up appropriate educational support services utilising collaborative approaches. The discussion presented suggests that there are some facilitating factors and barriers to transforming educational support for learners who experience barriers to learning.

The next chapter presents the findings from my study.

CHAPTER SEVEN

TEACHERS BECOMING INCLUSIVE EDUCATIONAL SUPPORT PROVIDERS

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

7.1 INTRODUCTION

This study was premised on the notion that teachers' knowledge of inclusion and educational support services and their implementation thereof are likely to be influenced by the context for change, teacher cultures, and restructuring. One primary and four secondary questions for the study were formulated as follows:

The primary research question can be formulated as follows:

How do Institutional-Level Support Team teachers understand the provision of education support through collaboration within the context of White Paper 6?

- How do ILST teachers view providing education support?
- How do ILST teachers understand providing education support through collaboration?
- What experiences do ILST teachers have of providing education support through collaboration?
- What are possible enabling factors for providing education support through collaboration?

Data was collected using individual interviews, focus group interviews, observations, and document analysis. The unit of analysis included teachers who were members of the ILSTs in three primary schools in KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa. The data analysis and interpretation is presented according to themes identified in the data.

This chapter presents the results of teachers' understanding of providing educational support through collaboration within the context of inclusive education. I refer to the district officials' responses to establishing and managing ILSTs at schools, as this influenced the teachers' understanding of providing educational support. The findings

are aggregated across the three schools as there were more commonalities than differences in the data collected.

7.2 TEACHERS IN ILSTS UNDERSTANDING OF PROVIDING EDUCATIONAL SUPPORT THROUGH COLLABORATION

The results for the primary research question is presented according to the following four identified themes:

- Educational support is viewed from different discourses
- Educational support through collaboration is dependent on the understanding of the requirements of policy implementation.
- Teachers experience providing educational support through collaboration as complying with policy.
- Potential for change

The codes used for identifying participants' contributions during the interviews are as follows:

IP1: Individual interview with the principal of Primary School 1

IP2: Individual interview with the principal of Primary School 2

IP3: Individual interview with the principal of Primary School 3

IC1: Individual interview with the ILST coordinator of Primary School 1

IC2: Individual interview with the ILST coordinator of Primary School 2

IC3: Individual interview with the ILST coordinator of Primary School 3

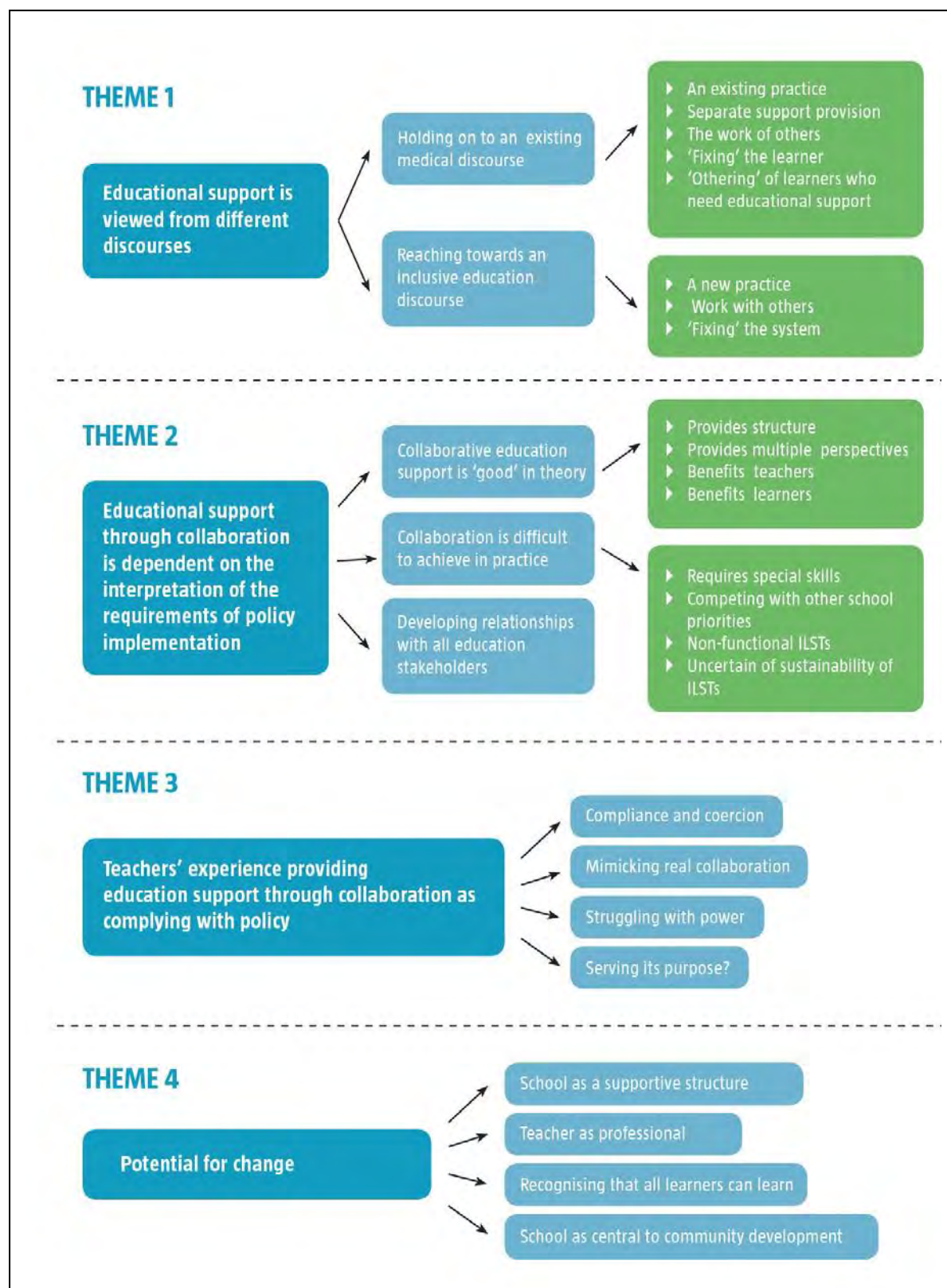
FG1: Focus group interview with ILST teachers at Primary School 1

FG2: Focus group interview with ILST teachers at Primary School 2

FG3: Focus group interview with ILST teachers at Primary School 3

OM3: Observation at an ILST meeting held at Primary School 3

FIGURE 7.3: ILST teachers understanding of education support through collaboration



7.2.1 Educational support is viewed from different educational discourses

Educational discourses influence teachers' views about educational support and could limit or facilitate change toward inclusive education. The implementation of inclusive education requires radical changes in thinking about where barriers to learning arise from, as well as how educational support is provided. Practices that display exclusion and segregation are located in the Special Education Act, influenced by the medical paradigm, and is associated with medical discourse. With the implementation of EWP6, the views of all stakeholders in the education sector, especially teachers, should have changed toward the South African Schools Act promoting inclusive education, using inclusive discourses.

When the teachers expressed their views of providing educational support through collaboration it was found that most of them were still thinking within a medical rather than an inclusive educational discourse. Perhaps teachers are still holding onto the existing medical discourse. This theme is divided into two categories: holding on to existing medical discourse and reaching towards inclusive education.

7.2.1.1 Holding on to an existing medical discourse

To illustrate that teachers remained in the medical discourse, I present data which reveals their views: an existing practice, separate support provision, 'fixing' the learner, and work of others.

An existing practice

The data showed that participants viewed inclusive education support as something that they have always been doing which is an indication of a lack of shift in their understanding of it.

ILST is a new structure envisaged by EWP6 (DoE, 2001). The participants' views indicated that they have been providing educational support, but not formally, or structured as ISTs. They expressed themselves as follows:

So somehow we seem to have been in line with the kind... services we were offering here at school and I think that's where it basically took off because ... it was more familiar, not something new. So we found that we embodied most of what was expected of an IST (IC1).

That was very recently done ... in a structural manner right. But we have been doing ... we have been performing before all this. So it was very easy for us to set the structure up. We had teachers that were already... like I was communicating with certain teachers when I had problems (IC1).

... in terms of the IST it is a relatively new concept but for our school it has been in existence for a long time (FG3).

...have been doing it for a long time... but we're actually doing these things because we have identified them and we have them in school and so on but ... now, they are now launching this IST program formally and now bringing all the things that we are doing, I think, together under one heading to say now it's going to be IST (IP3).

The danger of participants thinking that collaborative educational support has always been provided is that they see little or no reason to change their practice.

Some teachers in this study were of the opinion that only the terminologies have changed and that they have always provided support to learners.

I think many years ago when I first came into the profession, they used to talk, although the terminology was not the same, but I think right at that time ... I think in the early seventies or late seventies IE was very rife. We catered for the learners who were not performing according to the normal stream learners but it's just that we've called them all different names, first we used to call them remedial learners, then weak learners, learners experiencing difficulty with learning but we didn't really use that terminology, then we had ELSEN learners. You know each time the terminologies change but we catered from the time I started teaching, I would say, I have catered in my curriculum for the learners who were not functioning as the normal stream learner would (IP2).

In essence this participant is saying that through the years, despite all the changes that have occurred, practice has remained the same while terminologies may have changed.

Separate support provision

Believing that a 'pull-out' programme is acceptable as a way of providing educational support is another indication of participants working within a medical discourse. The participants pointed out that they believed learners who experience barriers to learning should be taught separately:

Children who are having educational problems do not have to be in a remedial class, if the school has a remedial class maybe it is just an hour or so a day. Major part of the day they should be with the classes they are supposed to be in. Schools should have some kind of intervention programme to assist learners with emotional or physical disabilities to allow them to reach levels of the other learners in the grades (FG1).

...they are just pulled out for one hour per day. Support is offered to them with the specialised educator. And they go back into mainstream (IP1).

...with them it's to pull out, pull them out for an hour and focus on reading, focus on um, language usage and comprehension, those issues (IC1).

... the very weak learners...will be pulled out during the maths lessons and they will be taught basic maths ... (FG3).

The other teachers in the focus group agreed. They stated that they care about learners to the extent that they were planning on setting up a separate class in the next year. The teachers' are being influenced by Primary School 1 that has remedial classes and is considered a model school for the promotion of inclusive educational practices. The danger of emulating such cases is that it prevents teachers' from designing creative and innovative systems and procedures for the provision of educational support.

The work of others

Within the medical discourse, educational support is provided in special schools, by special teachers, for learners with special needs. The belief that educational support is not a teachers' job, remains intact. Most teachers shift the responsibility for providing educational support to others such as parents, other teachers, social welfare, child line,

occupational therapists, and psychologists, and this is illustrated in the excerpts which follow.

One principal was of the view that

...certain teachers should be specifically trained to handle this. They really have to because the mainstream teacher is too busy with the mainstream children. Their hands are full (IP2).

This principal does not think that educational support should be the job of the ordinary teacher; a teacher should be specifically trained for this purpose. The same participant believes that providing educational support is *encroaching in our work*, implying that it is not the ordinary teachers' job.

The finding also illustrates that the task of providing educational support is seen as that of the teacher currently providing remedial services. The same coordinator later in the interview stated that the ILST is a

*... healthy thing, but at the end of the day it just becomes mine, my, my baby...totally. You know and I don't blame the other teachers because they are **so** (emphasis by participant) busy with mainstream... (IC2).*

She also accepted this situation as normal. Another participant felt that parents are not even taking responsibility for learners who experience barriers to learning:

Nobody wants to take responsibility for the child that is underperforming, the parents don't want to...he should be in special school by now... (FG3).

This excerpt reflects the teachers' view that if parents took responsibility she would not have to provide educational support for the learner. Another participant felt that educational support should be provided by the PGSES or a person trained for the purpose of providing support. The following quote illustrates the point.

...that is not the job, not our job you know PGSES should take that on, there should be bodies in place to handle these issues because we are teaching at schools and we don't have that kind of time (IC2).

Participants were of the view that specially trained personnel and parents should be providing educational support to learners experiencing barriers to learning, and not ordinary teachers. The consequence is that the teachers did not take ownership for providing educational support.

'Fixing' the learner

Typical of the medical discourse, participants were identifying barriers to learning from within the learner. However, another influence was the materials presented to teachers during workshops provided by the district officials. These focused mainly on physical, sensory and neurological disabilities such as hearing impairments, visual impairments and physical disabilities. They were provided with materials to assist with identification and possible intervention strategies.

When the teachers were discussing identification of barriers to learning there was no mention of barriers that could occur from the school, or classroom context. For example, teachers refer to the barriers as follows:

... they have a psychological problem

... he is dyslexic

... behaviour problem

... academic problem (FG1).

I think our main strategy is to find the, device methods of how we are going to remediate those problems ... we will try as far as possible to see how we are going to remediate some of these problems... (TM3).

The procedure for the identification of barriers to learning, is through the "Misdemeanour File". Examples of misdemeanours are: not doing homework, chronic absenteeism, misbehaviour, and poor academic performance. Once learners have their names listed three times they are identified as needing additional support. There was an

absence of identifying barriers to learning that could occur due to factors within the school, teacher or teaching methodologies, i.e. systemic barriers. The “Draft Guidelines for the Implementation of Inclusive Education” (DoE, 2002a) provides a framework for teachers to use when identifying barriers to learning which includes the following:

What in the *learner* her/himself is contributing to the problem? Is the *teacher* contributing to the problem in any way? Are other aspects of the *curriculum* impacting on the problem? How does the *school/institution*, physical and interpersonal environment affect the problem? How does the *home environment* influence the teaching and learning process? Are there broader *community and social* factors that are acting as barriers to the learning process? (p. 110)

It appears that teachers received mixed signals about the origination of barriers to learning. While the policy directs teachers to the possibility of barriers to learning stemming from systemic factors and/or within learners themselves, the training materials focused on factors residing within the learner such as various disabilities. This situation could have been incorrectly understood by participants and contributed to them resorting to what they know from existing beliefs, which is that the problem lies within the learner and that it can be ‘fixed’.

‘Othering’ of learners who need educational support

Influenced by the medical discourse, teachers were accustomed to viewing learners who experience barriers to learning as the ‘other’. They were seen as not ‘normal’, ‘different’ from us, and even less worthy of respect and dignity. This negative attitude of teachers led to the labelling of learners who experience barriers to learning. Unfortunately the data from this study illuminated the fact that the participants were still entrenched in the practice of ‘othering’. The following excerpts illustrate the point:

they are having apathy and they’re lazy’ (IP3).

... is weak mainly through apathy but not because he has a problem... (FG3)

He’s terrible (OM3).

... we have children that are of the... type that cannot cope. They, they don't have that mentality ... because they don't have a happy home situation. They, some of them even their nutrition; you can actually see the marks ... (IC2).

They cannot, they're not on par with even the average of their age group.

... like I said the teacher just came and called them 'mentals', 'mentals'. That's not right (IC2).

The data suggests that the teachers in this study still used a discourse of 'othering' which has a negative impact on learners who experience barriers to learning. It is possible that the participants' pre-service and/or in-service professional development was insufficient in terms of the necessary shifts required for inclusive education and a social justice discourse. The discourse used by teachers in this study indicated that they were of the opinion that learners require 'pity', are not capable of taking care of themselves, and require someone else to do it for them. An interesting point is that the ILST coordinator of Primary School 2 displayed concern that other teachers in the school refer to learners as 'mentals' yet she used the discourse of 'othering' herself.

7.2.1.2 Reaching towards an inclusive education discourse

A small number of teachers had a broad understanding of the purpose of inclusion which can be described as real moments of inclusion. To show that some teachers looked forward to inclusive education, I present data which revealed their views, as follows: a new discourse, mainstream support provision, 'fixing' the system, and work with others.

A new practice

The participants raised numerous issues about educational support that demonstrated that they had an understanding of educational support within the inclusive discourse.

So I agree totally with EWP6 and inclusivity for the simple reason that we shouldn't isolate these children, they should be part of society, after all, they live and dwell with society so they must have skills to cope with society. They cannot be isolated, it doesn't work. I think the IST goes a little further with children of any kind of

problem, whether it's a behaviour problem or an inner problem from the home, the IST should be providing the support for those children as well (IC2).

Inclusion, to me means basically that children who are physically disabled ... you know like legs, paraplegic and so on, they can come to a mainstream school, and they don't have to go to another school (IP3).

We look at IST in a very broad aspect, we don't look at IST only where learners benefit. We look at IST where educators are also part of benefiting from the expertise and skill of the IST team. We look at the community and that is why we have extended ourselves. We even have a bereavement fund. If there is a death with a parent of the learner we support them financially, same happens for our educators. So I think it goes beyond just support and helping people. If people are happy they are more productive. If learners are happy they learn better and I think that's where we focus and I think that's where we are winning (FG3).

We are actually more of a social institute here than an educational institution. We are checking to see whether they have their lunches, whether they have their basic need. We are supplying them with everything and not a few...quite a number... (FG3).

A change was noticed in the language that some teachers used, which indicated that there was a movement towards a broader understanding of inclusive education. Some teachers seemed to accept inclusion and providing learners with additional educational support.

Well, what is it as this like I said to you cannot treat these children in isolation, they belong to a world and they need to have skills and they need to, they need to function with the mainstream people because that's how they going to live with them. They cannot be in isolation I do not agree with that. So even in the school situation they shouldn't be isolated. It is not my view of the way they should be handled... (IC2).

The ILST coordinator expressed anxiety for even making the above statement in the interview, as the school had separate special classes. For me, this reveals that even though teachers believe and accept the philosophy of an inclusive educational support system, structural constraints and the scarcity of necessary resources obstructs their ability to enact inclusive education.

But I'm finding some schools are isolating them... And this is that our school has set a classroom aside. Now in this classroom we have children that are of the ... type that cannot cope.... But I suppose we have problems with teachers. The department

is not giving us educators to handle this kind of set up, so that is why we have this situation at our school (IC2).

The language these participants used was very different to the language of the participants who seem trapped in the medical discourse. The language depicted a social justice discourse which included:

shouldn't isolate

support

change

barrier to learning

no isolation

they have so much intelligence (FG1).

These phrases display a positive attitude toward learners who experience barriers to learning, although they still seem to see the problem within the learner. This could be an indication that the teachers may provide educational support in an inclusive manner.

From the data it became apparent that some participants grasped the difference between the two discourses and chose to move towards inclusive educational support. However, their practices were mostly constrained by structural factors and a lack of resources.

Work with others

Creating collaborative partnerships is an essential feature of providing inclusive educational support for learners who experience barriers to learning. Some teachers were able to see its relevance:

So in the IST we'd like to get people from the social work, people from the police, and people from the department of health. So we have a fully functional, a fully-fledged IST. We are unable to offer them support we try and elicit the help and support from outside organizations (IP1).

So these interviews were carried with, you know, with parents long before, we actually got into the program for learners and we found a lot of needs there, so we started engaging in... utilising the social services like the social workers, a bit of the health nurses, the nurses from the health department and so forth to help these kids cope with it and, with that we found that many children were already diagnosed ADD, ADHD and then we started asking for records and reports from the psychologist or the assessment centre (IC1).

Some teachers in this study were of the opinion that although they have an ILST at school, it is also important that they include outside organisations such as the health department, social workers, and psychologists, to assist with the provision of educational support.

A point of contention is that even when teachers understood educational support within the inclusion model, structural constraints compelled them to practice a model of separation. This suggests that teachers' practices are sometimes different from their understanding, due to situational contexts and limitations beyond their control.

Analysis of the data illustrates that these teachers had a combination of views of educational support. Most teachers were strongly influenced by the medical discourse, while a few have made the necessary shifts to an inclusive educational discourse. It suggests that the requirements of EWP6 with regard to the provision of educational support could be negatively affected by differing philosophical discourses that inform teachers' understanding.

'Fixing' the system

Some teachers were able to grasp the systemic concept of barriers to learning, and that they have to improve the school environment:

Just to say the IST does not actually mean sorting out children with learning problems; it can be children with serious home problems... (IP2).

So we are now targeting learners where we are providing quality education so these learners get educated, where we provide a conducive family environment for them, encouraging them to come to school... (IP1).

I think at the end of the day we want a happy environment, we want children to perform to their full potential and IST will obviously impact the school positively like that. Because you'll get better results, you'll get happier children and also now we trying to cater for like, we are getting in road shows, having entertainment besides the sports day and make them, give them a little more than just the curriculum and it's all because IST has identified needs of the children, have identified learners with learning problems that they feel it's not just about the curriculum but the children need to have a better life, we work very hard here as you will see. We try to paint and to pave and we try to make the school a place where they'll love coming. A place where they will enjoy and look forward to coming to everyday. It must be part of their home environment because some of their home conditions are not conducive to learning (IC1).

... when it comes to any other learning area he is quiet, won't say much, whereas the one next to him might be arrogant, but let it come to drawing and art and see how there is a transformation of personality where he is 'superior than thou'. So we try and encourage that (FG1).

The statements made by these participants' show that they have managed to move towards understanding barriers to learning as emanating from the system as well. Furthermore, they believe that they have to create a school environment that is more conducive to teaching and learning; include more extra-curricular activities, and that they have to make the school a welcoming environment as a way of providing educational support to learners.

Discussion: Teachers' views vacillate between the medical and inclusive education discourses of educational support through collaboration

It was not surprising that most teachers remained trapped in the medical discourse as their previous and current professional development were influenced by it. This kind of thinking led teachers to believe that only special education teachers have the capacity to provide educational support; that separate facilities are in the best interest of the learner, that the deficit is located within the learner, and that specialist intervention is necessary (DoE, 2002a; Swart & Pettipher, 2005). These beliefs and values affect the emerging organisational paradigm called inclusive education (Carrington & Elkins, 2002).

The findings of this study resonate with other studies (Benn, 2004; Carter, et al., 2009; D' Amant, 2009; Ntombela, 2006), where teachers made statements that reflect both the medical and inclusive education discourses. The move towards inclusive education necessitates a shift in views (Bornman & Rose, 2010; Deal & Peterson, 2009; Doyle, 2001; Fullan, 1996; Giles & Yates, 2011; Ntombela, 2006), especially for teachers.

One explanation for the teachers' lack of ability to move beyond the medical discourse could be that the professional development workshops were inadequate. It relied on a cascade model and only two ILST teachers per school were invited to attend. The understanding of the cascade model is that teachers that attend the training sessions will return and present the new content acquired to other teachers at the school. However, the content may be distorted due to individual teachers' interpretation thereof. The inefficiency of the cascade model was one of the lessons learnt from the implementation of Curriculum 2005 and the Revised National Curriculum Statements (SAND, 2001a; Malcolm, 2001), and still continues to be the preferred method utilised by district officials. Findings from this study indicate that professional development workshops did not provide the required framework for deep learning to occur for the teachers in this study.

The time allotted to ILST professional development workshops could also have influenced the teachers' misunderstandings or lack of understanding of educational support. Two hours appears completely inadequate to introduce teachers to a new way of thinking about inclusive educational support, schooling, and their roles within it. Substantive change is very challenging and teachers require time to unlearn what they already know of educational support, and to make complex and fundamental changes in their knowledge structures. The 'one size fits all' conceptualisation of training material also misses a very fundamental condition for the possibility of transformation and that is, the school context. It is short-sighted to believe that the same material can be used, unaltered, to suit the needs of different school contexts throughout South Africa.

It became evident that teachers in this study viewed new ideas, such as the provision of inclusive educational support, as familiar. This familiarity reinforces the point that Spillane, Reiser and Reimer (2002) make, namely that "[f]undamental conceptual change requiring restructuring of existing knowledge is extremely difficult" (p. 398).

Teachers preserved existing frameworks, in a position of uncertainty, rather than transformed them. Therefore, changing teachers' attitudes, skills, and practice is not a given that resides in policy imperatives like EWP6, but depends on how teachers "first notice, then frame, interpret, and construct meaning from policy messages" (Spillane et al, 2002, p. 5). Thus, policy is made at all levels and is dependent on the views of teachers that are responsible for enacting it.

Spillane, et al. (2002, p. 5) suggests that policy implementers "need to take account of and to unpack implementing agents' sense-making from and about policy," which implies reculturing. According to Spillane et al., how teachers understand policy depends on the interaction between the teachers' prior knowledge, local needs and conditions, and policy information. They suggest that first, there is a need to explore teachers' sense-making, especially attending to how they notice and interpret policy. Second, the context or situation is critical to understanding teachers' sense-making. Third, the policy signals sent to teachers could provide a strong motivation or hinder teachers' sense-making process.

Educational change such as inclusive educational support brings about uncertainties among teachers. From the findings of this study, and concurring with Fullan (1996), that change is inherently non-linear in character, it might be useful not to be pre-occupied with the promises of systemic reform on its own for change. A more powerful strategy is reculturing and restructuring simultaneously for sustainable change. This might imply a slower adoption process since reculturing is a long-term strategy of changing the conditions and nature of inclusion and educational support services. Nevertheless, I believe it is better to have a slower adoption process, instead of poor implementation due to inadequate understanding of the transformation required. It is strategies like reculturing within the systemic reform initiative that help develop and organise the views, attitudes, values, beliefs, and motivations in the minds and hearts of a large number of teachers, in other words, shifting the dominant discourse.

7.2.2 Educational support through collaboration is dependent on the understanding of the requirements of policy implementation

In an inclusive education system 'educational support' implies a different and broader understanding of support. Barriers to learning are understood from an ecosystemic perspective which implies that learners and teachers find themselves within a network of contexts that may have an impact on them. In an inclusive education discourse, educational support includes ordinary teachers, community, parent, and specialist support. Thus collaboration is seen as an emerging and accepted strategy to assist policy implementers, teachers, and schools, in their attempts at policy implementation, the professional development of teachers, promoting change, and school improvement efforts (Engelbrecht & Green, 2007).

The emerging evidence regarding school-based collaboration in the United States suggests four conclusions about collaboration (Idol, Nevin & Paolucci-Whitcomb, 1994; Villa & Thousand, 1996). First, learners who experience barriers to learning can benefit when teachers collaborate in teaching practices and coping mechanisms. Second, knowledge, skills, values, and attitude towards collaboration among teachers can be developed. Third, the solutions resulting from collaboration are of a better quality than when they are made individually. Fourth,

[e]ffective collaborators can expect positive changes at three levels: (a) changes in schooling systems (e.g., more team teaching among general and special educators); (b) changes in the skills, attitudes, and behaviours of adult collaborators; and (c) improvements in the academic progress and social skills of learners experiencing barriers to learning" (Villa & Thousand, 1996, p. 176).

This theme is divided into three categories: collaborative education support is 'good' in theory, collaborative education is difficult to achieve in practice, and it is necessary to develop relationships with all education stakeholders.

7.2.2.1 Collaborative educational support is 'good' in theory

There are not many teachers that would question that the theory of inclusive education advances democratic and social justice principles. It endorses the inclusion of those

previously marginalised from the mainstream of society and education, implying respect and collaboration as social goals (Engelbrecht & Green, 2007).

Teachers explained their interpretations of collaborative educational support as good by mentioning its many benefits. I therefore present this category by discussing how it can provide structure, provide multiple perspectives, benefit teachers, and benefit learners.

Provides structure

ILST meetings are meant to provide a platform for teachers to discuss learners who experience barriers to learning with the intention of finding the most appropriate forms of support. The benefit of having formal meetings was expressed as:

....when you actually sit formally at a meeting ... it is an extremely good method of actually getting teachers to talk and then for all of us to know and know exactly what's happening in the school because for example I am having all these experiences in my class maybe I can share it with the principal or maybe an HOD. But when we are sitting as a group, you know, you have representation from level one, management, and the different phases so here everyone is giving an input and by each one of us maybe an isolated incident one could have noticed in the sports ground or one could have noticed outside while on duty. Then we know exactly that a certain child, if we identify the child, yes, this is a serious... (IC2).

This teacher perceived the ILST meeting as a useful space where teachers can get to know what is happening in the school with regards to learners and to share their concerns about learners.

Provides multiple perspectives

The nature of ILSTs draws together stakeholders from various disciplines and communities which encourages a multiplicity of voices to be heard. To illustrate, participants drew on the example of one particular learner:

It's important, very important because in isolation I may know one child but for example now because in our meeting, now I mentioned that particular child,

everyone would have thought that he was just a write off, you know, he is beyond redemption, he cannot be taught again. But that particular child, my heart goes out to him because his parents are going through a very hard, are going through a divorce and it's affecting him dramatically...he has the potential, he's a very bright child but because of the anger that is coming from home, he's giving vent to his feelings...(FG2)

... that child needs help immediately and we'd pool our resources together and get help for that child. So it's extremely important, I think it's an excellent idea... (IC2).

Teachers in the focus group believed that they could make incorrect or inappropriate decisions when supporting learners individually. They realised the benefit of pooling their resources by having other teachers' perspectives and inputs and thereby finding the best interventions.

Benefits for teachers

Teachers often work in isolation and are rarely provided with educational support to cope with the changing environment in which they work. Collaboration within inclusive education alleviates this problem by supporting teachers in their endeavours toward an inclusive educational support system. Support provided by the ILSTs includes identifying teacher needs and addressing them within schools. The teachers also realised that it is possible that ILSTs could provide support not only for learners but also for teachers:

I think that the IST must be a small committee that focuses its attention to solving problems and helping children, and it's just not here for learners with barriers to learning, it is here to provide support for learners that have a wide range of problems that can be brought onto them and I know from a point of view this is just an institution support team looking at learners, if our team could also lend the support because you also have educators that are in need of support (IC1).

Teachers also work in complex environments and could encounter sensitive issues at school:

Remember working with children with learning barriers is not an easy task and you also, you know, sometimes you don't achieve anything for that entire week you're with them. I mean, you think you've got there and next day they've forgotten just about everything, it's really very demotivating for teachers working with these children all the time. So that was a good thing and I think IST should incorporate

*that now, is to say let's have the ELSEN educators meet teachers, to meet, share ideas, talk about some, give us some kind of suggestions to what worked for them um, then you'll find that people feel a little bit more motivated and say, hey, if we're failing there's somebody out there that can probably, you know, help (IC1).
... there is a lot of merit in the IST. I am sure it will solve lots of our other stresses that we have in the school (IP1).*

The ILST could be a formal structure where teachers discuss the challenges they encounter with learners experiencing barriers to learning and in this way avoid losing motivation. It might also make them feel less isolated because they are sharing ideas with others having similar experiences.

Benefits for learners

Many learners in ordinary classrooms require educational support but have not been previously identified as requiring it. ILSTs provide a forum where barriers to learning experienced by learners are addressed. This endorses respect for learners through improving the teaching and learning environment and the standards achieved by all learners. One principal thought that having an ILST is an advantage to learners since teachers can consult other teachers that they felt comfortable with rather than the principal only:

... I think having an IST is that the children tend to go to the teachers who they can confide in rather than thinking that the principal is the one who is going to be in charge of sorting out all problems. Because we find that children can actually go to people that they can confide in, people who they can connect with and by pouring out their problems we are able to actually assist the child. So we've got a system where children can actually go to teachers who they can be friendly with, tell them what their problems are and eventually come as a team to see how best we can help the children. So we have succeeded in that aspect (IP1).

But really, the IST intentions are very good. There's no doubt about that because if you look at the document and you read the document it is for the learners. And the end of the day I always emphasise this to the educators, the core function in schools are teaching and learning. Sports, the excursions are by the way and if we are not achieving our aims in teaching and learning then we need to go back and revisit why and I think the IST does that for us (IP2).

I think at the end of the day we want a happy environment, we want children to perform to their full potential and IST will obviously impact the school positively like that (IP2).

Another principal interprets the ILST in terms of what it should be and do. He perceives it as a structure that assists with the core functioning of the school, which is teaching and learning. At his school the ILST identified the need to make the school a welcoming environment so that learners will be motivated to attend school.

Teachers in this study interpreted the ILST in a positive light and agreed with its intentions and principles. They interpreted the ILST as beneficial in that it provides structure for educational support, and that learners would also benefit through the collaboration of many teachers resulting in multiple perspectives on identification and possible intervention strategies for learners.

7.2.2.2 *Collaboration is difficult to achieve in practice*

The respect for collaboration afforded by inclusive education is desirable. However, its implementation in schools is proving to be a challenge. As demonstrated, the participants interpreted collaborative educational support as a useful mechanism for improving teaching and learning in schools but they also considered it difficult to achieve in practice. Implementing a collaborative structure such as an ILST is a complex process and its outcome could depend on a number of influences such as the nature of the change, teachers' readiness for change, their interpretation of the change, and structural factors. To discuss the teachers' interpretation that collaboration is difficult to achieve in practice, I draw on data that illustrate this. It includes the following: teaching time, special skills, competing with other school priorities, and uncertainty of sustainability.

It is important to begin this category by describing how teachers interpreted ILSTs as structures for the provision of educational support. They are meant to represent a trans-disciplinary approach to providing inclusive educational support for learners who experience barriers to learning. The following participant describes what he considers an ILST to be

...fortunately because of our foresight, and hindsight, we started it a long time ago where we've had a multidisciplinary approach in solving all our problems at our school, so much so that we have an intern psychologist based at our school, and we

have social workers attached to the school, we have community policing forum and all that. So we've started that a long time ago (IP2).

Collaboration is a complex concept and is often used synonymously with a multi-disciplinary approach. However, inclusive education has broadened the concept to include teachers, specialists, parents, community members, and learners. It envisages a community-based approach (DoE, 2001) to educational support and a move away from the multidisciplinary approach. It seems that the participant (IP2) did not fully understand what collaboration meant within the context of inclusive education.

Teaching time

Time for teachers is controlled by the structures and organisation of schools. They have very little spare time to participate in activities such as professional development including the provision of inclusive educational support. As illustrated in this study, one of the difficulties teachers experienced in collaborating for educational support was lack of time. This means that providing additional educational support has to happen after school hours, and teachers were not happy with this situation. During a focus group interview, one teacher reported an incident where she intervened and the learner was sent for assessment and diagnosed with *border line retardation*. The participants commented as follows:

Where is the time? ...It's not even challenging, it's difficult, there's no time, there's just no time... (FG3).

Teaching is very stressful; it's time consuming; you have to manage your time effectively. How do you balance your time teaching and your time performing your duties as an IST member? (IP2)

There is far too little time because we have so many meetings that we have to fight for time. Now, I'm going to schedule a meeting now, to handle this identification of children for 2008 (IC2).

Because teaching in a public school we are in charge of fund raising, there are so many different things, there's no time to breathe and this compound places a lot of pressure on the teacher... In terms of our challenges we do find this actually encroaching into our work (IP1).

It takes so much of time, you'd rather shout at them, intervene and not even because it's so, it's so time consuming (OM3).

The participants felt that they will not have time to collaborate after school hours. Reasons given are that there are already too many meetings after school, which they can barely cope with and expecting them to make time for collaboration was being unrealistic. If collaboration is required during school hours then it encroaches on their contact time with learners. In addition the administrative procedures when a learner is referred to the ILST is time consuming, with the result they would rather not refer the case at all.

Requires special skills

Teachers think that they do not have the required skills to provide educational support so they interpret providing educational support through collaboration as someone else providing it. They also do not see themselves as having skills which they can share during collaboration.

Inclusive education teachers are required to think differently about their roles. Their roles have shifted beyond the provision of academic services to include a pastoral and welfare role. As lifelong learners they should continuously be developing their knowledge and skills. However, participants felt that collaborative educational support is difficult to achieve in practice and they do not feel adequately prepared to provide it. It requires specialised skills which they do not have. If not properly addressed, it could leave teachers feeling emotionally distressed and helpless:

He refused to do his work, he would just sit and distract all the other children, disrupt the lesson and when his mother came and told us the other side of the coin it was very, very sad. And this child has totally no parental care or supervision. There are lots of children, now how do we help that child? How do we help the child in that position? (FG3).

Even the teachers that are qualified to teach mainstream classes aren't qualified to teach, to handle these children. So it is a major, major problem. They need to be work-shopped. They need to even understand how to even identify these children in their classrooms...But mainstream teachers aren't skilled to handle that situation. And I feel inclusivity will only work when teachers are brought on board, networked and work-shopped and because it's not really there yet in their minds (IC2).

...although we had lots of information, the hands-on experience, or the practicality of it, wasn't really brought down to us. Like when you go back to school, the practicality of setting up your IST, and with the result you would find that we did come back to school, but an IST, as such, was not formed immediately at that point in time (FG3).

... both the teachers that I have as ELSEN teachers don't have the kind of experience or the kind of background where they're going to offer support to the mainstream teacher (IC2).

...but in most schools I'm sure they don't have that kind of... expertise to deal with it... (IC1).

The ILST teachers are meant to provide support for ordinary teachers with regards to coping with learners who experience barriers to learning. However, some teachers felt that they did not have the required knowledge and skills to provide this service since they were regular ordinary teachers.

Competing with other school priorities

Teachers ought to see inclusive educational support as part of their daily routine and understand it as important as any other school function. One of the features of collaboration is that there should be no competition and resources should be shared. Unfortunately the participants stated that collaboration is difficult to achieve in practice because ILSTs had to compete with a large number of already established committees present at school. Therefore, ILSTs were not given priority. There was simply not enough time to hold so many meetings:

I would say when you come back to school you see, besides the IST, we've got about forty to fifty different committees, now the IST committee is just up and coming. Now these committees are well established and they are to do with things which have taken place in school, I'm talking about school functions and everything else, and throughout the year we are involved in committees and committees and committees, meetings and committees... (IT2).

Unfortunately IST can't meet so often, but we do on a daily basis have a chat just in terms of the problems with the children. We have a debriefing meeting every morning at the school before we start our day where we just generally talk about peculiar cases that we're having problems with and we are very sensitive to what is

happening so we have the idea of referrals, where if there are any problems the teachers need to refer the children to the teachers that they are familiar with (IP1).

...as much as I think we would like to give support to all learners that need our support, it's just not functioning. The dynamics is not practical in our classrooms... (FG3).

The participants felt it was difficult to focus on providing educational support through collaboration as other school priorities took precedence. Matters of educational support were mentioned at daily meetings which were held for fifteen minutes. The concern is about the quality of support that can be addressed at such short meetings. An observation I made during the data collection phase of my study was also the challenge of attending ILST meetings. The priority of other school events and meetings such as IQMS, sports and school debutant ball, became evident over ILST meetings.

Non-functional ILSTs

While teachers perceived the ILSTs in a positive light theoretically, they also believed that they were not fully functioning at their schools. This however varied across the three schools, and in one school where it was working, the success was attributed to the input of the school:

... ILSTs are non-functional unfortunately. I think what you see at our school is mostly our own initiative and we are trying to make it work (IC1).

... I don't think it's happening in many places. Like I said it was happening here because of what we had put in place long before ILST's were formalised ... (IC1).

I think School 2 functions differently because of the kind of ... without sounding like this, you know, because these are the ideas we put in because we want (inaudible)...mainly because of the community itself. Very dysfunctional, low economic, social issues, I think that's where it came, how do we best bring the community in, how do we best place, help our kids? So that's where it is but other than that I can't see ...the need... (IC2).

From the excerpts above it becomes apparent that ILSTs are not fully established and functioning at the selected schools of the study. What Primary School 1 has in place is what they had prior to EWP6 and this has not changed in any way.

Uncertain of sustainability of ILST

The sustainability of ILSTs in schools is also not promising since teachers are already working in challenging contexts of constant change. An interpretation given by the participants, that affected the ability to put policy into practice, is that they were uncertain of the sustainability thereof. One participant perceived the ILST to be a 'nice idea' which could be strengthened, but in terms of implementation made the following comment:

I don't, I don't really see where we're going with IST. I think something that we know is what is expected and we're doing the best we can at our school, that's why we probably looked at as the (inaudible) the better but personally, I think it's far more one could do with this and I think if I had time, if I had office, saying, ok, I am the school counsellor, this is all my contacts and this is what I can... (IC1).

...but right now I think it's just another, you know like how you deal with curriculum, you've got IST in place, you've got an assessment committee in place, some other, now there's Youth Development come up so we've got to stop that, send somebody out and start a youth, scouts and all of that so it's just these things that come up,... (IC1).

You know in ...since it's been started it hasn't been a continued, sustained support team at any time (IC1).

...then you could say an IST should be in place but frankly I don't know if it's just something that is saying this is a nice idea uh, let's see if we can implement this, in a school setup but we're not ready for it, I just don't think (IC2).

... We've gone back to school, we've created the IST's, but that's not it, you just don't create them and leave them at our level because we need that guidance and we need that support and we need to say look, we moving in the right line and only because we want to provide the best for our children. As I said, we have just formed, we have an IST in place, how we are going to work from here and what we are going to do is something we are just going to see, as we go on (FG2.)

The teachers felt that they would try and do what is expected of them but in the long term they were not certain about ILSTs' sustainability. The reasons cited were that

when something else was required of teachers, it takes precedence and ILST work gets forgotten, and that they are not ready for it.

7.2.2.3 *Developing relationships with all education stakeholders*

Partnerships and relationships among and between district officials, support specialists, school management, teachers, parents, and learners is an important element of inclusive school communities. Participants in this study understood the need to form working relationships with the various stakeholders, but also found it to be a challenge:

....department has said so much.... But when it comes to support from the department ... department comes here after numerous phone calls have been made ... (FG1).

*If it's a social problem to the social agency, a psychological problem to the psychologist, if it's a department problem to the department (IP2).
So it's the intern psychologist coming into our school is a great, great help, to me. Really she is because she's taken a big load of mine, so I can get on with the actual teaching of these children... (IC2).*

So now when I phoned the social worker to ask her to come back again and follow this up to find there's a new social worker now. So those are some of the problems that we have ... (IC2)

However there are lots of procedures that are involved as far as handling cases of like abuse, because once it comes to school and you cannot handle it then you'd refer it to the social welfare and the department of education, now these are things that would have to be followed (IC1).

At one stage I was helping the surrounding schools to do their assessments and, and send it off to department (IC1).

I probably, through management, am incorporating these little things to make sure that we keep it going because of our pastoral care program, because of our supervision program and because of the goals for this year is to up the quality of children's performance but if we don't have these goals at school and, and things like, teachers that are just struggling and I think in other schools, if I may say so, I mean that's just my opinion, don't have that support from management. The ELSEN teacher's left to deal with this kind of thing so that is why I don't really think it's taken off that well (IC1).

We get all those teachers concerned like if you invite, say there were, the three children that were involved for that particular month where the um, grade seven, grade two, whatever, invite those teachers, you've got the team there, the committee, invited those three and then was able to do a follow-up with those that were in the program, where did we come with them, what was happening so far, did we succeed... (IC2)

...the parents we really need to cooperate with us..., those parents don't come to school... (IP3).

The above excerpts illustrate that teachers accept the need to collaborate and build relationships with all stakeholders. External to the school they mentioned district officials, various specialists, and parents. Within the school, the school management and teachers are considered necessary stakeholders. However, collaboration brings with it many challenges as it requires a change in previous and existing views about the roles and responsibilities of various education stakeholders. For collaboration to be successful it necessitates that stakeholders be sufficiently prepared and willing to collaborate. Structures and resources should also be available ease of practice. Participants in this study are of the view that they do not experience any difficulties at the level of the school as teachers and school management are supportive of inclusive educational support and collaborate with the ILSTs, as and when required.

For them the challenge lies at the district level. While they did not mention it, district-based support teams are not in place yet, and they are meant to provide the support required by the ILST members. The district officials cannot reach the schools as often as required as they have large numbers of schools to support. The teachers' interpretations are that they do not receive sufficient support from district officials. The teachers also felt that the district officials themselves were not taking ILSTs seriously. For example:

Everybody says this is what we got to do and this is how we got to function but in actual fact it is non-existent in any government department... (IP1)

... unfortunately this is how it works, that only when the SEM says I want your minutes of your IST meeting, then everyone is having an IST meeting and if they don't then we have on a need to have basis (IP3).

... and then to make matters worse I think PGSES ... we have different people in charge of us at different times...and so you know, we don't know who to report to (IC1).

it's going to lie there for I don't know how long before I get any help or feedback ... although now the psychologist or the clinical psychologist at ... is doing a fantastic job but all of the red tape, so I can't see how it can be functional (IC1).

...and there's no, not much contact, you got to, you got to phone, not available, leave a message, how long correspondence lies there uh, the structures are not put in place adequately like I'm saying.

...and then you must have sustained support of the department, it mustn't be once in 2 years, mustn't be once a year, they must ask us to give a feedback of the problems we are having and the support that we would like from the department and then give us that support, not take it and give it to us five years later.

The participants believe that the district officials should play a crucial role in the implementation of collaborative inclusive educational support. Teachers will only consider the change seriously when they can see that it is considered important by district officials. The problem here is that district officials did not prioritise the work of ILSTs; they did not follow up and check minutes of meetings as was normal with other innovations. Another challenge was the lack of continuity of the support provided as personnel at the district office were being moved around. Feedback from the district office with regards to support for learners is crucial and the participants' felt that there was a lack of timely feedback. Finally, the support has to be sustained on a regular basis.

Discussion: Educational support through collaboration is dependent on the requirements of policy

Data gathered and analysed for my study illuminates that how educational support through collaboration gets enacted by teachers is dependent on their interpretation of policy and not necessarily what it directs them to do. Their interpretations are derived from their understanding in the contexts in which they function. They agreed with the intentions of collaborative educational support, however felt that it was difficult to achieve in practice. The teachers also reflected on the importance of collaborating with

all the educational stakeholders and identified the challenges of developing such partnerships.

The findings of my study resemble and reinforce some of the benefits of collaboration claimed by Hargreaves (1994). Teachers agreed that a formal structure would benefit both learners and the teachers as it provides guidelines and structure. The learners would benefit through formal collaborative discussions at meetings where many teachers offer different perspectives, and teachers have a space in which to share their challenges and successes. Thus the long-term benefits of early intervention for learners, and having multiple perspectives of teachers was also acknowledged.

Similarly, Benn's (2004) study revealed that no teacher was willing to consider ILST as a negative process. They also seemed to like it because it was perceived as a learner support model. Hargreaves (1994), Idol, Nevin and Paolucci-Whitcomb (1994), and Villa and Thousand (1996), also suggest that collaborative structures such as ILSTs can bring about improvement in the educational growth and social skills of learners experiencing barriers to learning.

My study resonates with Chiang, Chapman and Elders (2011) who found that due to the demands on time, the project of their study was considered by some to be 'more idealistic than practical.' Some participants were concerned that workloads were already so heavy that anyone who participated would have little time to contribute effectively. However, the participants thought it was a good idea and worth trying if it would improve mental health education. As one team member in my study commented, 'Although we are busy, we have to do something if it is helpful.' Other research studies that were conducted nationally (Campher, 1997; Duncan, 2005; Gugushe, 1999; Johnson; 1999; Mphahlele, 2006) and internationally (Bailey, 1999; Benn, 2004; Chalfant & Pysh, 1989; Chiang, Chapman & Elder, 2011; Creese, Daniels & Norwich, 1997; Moore & Gilbreath, 2002; Perryman & Gallagher, 2007; Pysh & Chalfant, 1997; Slonski-Fowler & Truscott, 2004) confirm that time was the most common barrier to implementation of policy.

Studies conducted by various other researchers also found that ILST members experienced challenges such as insufficient district office and lack of parental support (Bailey, 1999; Carter et al., 2009; Creese et al., 1997; Duncan, 2005; Gugushe, 1999; Johnson, 1999; Moore, Glynn & Gold, 1993; Mphahlele, 2006; Norwich & Daniels, 1997).

One possible explanation for teachers finding it difficult to collaborate is what Hargreaves (1994) calls 'individualism'. In my study it refers to the way in which teachers talked about what they can or cannot do within the system in which they work. If not understood, individualism may be interpreted as teachers resisting change; however Hargreaves (1994) argues that it is organisational or situational constraints that present challenges to the practice of collaboration. The participants in my study interpreted collaboration as difficult to achieve because they identified challenges which reflected their lack of capacity and certainty about providing educational support. These conditions were restricting teachers from shifting to collaboration. The factors which describe Hargreaves's (1994) strategic individualism were identified in my study, namely: lack of time, teachers' lack of capacity and preparedness, disjointed support assistance, and lack of parental support provided for teachers during implementation. These barriers led to teachers choosing individualism over collaboration.

Competing with other school priorities is a form of collaboration that Hargreaves calls balkanisation. Similar to a study conducted by Shun-Wing (2011) in Hong Kong, the teachers in my study also displayed characteristics of balkanisation. For example in my study the data demonstrated that the teachers were balkanised into cliques with different beliefs about providing educational support through collaboration. One group consisted of a few teachers who were putting some effort into understanding the new system. They tried to formulate new strategies and worked with developing good relations with the school community. The other group displayed resistance to providing educational support through collaboration and resorted to individualism.

Hargreaves (1994) also found that when major innovations are introduced, it divides teachers into supporters and opponents who will resist. Hargreaves's study included interviews with teachers and principals. He found that teachers of general-level classes

and lower-status subjects were marginalised in the school's priorities. Balkanisation also created a myth of hopelessness of change among teachers. It underestimated and failed to make visible the teachers' own interests in and capacities to change. It created a barrier for change in that attempts at it would be aborted or defeated due to a lack of shared understanding and support for it.

The danger of balkanisation is that it can lead to poor communication or to groups going their separate ways (Fullan & Hargreaves, 1996); it can also result in limited access to and consideration of other ideas (Fullan, 1993a) and thus impede attempts at collaboration. The challenges of individualism and balkanisation need to be resolved before a truly collaborative culture can be established.

7.2.3 Teachers experience providing educational support through collaboration as complying with policy

The concept 'policy' could have different meanings for teachers. For some teachers it may possibly mean regulations to follow rigidly, while others might see it as a framework which they can use to make sense of events within their schools. The enactors of policy, namely teachers, should be involved in the early stages of planning implementation to ensure that they have input. This might enhance their ownership towards inclusive educational support and also help develop a common understanding of what policy means. Policy implementation requires effective planning to avoid delays or unintended outcomes. Bringing about change through policy is challenging and complex. No policy process occurs rationally or is achieved by following step-by-step instructions. Teachers have a powerful influence on the outcomes of policy which is why policy gets translated and contested at all levels of extraction and change becomes a never-ending process.

Teachers' experiences of providing education support through collaboration as complying with policy, is presented using four categories: compliance and coercion, mimicking collaboration, struggling with power, and serving its purpose?

7.2.3.1 Compliance and coercion

Teachers could resort to complying with policy, which means viewing policy as regulation, law, or surrendering their power to another, thereby following it without critical reflection of the context in which they apply it. The consequences of such experiences of policy could have a bearing on how inclusive educational support through collaboration develops in schools.

I provide an extract of my observation report of an ILST meeting at Primary School 3. During my early visits to this school I did not think that the school would actually have ILST meetings since my field notes reflected that they thought the provision of educational support did not apply to their school since they did not have ELSEN classes.

The coordinator welcomed all members and presented an apology on behalf of one ILST member, who was attending a mathematics competition. The coordinator then circulated copies of the manual presented at the first ILST training workshop and lists of names of learners identified by teachers as experiencing barriers to learning. It was emphasised that learner cases should be kept confidential and that all teachers be honest and non-judgemental. It was concluded that teachers have always addressed the problems of learners experiencing barriers to learning and that the DoE had simply renamed this counselling and guidance as ILST.

The matters discussed included:

- ✓ *the fact that the department needs to train teachers to deal with specific learner problems*
- ✓ *a severe 'case' had been dealt with: the school had all the necessary records and referred the case to PGSES, who had not followed up and the child was still out of school*
- ✓ *a list of names from the foundation and senior phase learners who were experiencing barriers to learning had been drawn up: the members were happy with the foundation phase list but the principal felt that the senior phase needed to review the names as they included names of children whom teachers could deal with on their own and did not need ILST intervention; these learners needed to be categorised according to their problems i.e. learning disabilities.*

- ✓ *one teacher emphasised, and all the others agreed, that dealing with ILST takes up a lot of teaching time and other learners are disadvantaged due to time lost in the classroom*
- ✓ *it was decided that all child abuse cases must be referred to the principal*
- ✓ *when teachers have any problems they need to consult with relevant services providers*
- ✓ *referring teachers should be present at the ILST meeting when a problem pertaining to a learner from their class is discussed*

The way forward was indicated as teachers to receive training on inclusion and providing educational support; for parents of learners experiencing barriers to learning to be invited to discuss issues relating to the progress of their children; for learners to be identified and separated into smaller groups; and for children to be directed to the relevant service providers such as social workers, hospitals, child line etc. (OM3, 18th May 2007)

The coordinator of the ILST scheduled the meeting, as per policy requirements, and invited all ILST members to attend. The meeting was held on a Friday afternoon, after school, in the staffroom. A table was arranged to accommodate the meeting which was attended by the principal, the deputy principal (ILST coordinator), a level one teacher from the senior phase, a foundation phase head of department, and a senior teacher from the foundation phase. The specific purpose of the meeting was to address barriers to learning experienced by learners. The meeting lasted forty minutes.

The meeting was conducted in a systematic manner according to the District Manual provided to teachers at an ILST training workshop. Each teacher was provided with a copy and the coordinator kept referring to it during the meeting by alerting teachers to what point she was at. She had the manual in front of her and ticked each step as she completed it in the meeting.

The observation data indicated teachers were of the opinion that the structure was imposed on them by the department. A comment made by one principal clearly illustrated that she set up the ILST only because of pressure exerted by the department. She makes the following comment about the establishment of ILSTs:

... suddenly this year we are just called for a meeting and said it should be structured, this is what should be happening (in a kind of mocking tone). So really when it was initiated... (IP3).

This principal was introduced to inclusive education in 2003 at an advocacy workshop where participants were requested to return to schools and establish ILSTs. The data was collected in 2007, five years later, and she indicates that it was “sudden”. It seems that the principal had no intention of establishing an ILST until the department insisted on having the names of the members of the ILST sent to the District Office. At the meeting she comments:

... so the reason that we now as a team, we need now, I think the main function will be to actually sit here and find some way of convincing the educators to initiate this and at least start it in our school even if it's not supported and we don't get solutions because solutions are not within our sight but we have to start something on the same token as much as we're saying on the one hand this is what department is doing but as educators there has to be some initiation from the school part so that something is done and we identify these learners, we have meetings, and parents maybe later on will say, yes, I remember the primary school educator said this and so on so we just need to start all of this and I think this is mainly the, our plan is to actually get this but it is very frustrating. I get very frustrated because the teachers get so busy with this whole function of teaching that these are little things you forget, by the way (IP3).

It became apparent that the teachers did not ‘buy-in’ to the implementation of inclusive education yet, and as the principal says, the ILST would have to find some way to convince them that it is a good idea. She continues by saying that they have to persist even if not supported by other teachers in the school, implying that they were compelled by the DoE to implement ILSTs. It seems that the school established ILSTs to merely show that they were doing something; they were coerced rather than doing it voluntarily. She was aware that ILSTs should work with parents as well and says that they will deal with that later, for now they had to initiate something even though it is frustrating. Her attitude is reflected in the way in which she refers to the ILST as, “*these are little things you forget*”. This is indicative of the principal not supporting inclusive education, and then the chances of teachers following through with any attempt at improving the quality of teaching and learning in schools are slim.

7.2.3.2 *Mimicking 'real' collaboration*

Collaboration has been identified as the critical element in the development of inclusive education, implying a shift from individualism and exclusion (Engelbrecht & Green, 2007). It was established that collaboration in education is difficult to define (cf. 3.2) and therefore researchers prefer to use its characteristics which include the following: collaboration emerges from teachers themselves, it is voluntary, it is development oriented, working together is not a scheduled activity, and the outcomes are unpredictable (Hargreaves, 1994a). EWP6 is based on the assumption that a structure called the ILST will be established at every primary school, that the ILST structures will take the form of collaborative, problem-solving teams, and that teachers will take up collaborative roles to provide educational support to school communities (DoE, 2001). In practice the reality of collaboration is unfolding in unexpectedly different ways.

Overall, teachers were collaborating at various levels. Most teachers agreed that they collaborated with officials from the district office. This collaboration was mainly to discuss performance levels and the progression of learners who experience barriers to learning. These discussions focused on moderating the progression schedules already prepared by the teachers:

... recently, before the district official came in, we had to take both our files and marry them ... so she had evidence to see whether that child was performing at that level, ... so and so is still reading at a grade 3 level, grade 2 level, grade 1 level, and then she looked to see if basically our standards were equitable (IT2).

Thus the district officials collaborated with teachers to verify and provide any additional information on behalf of learners who are referred for educational support, mainly for placement at special schools. The final decisions were made by district officials. These meetings were intended as a space for teachers to collaborate, but it was more an endorsement of what was to happen.

Prior to the introduction of inclusive education, Primary School 1 already had good working relationships with support services such as social services, nursing, and health services in the district. Collaboration with these services assisted the teachers with identification and setting up appropriate programmes for learners who experience

barriers to learning as illustrated by the following quote:

...so we started engaging in, utilising the social services like the social workers, a bit of the health nurses...to help these kids cope...we started asking for records and reports from the psychologists or the assessment centre (IC1).

I would expect that given the advent of inclusion, such a system would be strengthened. Unfortunately, the coordinator continued - in the same interview - to stress that such a system worked well when it was in place, but of late they had been facing challenges. The biggest challenge according to her was the continuous relocation of personnel (e.g. social workers) working on particular cases. She felt that this jeopardised the support provided to the learners:

...of recent we haven't had much going for us in that area but previously when we really had the programme up and running, we found that we were able to liaise with the social worker who was in this area,...everyday you'll find a new social worker that worked in this area...Just today I phoned and I find it's a complete new social worker that's dealing with this case (currently working with) (IC1).

It is also important for school management to support and collaborate with parents and the wider community. In this school the principal claimed that he conducts home visits and liaises with various community organisations.

I offer all the support. Whatever support is needed. I do counselling, I do home visits, I do parent consultation, I call in parents, we liaise with organisations, I serve on many community bodies ..., and I virtually walk to homes on a daily basis (IP1).

While this situation may be encouraging, it is seen from an individual (the principal's) perspective, and he is not working with the ILST as a collaborative team.

The coordinator of Primary School 1 said that collaborating with schools in the surrounding areas was previously done, and that they found it useful and encouraging to share ideas and concerns:

...you know what works well, is you know when we first started the ELSEN, was where we had a support group of schools around us and we used to have the meeting at least once per quarter, sometimes more and uh, others came to the meetings and brought all of their ... concerns and their difficulties, things they didn't understand and we were able to talk around these things, spend that hour

together, ... give each other some kind of suggestions, say this is what's working for me, try this out, someone will come ... people went away a little bit more encouraged (IC1).

Consulting with members of the school management is another very important source for collaboration:

Then I also work with the principal and deputy principal. So we do all our work together and ... (FG1).

The most appropriate time to collaborate varied among the participants. During a focus group teachers said that they meet during lunch breaks:

Even during break time or even we are sitting in the staffroom if you find that a teacher is having a problem - used to come to us and ask if a child is behaving like this, what is the first step we need to take (FG2).

One teacher stated that some ordinary teachers approach her for assistance with learners who experienced barriers to learning because of her ILTS membership and because of her experience and training:

Recently she comes to me now – 'Mrs....I don't know what to do now. This child is not listening to me' (FG1).

I find teachers are grappling in their class with their numbers and they got learners that I am familiar with and I know those learners' problems...they need me to come in and tell them 'This is what you need to do' (FG1).

From the excerpt above it can be seen that the ILST teacher is also providing indirect support to learners by advising teachers. This illustrates that ILST members are seen as approachable for support.

The ILST cannot meet often in a formal way to meet the needs of learners and teachers, therefore teachers seem to meet informally on a more regular basis to discuss barriers to learning. At one school they found that the most appropriate time to collaborate with ordinary teachers is when they are in between classes. That is, when the ELSEN teacher fetches or returns learners to the ordinary class:

Anytime, between shifting our classes and going to pick the learners up, whenever we get a chance we just have to do it and the best time is when you meeting the teacher all fresh when you picking the learner up (FG2).

Other teachers indicated that learner issues are discussed as part of regular weekly management meetings:

...but the management team is on board, we have our meetings, I've got the one ELSEN teacher ... committee so we have our regular meetings (IC2).

While the teachers do not meet regularly they discuss learners at their debriefing meetings on a daily basis:

Unfortunately IST can't meet so often, but we do on a daily basis have a chat just in terms with the problems with the children. We have a debriefing meeting every morning at the school before we start our day where we just generally talk about peculiar cases that we're having problems with... (IP2).

Teachers experienced collaboration in an informal manner. Some teachers found aspects of collaborating in a structured way less helpful. For example one teacher according to the ILST coordinator, often serves as a supportive role to learners, although it is done informally:

...right now, with teachers I know as long as you do things informally and you not recording you not making them sit and say let's discuss then you get a lot of joy out of it. (IC3).

We can't have structured time. Structured time is very difficult for us to have to consult with educators and stuff like that. There is a kind of form that we fill in all that but half the time it becomes problematic to get to do those things and make appointments and all that. So it is done very informally (FG2).

However, the teachers believe that although they do not have regular ILST meetings and they may not be formal, when the need and opportunity arises, educational support is being provided:

We are constantly doing institution support systems with our team because although it's ... most of the time it's not formally done, I think it's done on a regular basis and at all times we must know that (IC1).

...it's just that I can't do it with the IST team saying, 'ok, IST team, we need to meet once a month' and bring in all of these so I can't do that but I'm doing it with management members so the problem is being attended to... (IC2).

... but it is being done. There is always that feedback and response and communication (FG2).

Hargreaves (1992b) and Scruggs, Mastropieri and McDuffie (2007) state that existing research unfortunately suggests that the culture of collaboration in schools is a rarity, that it is difficult to create, and even more difficult to sustain. The reason is that it clashes with all the pressures and constraints that come with teachers' work (Little, 1982). The preferred culture of teaching is not compatible with the existing context of teachers' work which restricts the possibilities and scope of collaboration.

7.2.3.3 *Struggling with power*

The data for this theme draws mainly from my observations at placement meetings and an ILST meeting held at Primary School 1. ILST meetings, according to EWP6, should take on a collaborative teaming approach with regard to learners who experience barriers to learning. From my observation it was clear that the final decisions made with regards to learners who experience barriers to learning is done by officials from the district office. While the teachers provided some input about the performance of the learners, it was the district official who made the final decision about whether the learner could progress to the next grade or not.

One of the characteristics of collaboration is that all members should feel that their input is valued, and that multiple ideas be allowed toward making decisions in the best interests of the learner. During a focus group interview one teacher illustrates her dissatisfaction about her input not being valued during a placement meeting, and the power of the district officials in the process of making decisions for learners:

... last year a learner was held behind at school... recommended by the departmental psychologist... not because of his academic performance but because of his behaviour... And from my point of view which I made very clear... Brighter

than average learner in an ELSEN class because of behaviour problems..... basically the district office has to make the final decision (FG3).

While she talked, the other teachers displayed tension by looking at each other and not wanting to contribute to this discussion. The teacher disagreed with the reason for holding back the learner, and had to abide by the district official's decision.

The data also reveals that there is a traditional division between the principal and the teachers at the ILST meeting. Within the context of inclusive education, the coordinator of the ILST should head the meeting and the activities of the ILST. However, at the beginning of the meeting, the coordinator of the ILST named the principal as the head of the ILST meeting:

The head of our IST meeting we have the principal, and you know I'm the coordinator, the secretary is... (OM3).

This clearly indicates confusion in the school over leadership roles in a collaborative structure. The principal used her positional power to make decisions about learners who were eligible for educational support indicating that decision making was not shared among the participants.

Attendance at ILST meetings includes all members of the ILST, including parents, the referring teacher, and members of the district office as the need arises. There are six members of the ILST at Primary School 3, and five members attended the meeting. All members should contribute and participate equally to the discussion. Observations reveal that at the meeting at Primary School 3 the discussion rotated between the ILST coordinator and the principal for most of the meeting, followed by one other member with minimal input from the rest of the team members. The ILST coordinator provided input mainly with regard to meeting procedures while the principal stated her case with regards to the identification of learners experiencing barriers to learning.

Collaboration requires shared goals which must be clear to all members. From my observation it became evident that there was tension between the ILST coordinator and the principal with regard to the purpose of the meeting. On the one hand, the coordinator tried to streamline the meeting by choosing a few cases and discussing them in terms of assisting teachers with suggestions about classroom support. On the

other hand, the principal's main concern stopped at the identification of the names of learners who experience barriers to learning.

7.2.3.4 *Serving its purpose?*

One of the consequences of restructuring is that teachers should organise themselves along the principles of collaboration rather than hierarchy and isolation. Collaboration has been proposed as a solution to areas of challenge that teachers may be experiencing, for example in implementing policies such as EWP6. Where collaboration is successful it ought to provide support for teachers and learners in times of change, increase efficiency, improve effectiveness, reduce overload, reduce uncertainty among teachers, make it possible for teachers to interact more confidently and assertively, help teachers to critically reflect on their practice, allow teachers to respond quickly, provide opportunities to learn, and promote continuous improvement. Teachers' experiences in this study show that notwithstanding the promises of collaboration as a principle of educational change, it does not always get realised as anticipated.

For example, instead of reducing the workload, teachers were of the opinion that collaboration made demands on them that could create tensions with regards to their expanding roles as teachers which in turn could lead to frustration, strain, and burn-out:

...it's lots of juggling around and it puts a lot of strain on the educator because you have to cater for varying abilities, like we have a mixed bag in the class and its quite demanding in terms of our reading and in terms of progression. Sometimes it just burns the educator out (IP3).

In terms of our challenges we do find this actually encroaching into our work. It's a pity that we don't have a full time social worker or counsellor. We would like to have a counsellor in the school that will help with children's problems. Now, we have reached burnout, it is difficult, it's very, very difficult (OM3)

One teacher expresses sincere concern because she feels that they are not following the process of the ILST according to protocol. This makes her feel anxious:

... those kind of things, so that rounding up and follow-up and reporting back, for me, is not happening that's why I feel, maybe that's what I'm feeling personally, I'm

just not on top, and the committee is not on top of things...(IC1)

Changes in membership of the ILSTs, due to teachers resigning, pose a great challenge to the functioning of the process. The department does not provide support in terms of training new teachers and the responsibility falls back onto the school. Where are they supposed to find the time for this in a busy schedule?

... a great challenge, great challenge because I mean learners with special needs need to have people that are experienced and trained and things. Uh, department doesn't seem to offer that, we need to, always when you have to have a teacher, ...so it's left to somebody to be training and it falls back again on the school so now I've got to train because I have some of the experience but again time factors, you know ... it may sound simple but it's not because where do you fit that in? And then if I had to handle all of the other things like interviewing parents, interviewing the children, doing the assessment ... (IC2)

... but I think also, remember with the kind of workload and the kind of numbers in the class, I think one of the problems in our school is the number in the class. Teachers are just too stressed and how many, how many kids can you deal with sometimes? So sometimes the matter of going there and getting your lesson completed, making sure these assessments are done on time, so the, the extra bits needed for IST like sitting and getting to know their child, interviewing setting reports back, it gets a little bit too much for them, so I don't think everybody is really happy with it... (IC3)

Teachers find themselves in a very difficult position due to all the new requirements. It is all happening at a very rapid rate (the teacher is talking about the foundations of a learning campaign which had just been launched at schools), which is problematic:

...that you know that the focus is on literacy, having children read uh, the hours are upped again, the Post Provision Norm becomes a problem so that's again so just as you think, ok, I'm here now, then something else new, something new comes up and then...the goalpost gets shifted and then you got to turn focus and start this, so it's not easy... it's quite difficult.

Collaboration should be of benefit to learners as well as teachers. However, the teachers revealed that the ILST process was not functioning as intended and therefore learner support is inadequate.

A noticeable point of departure at the meeting was the next step in which a teacher was meant to present a case including background information and actions

already taken by the teacher for discussion. However what was presented were lists of learners, per phase, who were experiencing barriers to learning. The lists contained names of learners and their grades with no additional information. The barriers to learning were described as behavioural in all cases and members agreed that the names submitted for ILST intervention were appropriate. Actual barriers were not identified, contributions were not encouraged, teachers were judgemental toward learners, solutions and strategies for action were not discussed, and there were no suggestions for teachers to support learners (OM3).

Another teacher points out that learners could be incorrectly identified and that this has long-term effects at her school as learners remain in the remedial unit until they complete their schooling careers:

They just take this naughty one that's always doing things wrong or always not doing homework and that's an ELSEN and that's not necessarily so. Right, so we are having that kind of problem in mainstream schools (IC3).

And although we have children with barriers to learning, and we are identifying them, I don't think we've been doing justice to children, not only because of the absence of the IST, I would think that we really don't have the know-how to deal with these children (IC2).

Some teachers feel that learners who experience barriers to learning are compromised at schools due to lack of recognition in the system.

These children are being compromised like I said in schools because you find that the attention is on children that are gifted, children that are above average, even average. But these children that have learning problems, that have barriers to learning are not even recognized in some instances (IC3).

...you know, we at the school are fighting a losing battle (OM3).

One teacher at Primary School 3 candidly disagrees with the current pull-out system in her school:

They are children with barriers and they are ranging from grade 2 right up to 7. Putting 12 year olds with 8 year olds and 7 year olds. It's not good I don't think it's a healthy situation. All right I do agree that that 12 year old is functioning at the very level that the 7 year old is but we should give them some dignity ... they're older and grown up and keep them separately (IC3).

When a teacher describes the pull-out system at her school she says it has a negative impact on the learners because they are separated from the others.

I think in the broader spectrum you know it would be better to let them be included amongst the mainstream children so they will feel a part of them. Where they really feel very embarrassed and awkward is when like we having a show or something and they sitting with their class they feel that some of the children tease them and stuff like that, they don't really enjoy, I mean it's embarrassing for them (IC2).

The concern for this teacher is what happens to the learners who experience barriers to learning after primary school:

But most of these children cannot go into the high school that is a major, major situation because I mean problem and I had to go out of my way, and see where we could fit these children in... But apparently they even struggle there. So what we, we had a meeting recently, umm the IST unit and they suggested that these children be pulled out after grade 9 let them go to at least grade 9, pull out and they can go for a trade or a some other like dressmaking or hairdressing or floral arrangement something where they could have a skill (IC2).

Some teachers feel that the challenges they face, such as large classes, varying abilities, and lack of support from the department, could lead to neglect of learners who need extra support:

...at school we are faced with so many problems in terms of inclusive education...and we do not get much support from department with respect to how to cope with children with these types of problems. Being educators we talking remedial education and that have helped us in terms of helping those learners with problems...because of the large classes now it's very difficult to give individual attention to those learners who are really lagging behind. Unfortunately those learners who are in mainstream are suffering because of the large class, and that child needs more attention. We use our little techniques like our group work, peer teaching to help facilitate understanding, but because of the large class that's a really big constraint ...

Overall teachers feel that learners' needs may be compromised given the contextual constraints within which they work.

Discussion: Teachers' experiences providing educational support through collaboration as complying with policy

It became evident from the analysis that teachers have been collaborating with relevant people at various levels of the system, namely the district office, possible support providers, school management, teachers, parents, and learners. This finding is in keeping with the requirements of EWP6.

A point of contention emerges over the meaning of collaboration. ILSTs are described as formal support structures established at primary schools to provide educational support to the school communities through a collaborative, problem-solving framework. This implies that ILST meetings should be held at regular intervals, have planned agendas, and use a problem-solving approach with written records of minutes; the kind of meeting that Snell and Janney (2005, p. 57) refer to as a 'sit-down' meeting. It is also an example of what Hargreaves (1994) calls 'contrived collegiality' rather than collaboration (c.f. 3.4.2), where teachers are coerced into agreeing to a structure imposed on them.

The teachers in the three schools prefer meetings that occur voluntarily and frequently. They feel that they learn a lot about supporting learners experiencing barriers to learning during informal meetings. On the other hand, EWP6 envisages the ILST as a mechanism to support the implementation of inclusion as well as providing educational support for the professional development of teachers. The argument is that teachers display concerns about their personal development while EWP6 is more implementation-driven. The findings confirm the continuum that Hargreaves (1994) uses to define the degrees of collaboration within schools. It is the kind of collaboration that Snell and Janney (2005, p. 57) call 'on-the-fly' meetings where teachers have discretion and control over what will be developed, work together to develop their own initiatives, and decide to collaborate on their own without external pressure. The teachers are central to the process and simultaneously develop themselves professionally in terms of providing educational support. The teachers' preference in this study for informal types of collaboration can be explained by Little's (1990) forms of collegial relationships. Telling stories, scanning for ideas and resources, giving and receiving aid and assistance, and sharing ideas do not pose serious threats to teacher independence or autonomy.

The data also shows that teachers understand collaboration as advice-giving during informal interactions with support teachers. ILST members provide advice based on what they know. This is reflective of what Friend and Cook (1992) view as consultation, not collaboration. In a consultation process, a consultant and consultee or client work together in a combined effort to address identified needs (Dettmer et al, 2005). Consultants and consultees only begin to collaborate when they assume equal ownership of a problem and its solutions. There was no evidence of this in the three schools under study.

Inclusive educational support utilising the ILST comes into action when a barrier to learning cannot be solved by the class teacher with the assistance of parents and other colleagues. An ILST meeting is a collaborative effort by team members using a reflective and problem-solving approach to address barriers to learning. Earlier the principles of collaboration were discussed. The findings of my study show that despite the training the teachers had received they were not clear about the dynamics of collaboration.

Power struggles became evident from the observational data collected. The coordinator of the ILST should be the leader in the space of the ILST yet the data shows that she defers to the principal as head of the ILST meeting. The principal, also by virtue of her positional power, dominated the discussion during the meeting. Decision-making should be collaborative in teamwork, yet there were tensions over who and how decisions were made about learners who experience barriers to learning. One of the principles of collaboration is the sharing of ideas among teachers. In the absence of equal input, exclusion occurs.

The ILST should provide a platform for collaboration among and between district officials, service providers, school management, teachers, parents, and learners. However the data suggests that this platform is being controlled by the power vested in district officials and school management. Teachers' reactions reflect that their input is not valued and consequently they do see themselves as able to contribute to the collaborative decision-making.

The principal's domination of the process of decision-making is what Hargreaves (1994) calls contrived collegiality which occurs when teachers are forced to accept decisions and agree with them. The features of contrived collegiality are the following: collaboration does not evolve spontaneously from teachers but is imposed by implementers to meet and work together, it is compulsory, it is implementation-oriented, it takes place in particular places and particular times, and the outcomes are predictable.

Contrived collegiality seems like collaboration in that it is a group of people sitting together with a common purpose and collaborating spontaneously and voluntarily. Hargreaves's (1994) descriptors of contrived collegiality and collaboration imply that the situation in school must be 'either-or'. I believe that contrived collegiality can lead to collaboration as time progresses. In the early stages teachers may be unsure of the process but through refinement and over time they may find a system of collaboration that may suit their school context.

One way of explaining the pattern of contrived collegiality is that teachers' work and life circumstances vary. It cannot be standardised, or the principle of 'one size fits all' that is so popular among leaders of implementation, cannot be applied. Hargreaves (1994) asserts that flexibility is important for many reasons, namely:

... to place preparation time in the realistic context of teachers' wider life and work circumstances; to allow preparation time use to be responsive to the day-to-day, week-to-week variations in required tasks and priorities; and not least, to acknowledge the professionalism of teachers as defined by Schön in terms of their rights and opportunities to exercise discretionary judgement in the best interests of those students for whom they care and hold responsibility (p. 198).

Other studies also found that it is not clear whether ILSTs actually function as intended (Sindelar, Griffin, Smith & Watanabe, 1992). For example, in one study there was evidence that many teams fall short of the goals. In my study, ILSTs did not focus on the provision of follow-up support for learners. Many members thought the process stopped at identification, and the interventions suggested by the teams seldom required teachers to make any substantive classroom modifications (Slonski-Fowler & Truscott,

2004). Benn's (2004) study displayed the same findings as she found that there was a lack of problem-solving when team members met.

The question then arises, 'How does professional development get accomplished?'

7.2.4 Potential for change

Although the data suggests that changes through policy implementation is a challenging and complex process, in some instances teachers saw it as an opportunity to develop themselves professionally irrespective of the barriers they are exposed to. It is important to discuss the causes and dynamics of how change does occur, even if it is limited.

The theme of potential for change is discussed using four categories: school as a supportive strategy, the teacher as professional, recognising that all learners can learn, and school as central to community development.

7.2.4.1 School as a supportive structure

Conducive school environments allow for enactment of policy. The school cultures displayed in Primary School 1 motivated teachers towards change. The kind of support required from a school to bring about change among teachers include that it facilitates the development of a culture that focuses on professional development, gives leader support, makes teachers feel valued by management, reduces the workload, and implements monitoring and evaluation. The teachers indicated that they perceive their school as a family organisation and receive the required support in various ways. The school values the professional development of teachers when the need arises:

...and some of the problems that we found was anger management, learners display a lot of aggression so we decided we need to go with a course where teachers are trained to work with learners who display aggression in terms of conflict resolution, anger management and hopefully sometimes this term that workshop will take place. So we are training all the time where there are gaps, try and fill the gaps and I think that is why we are a little more successful.

There is a strong focus in the school on the professional development of teachers and learners. The assembly is used as a forum to develop teachers' public speaking skills. Every teacher has to do a short presentation on a topic e.g. If it is close to Heritage Day then the teacher must present something about it at assembly or do a moral lesson.

Through IST coordinators' guidance... she said that every teacher must be developed in public speaking...

We believe that the school is a family organization and we support each other (FG1).

The school also provides opportunities for teachers to collaborate with teachers from surrounding schools. The teachers find this empowering as there is an exchange of ideas.

There is a lot of developmental things going on at our school... We have been twinning with a lot of schools from our district... it was developmental for us... as well as the other teachers were learning from us.

During the focus group discussion some teachers endorsed the necessity and benefits of receiving support from leadership and mentors.

From the school I get a lot of support...is like my mentor, so whenever I can't get a child to focus...I don't know what to do, she says to me you start off go and get them a puzzle. Then let them sit with it ... so ma'm is there to back me up... (FG1).

When teachers feel valued and are given the opportunity to be creative and innovative, it motivates them to introduce additional educational support opportunities for learners:

They give you the opportunity to, to take whatever you want to. Because of my involvement with them I wanted to do this and I wanted to do that. So principal he allows me the opportunities because he knows I'm going to obviously do it for the betterment of the child... (FG1).

They (school) give you a lot opportunity... to teach what I think I will enjoy and do my best....IST coordinator values my input at the same time gives objective advice (FG1).

And then we have given all educators a slightly reduced load because of the learners with barriers that they are faced with in their classes to give individual attention to work with them (IP1).

The ELSEN teachers also have a ...time slot for peer support, that means to interact with their mainstream teachers, see what is going on there and how best they can help (IC1).

And there I've got an isiZulu speaking teacher at school ... So I got the teacher to do a home visit. He lives in KwaMashu and then the granny can't speak English so she visited and then the granny came in the following day... (IC1).

I teach other teachers how to speak IsiZulu... We have music workshops, arts and craft ... every time a new policy comes out educators get a chance to develop themselves professionally by getting an opportunity to present it to the other teachers at school... (FG1)

When the school management is supportive of learners experiencing barriers to learning it sends out a positive message to teachers and learners. Primary School 1 provides a space for learners to show-case their talents during assembly:

Learners experiencing barriers to learning are also provided a platform to develop their skills by presenting whatever they are good at singing, reading a prayer.

The success of policy implementation is also enhanced by effective gathering of information (Fullan & Stiegelbauer, 1991) and therefore monitoring and evaluation need to be regular and ongoing:

Any programme that is implemented in this school is always evaluated. There's ongoing evaluation for any aspect of what we do even if it is a little activity that is done in a class. After that activity that has to be evaluated and then we look at the evaluation of that activity and see maybe how we can improve and make that thing better. If evaluation tells us that it is not serving a purpose we discard it (FG1).

The findings reflect that change toward providing collaborative educational support is possible when the school culture is appropriate.

7.2.4.2 Teacher as professional

In this category I present the data that shows what makes change, like collaboration, possible with and among the teachers in my study. Some teachers readily accepted the change, while most did not. Rather than viewing policy as a threat, some teachers saw policy as a driving force for professional development.

Some teachers are very committed to the process. Once a problem has been identified, they take the initiative to do home visits should the parents not respond to their requests to come to school for consultations.

I've also made many home visits because sometimes parents cannot come so it is easier to go to them. And then in that way you see the home environment, there you have hands-on experience of what is affecting the child. It's only when you do a home visit you realise what factors are really hindering the child's progress (IC1).

The teachers' commitment and compassion for learners and their profession is further illustrated by the following quote:

And to me it breaks my heart if I must see a child sitting in class and I know that the child is not performing because there are factors deterring the child, and then I need to go and do something about it. I need to find out what are the factors that are distracting the child. I noticed his marks were gone so low, his compositions were written in such a slap dash method and it worried me to such an extent and I said, 'Y you are not Y anymore, where is my old Y and when is he coming back?'. He would get so angry and I counselled him and I counselled him... And I started counselling him and she said (the mother) 'ma'm he cares for you so much, you are closer to him than anybody else why don't you talk to him, he'll open up. And Y is gone back to his old self'. You know you need to tap into the child because you know the children. (IC1)

The same ILST coordinator identifies qualities of insight and affection as useful and necessary for effective teaching and believes that teachers need to broaden their horizons and see themselves as more than facilitators of knowledge acquisition:

First or second month you should know every child in your class if you are a committed and dedicated teacher and you will notice that change in behaviour... And then you know you've got to be affectionate with children, you've got to win them over, once you've won them over you know you've won them for good. So my advice would be for teachers to, you know sense what is happening in the class, to know your learners and only if you know your learners you will be able to pick up if there are any factors that are causing barriers to the learner (FG1).

When asked about support from ordinary teachers, the ILST members stated that the teachers are very supportive in terms of keeping proper records of learners' cases:

Oh yes, a lot of support. The teachers know what they have to have in readiness e.g. if the IST is sitting with a case study of a learner with discipline problem teachers know that my misdemeanour file needs to be here... because they have been brought on board... So teachers they know what role they have to play. So it works nicely (FG2).

One teacher explains that she takes a personal interest in developing her knowledge by doing independent research:

Personally I have been doing a lot of research, looking at the DOOR programme for the hyperactive kid... (FG1)

I did a workshop and I did quite a bit of research on how art affects the child and how psychologically the art, the child expresses herself or himself through art and um, there was a very, a very interesting piece of work where we found that children express themselves best through art. I have been doing a lot of research....and stuff like that. I use some of the ideas for our learners... (IC1).

Emotions play an important part in the change process since change is about people. Day (2004) believes that passion gives teachers energy, enthusiasm, and commitment and is often associated with caring, inclusivity, and courage. Passionate, caring teachers will stay on course and focus on the purpose of the change. One teacher from Primary School 1 expressed her passion and attitude towards the provision of educational support to learners:

I think I am very, very passionate about my job and passionate about the children. I always tell the children that they are more than my children to me because it's just not the class work or the curriculum. I feel for them I want to know their problems, I want to know what's affecting them and on many, many, many occasions children feel free to open up to me if they were having problems, be it at home or if they were being abused in any way, they found it very easy to come to me (FG1).

In the focus group discussion another teacher from the same school made the following comment which shows her passion about what they are doing to be able to cope with inclusion and providing support:

...I think one of my main tasks is to motivate those children, I need to give them confidence and those are things before I teach them to read or write. Once I give them that, then I know half my battle is won. Now when I give them words to go home and learn, they going to learn because they motivated enough to do it. (FG1).

7.2.4.3 **Recognising that all learners can learn**

EWP6 stipulates that teachers should change their attitudes about learners who experience barriers to learning. During the focus group interview some teachers who have made the shift in thinking expressed the feelings they have for the learners in their ELSEN class. They claim that the learners are like their own kids. When one teacher was talking, the others nodded in agreement with her:

... these kids are our kids now, so they listen to us. I think it's because we give them the attention ... one-to-one. When they come to us they get more respect or whatever so it works (FG1).

...we find a lot of our kids are bright ... Majority of our hyperactive kids are brilliant children ... They have so much intelligence in them but it's just not channelled properly (FG1).

Learners are provided a space at assembly to show-case their talents. This makes them feel very special:

... she did that beautiful song at assembly she was so proud. Then another side of her was shown to the learners who thought all the time that they say 'stupid, stupid girl', but when they heard the song it was 'what a lovely voice, nice song'. After break she came and told me, 'so many children told me I can sing, I can sing'. So they don't know her for only belonging to ELSEN programme but Erica 'who can sing' (FG1).

The teachers at Primary School 1 also identify and focus on what learners can do, and promote these skills rather than dwell on what they cannot do:

...when it comes to any other learning area he is quiet, won't say much whereas the one next to him might be arrogant, but let it come to drawing and art and see how there is a transformation of personality where he is 'superior than thou'. So we try and encourage that... he has the potential, he's a very bright child ... (FG2).

... the child needs to feel like part of society and I feel that is very important that they be given that opportunity so when they grow up there's no complexes...I need to give them confidence before I teach them... I need to motivate them and give them confidence before I support them... (FG1).

I think at the end of the day we want a happy environment (IP2). ... we want children to perform to their full potential and IST.... Because you'll get better results, you'll get happier children and also now we trying to cater for a little more

than just the curriculum and it's all because IST has identified ... the children need to have a better life... and we trying to make the school a place where they'll love coming. (IP2).

So we are now targeting learners ... encouraging them to come to school and once educated, there is a better possibility of them seeking better employment (IP1).

A lot of our kids are very bright... the hyperactive kids are brilliant.

Some teachers through their professional development have changed their attitudes and beliefs about learners experiencing barriers to learning. This change makes it possible to change the way educational support is provided.

7.2.4.4 School as central to community development

EWP6 calls for an alternative way of providing educational support to learners. Previously the practice consisted of individualised, direct service delivery, but EWP6 suggests that it changes to a structured, collaborative community participation approach (DoE 2001; 2002a). The idea is to draw on existing resources within the school and community and in that way create a reciprocal relationship between schools and surrounding communities. Other researchers also believe that when the community, parents, and teachers work together, the learners' progress multiplies. The mind-set of "us" and "them", "school" and "home" has to stop (Bornman & Rose, 2012, p. 244).

Our school, we pride ourselves to provide quality education, best education money can buy because it is our belief that we need to change this section and change the community and that can only be done through a process of education. Right now there are many people in our community who are living in a circle of poverty. So we want to start changing that to a circle of wealth (IP1).

I offer all the support, wherever support is needed. I do counselling, I do home visits, I do parent consultation, I call in parents, we liaise with organisations, I serve on many community bodies in this community, and I virtually walk to homes on a daily basis (IP1).

We do various other types of programmes like eye clinic, health programmes to the community we are serving. It's something. The Sai organisation does the health programme, the church organisation that come and does health screening. Then they came and did an eye clinic where they offered free glasses to the indigent and elderly. They do blood transfusion clinic at the school. And they also do home visit

and provide food hampers for communities. They had a workshop on drug addiction. We have a very active community involvement... (IP1)

We do lots of home visits to visiting community, looking at some of their needs. There were problems with child support grant and we got the department of welfare to come to school. We invited the parents over to school and we did the applications form for them. We did the ID campaign at our school. We view the school as a community organisation. How the community can benefit from the school. The other belief that we have is that the school is only as strong as its community. If we want the school to be strong we have to develop the community (IP1).

These findings reflect that the principal of Primary School 1 together with the teachers realise the value of the surrounding community and the role the school can play in the development of the community from one of poverty to one of a more stable economic status.

Discussion: Potential for change

The main local factor that influences the implementation of changes such as collaborative educational support is the school system or culture (Engelbrecht & Green, 2007; Fullan & Stiegelbauer, 1991; Sarason, 1996). The school system can either represent situational and/or organisational constraints or provide opportunities for effective change. The findings from this study reflect that of the three schools; one of the schools provided more opportunities than constraints. In my study the school emerged as a positive system that supported and offered opportunities for teachers. The teachers ascribed positive feelings for the perceived compassion and empathy they received from their school. I noticed that the teachers presented with increased self-esteem and self-worth, and related to the opportunities that the school afforded them. It is clear that teachers who were willing to adopt the change were from a learning-enriched or moving school, as defined by Rosenholtz (1989).

My findings also show that there are possibilities for the successful implementation of collaborative educational support structures such as ILSTs. When school cultures are compatible with teacher cultures, they are able to provide teachers with the agency required for collaboration to provide educational support. It confirms the position of theorists such as Engelbrecht and Green (2007), Fullan and Stiegelbauer (1991), Fullan (1992; 1993a; 2001), Glatter, Castle, Cooper, Evans and Woods (2005), and Hopkins et al. (1994) who maintain that there are certain conditions required for change to occur.

The school culture of Primary School 1 displayed most of the elements such as support within the school, especially for professional development; teachers felt that their input was valued; there was a strong element of monitoring and evaluation; and there was an emphasis on relationship building. The most important influence seems to be the strong, positive, supportive leadership at school level and also displayed by the ILST coordinator. The teachers displayed passion and commitment; some teachers took ownership of the process and had positive attitudes towards learners who experience barriers to learning. The teachers in Primary School 2 and Primary School 3 however experienced more barriers than conditions for providing educational support through collaboration.

A better understanding and appreciation of the role teachers can play, could lead to better inclusive practices. The important aspect is to better understand the subjective realities of the teachers and the contexts which shape their work. Fullan and Stiegelbauer (1991) aptly comment that any plan of implementation requires planners to “[u]nderstand the subjective world – the phenomenology – of the role incumbents as a necessary precondition for engaging in any change effort with them” (p. 131). The findings of my study illustrate similar findings to the study of Brownell, Adams, Sindelar and Waldron (2006) in which teachers displayed different levels of adoption in implementing new teaching strategies, as opposed to others. Furthermore teachers, who were willing to adopt strategies, learnt through collaboration with other teachers and displayed certain qualities which were different from those who did not adopt the change.

In South Africa the Norms and Standards document illustrates the seven roles of a teacher (DoE, 2000), which is retained by the Minimum Requirements for Teacher

Education Qualifications (DBE, 2011). However, of relevance to this study, are two of the seven roles, namely as that of “scholar, researcher and lifelong learner, and the community, citizenship, and pastoral role” (DoE, 2000). My study reveals that while there are a few teachers who are able to live up to the descriptions provided by the Norms and Standard document it is not a sufficient number to make change possible on a wider scale. Morrow (2007) argues that a possible reason for this failure is that the seven roles ignore the reality of the conditions of the schools in which teachers work. Teachers in functional schools will have a very different experience to teachers in schools that are not so functional and this may be “a source of acute professional guilt as they struggle to cope on a daily basis; it makes greater demands than any individual can possibly fulfil” (Morrow, 2007, p. 11). Intrapersonal characteristics such as passion, commitment, support, and learning are also some of the qualities displayed by the teachers in my study that reveal possibilities for change.

EWP6 acknowledges that negative attitudes of teachers and inappropriate communication are considered barriers to learning for learners (DoE, 2001). The professional development of teachers requires a shift in thinking and discourse from a medical to a rights discourse. A few teachers in this study were able to make that shift and talked of learners who experience barriers to learning from a rights perspective. The teachers use a language that reflects their respect for the learners, believe that they can succeed, are prepared to provide them with opportunities to develop and focus on what they *can* do in order to build their confidence.

It is generally accepted that a wide social network with ongoing support and caring relationships act as a strong support system for learners who experience barriers to learning. The participants in my study believed they were getting support from the surrounding community and that they were providing support for them as well. Collaboration requires all involved to listen to each other, to respect each other’s rights, to create safe learning environments where parents support teachers, and finally to strive to assist each other (Bornman & Rose, 2010).

7.3 CONCLUSION

This chapter explained the teachers' understanding of providing educational support through collaboration. I first explained their understanding of providing collaborative educational support within the context of the implementation of EWP6; their understanding of educational support is still located in the medical discourse. This implies that they do not see the need to change their values, attitudes, and thinking about educational support services within an inclusive education discourse. I then explained how teachers' experiences reveal little indication of collaborative cultures in the three schools, and what emerged was contrived collegiality. There is very little evidence of 'true' collaborative team approaches; for the most part it just seems like a group of teachers interacting.

The next chapter discusses a summary of the key findings, implications of the findings in this study, the contributions of the study, the limitations of the study, and possible areas for further research.

CHAPTER EIGHT

A SYNOPSIS OF TEACHERS' UNDERSTANDING

Whose culture is it anyway? If teachers are told what to be professional about, how, where and with whom to collaborate, and what blueprint of professional conduct to follow, then the culture that evolves will be foreign to the setting. They will once again have "received" a culture. (Cooper, 1988 cited in Hargreaves, 1994a p. 189)

8.1 INTRODUCTION

The development of special education in South Africa has followed similar trends to those in developed countries (Du Toit, 1996). These trends wield a powerful influence on the provision of educational support services globally. However, in South Africa, a particular political, social, cultural, and economic context has concurrently complicated the education and support system significantly. Consequently, the nature and quality of educational support services varied for each ethnic group resulting in unequal support services across different education departments. White learners received the best services and Indian, coloured, and black learners had little or no access to any kind of educational support service at school (Du Toit, 1996). Furthermore, the medical model informed the provision of support for learners. This too was found to be problematic and resulted in negative consequences for learners who received the support.

To address the concern of inequality and inappropriate support provisioning, EWP6 (DoE, 2001) on inclusive education was launched in 2001. Through the establishment of ILSTs, a capacity-building programme for all ILST teachers was designed and managed by education district officials, as a pilot project. The focus of the programme is to move away from an individualistic to a collaborative process of providing educational support to learners experiencing barriers to learning. It is important to understand teachers' perspectives of successes and/or challenges experienced as they progress toward collaboration.

Against this background, the main focus of this study was on exploring teachers' understandings of providing educational support through collaboration in three

primary schools in Durban, South Africa. Utilising the findings from the study, this study aimed to explore Institutional-Level Support Team teachers' understanding of providing educational support through collaboration within the context of White Paper 6.

Chapter Seven presented the findings that address the research questions and focused on an analysis and discussion thereof. It was organised in a way that explained the provision of educational support through collaboration. In Chapter Eight, I provide a synopsis of my findings, the possible implications, the contribution, limitations, suggestions for further research and conclusions in terms of the research question. I begin this chapter by addressing my secondary research questions. Thereafter, while addressing my primary research question I provide the potential contribution of my study to research and the practice of educational psychology.

8.2 SUMMARY OF KEY FINDINGS

This section presents a summary of the key findings of this study. The four sub-sections, namely teachers' views of providing educational support, teachers' interpretation of providing educational support through collaboration, teachers' experiences of providing educational support through collaboration, and potential for providing educational support through collaboration, each presents important outcomes emanating from this study.

8.2.1 Teachers' views of providing education support

Findings from this research illustrate that teachers are members of society that was socialised into exclusionary discourses and practices of providing educational support to learners who experience barriers to learning. With the advent of inclusive education they have had to make radical shifts about the identification of barriers to learning and the way educational support is provided.

Teachers' engagement with inclusive education separates them into two segments. There are those who are holding on to the medical discourse and those who are able to make some subtle shifts towards an inclusive discourse. The participants that are

holding on to exclusionary practices understand collaborative educational support as something they are already doing and do not see it as something new; they agree that separate provision is in the best interest of the learner, still believe that the learner needs to be fixed, and that the provision of educational support is the work of specialists as they are not adequately professionally developed for the task.

Other participants made subtle shifts in their understanding of the provision of educational support. They display traces of movement towards an inclusive education collaborative approach. The subtle adjustments include the need to provide educational support within ordinary classes, they identify barriers to learning as emanating from broader sources moving beyond the learner, exploring ways to adapt the system to suit the needs of learners and recognise the necessity of working collaboratively for the benefit of learners.

The findings remind us that in order to achieve appropriate collaborative educational support practices, teachers should change their thinking and practices simultaneously. Understanding the shift from an individualistic approach to a collaborative one calls for deep learning. This requires fundamental changes in teacher discourse and practices. Changes of such magnitude are complex and takes time, compared to putting systems in place.

In this study, some teachers were able to make adjustments in their thinking about inclusive education and collaboration while most did not. The teachers' views reveal a perpetuation of the medical discourse and practices. This reflects a lack of clarity in their understanding of the paradigmatic shift required by EWP6 (DoE, 2001). Policy implementation efforts focused on restructuring the provision of educational support by implementing ILSTs at each school. The professional development provided through district office workshops did not adequately enable teachers for the required changes for the provision of collaborative educational support.

8.2.2 Teachers' understanding of providing educational support through collaboration

Collaboration is the foundation for inclusive education and educational support. Most teachers reflected that the intentions and principles of a collaborative structure such as an ILST are necessary. They recognised its importance as it provided more structure to the process of providing educational support. Participants thought that ILSTs were constructive since it allows for multiple perspectives on identification and management of barriers to learning.

However, they also agreed that as much as collaboration is good in theory, it is difficult to achieve in practice. Some of the reasons cited were that they thought it takes up teaching time, they did not have the required knowledge and skills to manage learners experiencing barriers to learning, there were too many competing school priorities, they felt the ILSTs were not fully functional, and they did not believe that it was sustainable at their schools.

Most teachers work in schools where cultures of individualism and balkanisation coexist. They may plan and develop programmes in their subject departments but rarely co-operate on issues that threaten their classroom autonomy, or ones that may open up their practice to intrusive inspection. The combination of individualism and balkanisation inhibits teachers' responsiveness to externally imposed innovations. The combination also does not suit either the top-down or bottom-up models of change. Hence there is support for developing greater collaboration and collegiality among teachers. However, the intentions and effects are very different in both cases. Bottom-up models are interested in professional development and support the empowerment of teachers. Top-down models are more suited to policy implementers who regulate and reconstitute teachers' collegial relations in line with bureaucratic purposes.

Participants agree that collaborative teaming for the provision of educational support has many benefits for teachers and learners. However, in practice efforts at implementing ILSTs have not been successful due to the presence of individualism and balkanisation. What the study reveals is the presence of superficial shifts rather than

substantive change. Attempts at restructuring educational support services were limited by various individual, contextual, and organisational constraints. These findings indicate that teachers' interpretations of policy requirements within the context in which they work determine the success or failure of its implementation.

8.2.3 Teachers' experiences of providing educational support through collaboration

In essence in this study, the ILST seemed to be a simulation or mimicry of collaboration to appease district officials. It reconstituted teacher relations in the policy makers' image of collaborative educational support. Teachers felt obligated to comply with policy intentions which put pressure on them to establish ILSTs at schools. However, externally imposed innovations tend to de-professionalise and disempower teachers into uncritically implementing the decisions of others (Hargreaves, 1992b).

From the teachers' experiences it becomes evident that they felt the ILST was imposed on them by the department and there was no buy-in for collaborative educational support provision. While teachers were collaborating at different levels there is clearly a lack of structure and problem-solving among members of the ILST. Collaboration occurs according to Hargreaves's (1994) definition when it is voluntary, unplanned, and informal. This kind of collaboration is useful but it does not provide sufficient time and information required for the professional development of teachers.

Collaboration requires relinquishing of power by all members of the ILST. However, the findings reflect a struggle for power among teachers, district officials, and school management. This study also confirms that the benefits of collaboration cannot be taken for granted. Teachers in this study felt that their workload had increased instead of reducing. This could lead to frustration and burn-out for them. They were also uncertain that their process of the ILST was in keeping with EWP6. If it is not then they fear that learners would be compromised.

Teachers experience their membership of the ILSTs from multiple perspectives, ranging on a continuum from positive to a compromise. Most of them agreed that 'it is good ' in

principle and intention, however, in practice it is 'short-changed ', 'loose', 'informal', 'not fully functional', and 'there in name's sake'. The teachers' experiences reveal that they felt obligated to comply with policy requirements, and power struggles were evident. These outcomes pose barriers to collaboration.

8.2.4 Potential for providing educational support through collaboration

Despite the deep-rooted practices and beliefs of the medical discourse, the findings reveal some potential for providing educational support through collaboration. While this may sound encouraging, it was mainly one school and very few teachers who displayed some movement toward inclusive education discourse and practices. One out of the three schools used in the study displayed characteristics that are conducive to bringing about changes toward collaboration. Primary School 1 has the professional development of teachers high on their agenda. They provide opportunities for twinning with surrounding schools, and teachers found this a rewarding experience for themselves and for the teachers from the other schools as it helped facilitate their professional development. The teachers also felt that the school management and ILST coordinator valued their input and provided space for their personal growth. Learners are also provided with opportunities to show-case their talents at assembly.

The interpersonal and intrapersonal qualities of some teachers also display strong possibilities for change. The findings suggest that some teachers are committed and passionate about the process of providing collaborative educational support. Some teachers also display an interest in their personal development by making an effort to conduct independent research about setting up and managing ILSTs.

The teachers' discourses illustrate their beliefs about learners. Those who have shifted their thinking toward inclusive education have positive beliefs about the learners and use an encouraging language when describing them. However, teachers that are trapped in the medical discourse continue with stereotyping and use a negative discourse when referring to learners. The former recognise that all learners have the ability to learn. These teachers also strive to build relationships with parents, the surrounding community, and service providers as a way of enhancing their services. They see the

school as a family organisation and believe that collaboration is the way to support each other.

Despite the struggles of most teachers there was hope as some participants showed traces of understanding the paradigmatic shifts required of them. They seemed to understand that the important motivating forces which make collaboration possible are: school leadership and environment, teachers' interpersonal and intrapersonal qualities, recognition of learners' potential, and the importance of building community relationships.

8.3 IMPLICATIONS OF FINDINGS

This section discusses the implications which arise from the outcomes of this study. The implications are presented according to the themes identified and discussed.

The teachers' responses in this study indicated that they required continuous support from the district officials for the development of a collaborative educational support system. It may also be that they really want "specialists" to step in and serve learners experiencing barriers to learning. It is also an indication that they experienced severe difficulties in their attempts at collaboration due to lack of clear understanding of the change process and the change itself. This led to anxiety, frustration, and uncertainty among the participants in the study. The situation is exacerbated by the lack of functional DBSTs as their support might make teachers feel less isolated and more confident about change. Additional assistance from the district officials in the form of more frequent and appropriate professional development workshops accompanied by on-site support could make teachers feel more certain about the change required and could help improve their motivation.

The teachers' views of providing educational support are still located in a medical discourse which is counterproductive to the implementation of collaborative teaming deemed necessary for inclusive education. "People are always wanting teachers to change" (Hargreaves, 1994a, p. 5), yet teachers are expected to meet the demands of change in contexts of severe financial, physical, and human resource scarcity. The

professional development of teachers should include how change occurs so that they can better understand it and what is required of them. It is one way of getting teachers involved especially when the change is complex and requires major paradigm shifts. For example, expecting teachers to provide collaborative educational support requires teachers to unlearn their previous and existing limiting beliefs about their roles as teachers, to shift from special needs to inclusive practices, and finally to change their traditional practice of working in isolation to working through collaboration. Thus teachers' involvement is of extreme importance to any change process.

Unfortunately, the implementers of change, such as the district officials, usually "ignore, misunderstand or override teachers' own desires for change" (Hargreaves, 1994a, p. 11). To bring about change, the district officials rely on teacher guidelines and professional development workshops. On closer inspection, these strategies focussed on setting up ILSTs as collaborative structures for providing educational support and the practices thereof, what Hargreaves calls the 'form' of teacher cultures. The workshops provided limited if any development of the values, beliefs, and attitudes of teachers, referred to as the 'content' of teacher culture. Thus, the findings indicate that insufficient attention was paid to both content and form of teacher culture as teachers lacked clarity about the meaning of collaboration. It is only when teachers experience implementation that difficulties and concerns become apparent. It is therefore crucial that teachers receive some initial assistance and continued support for successful implementation.

If change is to be perceived as meaningful, teachers should be provided with opportunities to first consider the change and to check whether it is practical. The practicality of change for teachers' means assessing what will work and what will not work for a particular teacher in a particular context. Therefore, the possibility of change is a combination of purpose, teacher, politics, and workplace constraints (Hargreaves, 1994a). It is these aspects that change strategies must address since teachers use them to motivate their willingness to make change possible or not.

As discussed in Chapter Four, there are various models of collaborative teaming in the literature. After an extensive review, Pugash and Johnson (1989) concluded that when

teams become too highly structured, they also become too time-consuming, too behavioural, too bureaucratic, and tend to maintain the roles of specialists, such as special educators and school psychologists. ILSTs, as conceptualised in EWP6, are more similar to pre-referral intervention teams (rigid and lacking flexibility) than to teacher assistance teams (informal and flexible) in their design characteristics. The professional knowledge gained from the informal meetings should not be underestimated.

ILSTs are not awarded the same status as that of other existing teams in schools. The prevailing attitude toward ILSTs is negative and caused by teachers' understanding that it is an 'add-on' or 'not as important as the other teams'. Therefore there is a need for a systematic shift in thinking among all stakeholders in the education sector. The danger of balkanisation in this situation is that it perpetuates a myth of changelessness among teachers, reduces the initiative they may have to improve their knowledge and skills, and also restricts opportunities to learn from each other (Hargreaves, 1994a). This attitude leads to balkanisation, which divides teachers and poses a threat to attempts at change as there will be many groups looking after their own interests over others.

Perceptions and practices of leaders are very important since they are the crux of any change initiative. Distributed leadership which focuses on shared leadership, participative decision making, and shared responsibility for change and development is useful (Engelbrecht & Green, 2007). It is premised on trust, teachers' mutual acceptance of each other's leadership potential, and access to resources. Change is possible where teachers accept a network of shared expertise. Distributed leadership assumes that all teachers are potential leaders and regarded as change agents because they are closest to the classroom. It is a form of collective leadership where teachers develop knowledge and skills in teaching and learning by working together. In inclusive schools leadership takes on many forms and comes from many different people (Engelbrecht & Green, 2007). Leadership is beneficial only if it is combined with other forms of support.

When any change is implemented it requires monitoring to check the progress or challenges experienced; in this way difficulty in practice can be identified timeously and solutions provided. Evaluation goes hand in hand with monitoring; when teachers attempt something new they need to know how they are progressing. Examining their

efforts could motivate them to sustain the change and also elicit a sense of urgency and commitment on the part of the principal and/or district officials. In other words leadership needs to exert some pressure for any change to be successful.

Teachers' responses bring to the fore the following question: 'Should teachers provide educational support as part of their formal work?' The findings from this study have contributed important information about the way some teachers think about additional roles that are imposed on them. For example, in this study most principals did not take ownership of the change and teachers believed that the department should provide schools with additional human resources for the provision of collaborative educational support, which means that they are missing the importance of expanding classroom supports to better enhance the learning of all.

8.4 CONTRIBUTION OF THE STUDY

This study highlights the working of ILSTs within the context of implementing inclusive education, in South Africa. The Department of Education (now DBE) in South Africa has attempted and is still attempting to restructure educational support provision in schools by introducing EWP6. There is a tendency to perceive the implementation of this policy as a rational and linear process; however the findings from my study point to the complex and emergent nature of enabling teachers to collaborate in providing educational support. The complexity is in contrast to perceived linearity and implies neither looking from restructuring to reculturing, nor from reculturing to restructuring, but looking simultaneously at the strategies in their own right. Teachers clearly need time to make changes and develop collaborative educational support practices. In this context, I put forward three propositions, drawn from the findings, in improving implementation of ILSTs:

- Policy implementation strategies should integrate 'forward mapping' and 'backward mapping'.
- Restructuring and re-culturing should occur simultaneously during policy implementation.

- Teacher culture and a micropolitical perspective should be combined during policy implementation.

These propositions imply that various change strategies should occur or operate at the same time, and therefore the notion of “simultaneity” (Davis, 2008) is critical to the success in changing teacher practice.

8.4.1 Policy implementation strategies should integrate ‘forward mapping’ and ‘backward mapping’

One way of achieving such simultaneity is that policy implementation strategies, at the national and district levels, integrate forward mapping and backward mapping in order to support the drive for sustainable change. Findings from this study illustrate that professional development provided by the Department of Education slows down the process of professional development. I therefore argue that forward mapping approaches to implementation ignore the challenges encountered by schools and teachers. Backward mapping, which approaches policy implementation from the ‘bottom-up,’ by analysing what drives teachers’ actions and behaviours to enact policy, should be part of the implementation process.

8.4.2 Restructuring and re-culturing should occur simultaneously during policy implementation

Teacher discourses in this study reflect that perceptions of education support remain located within the medical discourse, revealing that in spite of engaging in structures such as EWP6, district office support and ILSTs, teacher values and beliefs remained unchanged. Restructuring, as a preferred approach to policy implementation, does not automatically enable changing the form and content of teacher cultures which shape existing practices. Restructuring may be a necessary condition for changing practices, but it is not a sufficient condition. Reculturing which creates opportunities for change in the content and form of teachers’ practices and beliefs, and for time release from classroom duties for teachers to collaborate and plan, allows for professional development. What this means is that professional development needs to pay particular

attention to teacher 'selves' in restructuring and reculturing as they share a reciprocal relationship. Practices and beliefs tend to change interactively and together, and hence restructuring and reculturing should occur simultaneously during policy implementation.

8.4.3 Teacher cultures and a micropolitical perspective should be combined during policy implementation

Findings from this study elucidate different forms of teacher collaboration that have different consequences and serve different purposes. Even when teachers 'collaborated' it rarely extended to critical, collaborative and reflective practices of providing educational support. It is therefore important for policy makers to understand the dynamics of collaboration which leads to questions about who guides and controls collaboration i.e. their micropolitics. The advocacy for collaboration has largely taken place from a cultural perspective of change which assumes a shared culture among teachers. However, their differences, conflicts and disagreements significantly impact bringing about change. The presence of balkanisation and contrived collegiality in this study illuminates teachers' power and influence. Furthermore, it is necessary when promoting change toward collaboration among teachers that they are assured that it does not mean giving up their voice. The need for change should be positioned in policy as an 'ethic of care' (cf. Chapter Four) rather than an 'ethic of responsibility'. Teachers need to understand that the time spent away from their classrooms is actually for the benefit of the learners. I argue that during implementation phase teacher cultures and the micropolitical perspective must be considered. Department officials should not assume a shared culture among teachers and be aware of the power and influence that teachers have in the process of change.

Drawing on the propositions as contribution of my study, I offer a conceptual framework (See Figure 8. 4) towards enabling teachers to take up policy implementation and to provide educational support through collaboration. The conceptual framework illustrates that teacher's work within particular contexts when implementing inclusive education policy and that they are influenced by external environments as well as internal environments of the school. To bring about sustainable

change, such as collaboration within ILSTs, there is a need to employ a systemic reform perspective, which requires a focus on the internal development of the teacher (reculturing) while at the same time seeking connections with the external structures (restructuring). In other words, teachers and the contexts in which they work should simultaneously be addressed to enable change towards collaboratively providing educational support within an inclusive education context.

FIGURE 8. 4: Conceptual framework for facilitating the implementation of ILSTs in the context of inclusive education



The complexity of the transformation of educational support services can be crystallised as a “moving mosaic” (Toffler, in Hargreaves, 1994a, p. 66) highlighting the ‘flexibility’ required in the transformation of educational support services. Flexibility can contribute to what Senge (1990) calls organisational learning. The moving mosaic offers an organisation a structure that allows teachers to engage in taking risks, distributing leadership and shared decision making which encourages dynamic and shifting forms of collaboration through networks, partnerships, and alliances within the school and beyond.

8.5 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

It is acknowledged that there are limitations to this study:

- A small sample of the three schools and fifteen teachers provided rich data, but the results cannot be generalised to other schools without taking the context into account.
- The three schools were semi-urban primary schools which means the results could be different if the same study were to be replicated in urban or rural primary or high schools.
- The sample consisted mainly of Indian and black female teachers and I therefore do not know how teachers of other ethnicities and sex would have responded.
- One of the challenges of my data collection period was setting up observations at ILST meetings at the three schools. The year I chose to do my data collection was when a teacher strike occurred which had serious implications for the work of ILSTs. All further training workshops and ILST meetings were put on hold. I could only observe one ILST meeting at Primary School 3.

8.6 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER STUDY

The study highlights several areas for further research:

- There is a need to explore teachers differing conceptualisations of inclusion and barriers to learning and the impact this has on its implementation. Do teachers who perceive barriers as impairments make different decisions compared to those who see barriers primarily as problematic environmental issues?
- In-depth investigations are required of how teachers change their attitudes toward collaboration.
- Explorations could be made into which influences promote teachers' efforts at educational change.
- It is argued that change is a process, thus longitudinal studies tracking teacher change over a period of time is required.
- The needs of teachers for the successful implementation of collaborative structures such as ILSTs require investigation.
- Investigations to include the effects of collaborative educational support on the recipients of the service provided would be useful.
- This research could be replicated in a different context such as private and rural schools.
- Research could be conducted using different methodologies such as ethnography or life history throwing light on teachers' understanding of providing education support through collaboration. Exploring teachers understanding from a critical perspective will also assist with the transformation of teachers toward collaborative teaming rather than merely helping to understand.

8.7 CONCLUSION

The study revealed that policy implementation is not the linear and rational process policy makers believe it to be. The complexity of the process of implementation is influenced by the nature and context for the change, teacher cultures, and reculturing. The planning for implementation requires active, adequate and appropriate initiation of, and participation by teachers to be successful. There is clearly pressure on the part

of the Department of Basic Education to implement ILSTs using a collaborative approach for professional development towards inclusive educational support. The provision of support and leadership from the level of district offices and school management is crucial for attempts at restructuring educational support services. Up to this point most teachers have not fully understood the 'true' meaning of collaboration as envisaged by EWP6, and Fullan and Stiegelbauer (1991) refers to this as a period of "the implementation dip" (p. 91) which means that when trying something new it is acceptable for "things [to] get worse before they can get better and clearer as people grapple with the meaning and skills of change" (p. 91). Spillane et al., (2002) aptly posit that it is fundamental to be attentive to the 'what ' of policy such as directions, goals, and frameworks; however policy ideas about changing existing behaviour – depends significantly on the implementing agents, the teachers, their interpretations, expertise, and experiences.

Collaborative cultures are slow to evolve and are therefore unattractive to policy makers who look for speedy implementations. Teacher collaboration should be an important aspect of the research agenda if there is seriousness about developing such a culture or else the result could be forms of individualism or balkanisation, both of which will hamper the process and sustainability of any efforts at change. Hargreaves (1994) concurs that "[c]ollaboration and restructuring can be helpful or harmful, and their meanings and realizations therefore need to be inspected repeatedly to ensure that their educational and social benefits are positive" (p. 248). Finally, without adequately empowering teachers, neither restructuring nor reculturing will be of any benefit to the process of change, which is clearly illustrated in this study.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1 ETHICAL CLEARANCE



RESEARCH OFFICE (GOVAN MBEKI CENTRE)
WESTVILLE CAMPUS
TELEPHONE NO.: 031 – 2603507
EMAIL: ximbap@ukzn.ac.za

21 NOVEMBER 2005

MRS. M CHETTY (7609319)
EDUCATION

Dear Mrs. Chetty

ETHICAL CLEARANCE APPROVAL NUMBER : HS9105224A

I wish to confirm that ethical clearance has been granted for the following project:

"The influence of leadership on emerging trends of institutional – level support teams in developing Rural Primary Schools towards inclusive education"

Yours faithfully


MS. PHUMLELE XIMBA
RESEARCH OFFICE

PS: The following general condition is applicable to all projects that have been granted ethical clearance:

THE RELEVANT AUTHORITIES SHOULD BE CONTACTED IN ORDER TO OBTAIN THE NECESSARY APPROVAL SHOULD THE RESEARCH INVOLVE UTILIZATION OF SPACE AND/OR FACILITIES AT OTHER INSTITUTIONS/ORGANISATIONS. WHERE QUESTIONNAIRES ARE USED IN THE PROJECT, THE RESEARCHER SHOULD ENSURE THAT THE QUESTIONNAIRE INCLUDES A SECTION AT THE END WHICH SHOULD BE COMPLETED BY THE PARTICIPANT (PRIOR TO THE COMPLETION OF THE QUESTIONNAIRE) INDICATING THAT HE/SHE WAS INFORMED OF THE NATURE AND PURPOSE OF THE PROJECT AND THAT THE INFORMATION GIVEN WILL BE KEPT CONFIDENTIAL.

cc. Faculty Research Office (Derek Buchter)
cc. Supervisor (Dr. N de Lange)

**APPENDIX 1A
APPROVAL OF CHANGE OF TITLE**

16 July 2013

Mrs M Chetty
University of KwaZulu-Natal
School of Education
Edgewood Campus

Dear Mrs Chetty

CHANGE OF TITLE: DOCTOR OF EDUCATION

School Research & Higher Degrees Chairperson executively approved on 16 July 2013 your change of title as follows:

Old Title: Institutional-level support teams: A case study of members' understanding and experiences of support in the context of inclusive education.

New Title: Institutional-level support teams: A case study of teachers' understanding of providing educational support through collaboration in the context of inclusive education

Yours sincerely



Mrs P Mnguni
Academic Administrative Officer
Research & Higher Degrees

cc: Dr P Morojole

School of Education

Postal Address: Private Bag X03, Ashwood, 3605, South Africa






Telephone: +27 (0) 31 260 3663

Facsimile: +27 (0)31 260 3600

Email: education@ukzn.ac.za

Website: www.ukzn.ac.za



Teaching Campuses:  Edgewood  Howard College  Medical School  Pietermaritzburg  Westville

APPENDIX 1B

Turnitin originality report

Teacher Collaboration1 by Kantha (M.) Chetty

From Chapter1 draft 25/6 - 2/9 2013 - Part 1 (Moodle 21091580) (TURN500ed:
PG Prof Singh (Moodle 6494097))

- Processed on 01-Jul-2013 01:47 SAST
- ID: 338732481
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APPENDIX 2
PERMISSION - PROVINSIONAL DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION



PROVINCE OF KWAZULU-NATAL
 ISIFUNDAZWE SAKWAZULU-NATALI
 - PROVINSIE KWAZULU-NATAL
 DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
 UMNYANGO WENFUNDO
 DEPARTEMENT VAN ONDERWYS

Tel: 033 341 8611
 Fax: 033 341 8612
 Private Bag X3137
 Pietermaritzburg
 3200
 228 Pietermaritz Street
 Pietermaritzburg, 3201

INHLOKHOHLOVISI	PIETERMARITZBURG	HEAD OFFICE
Engquinen: Imbizo: M France Namas:	Reference: Imbizo: 025188 Verwysing:	Date: Usoko: Datum: 12/03/2007

RE: PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

This is to serve as a notice that Magavani Chetty (7609319) has been granted permission to conduct research with the following terms and conditions:

- > That as a researcher, he/she must present a copy of the written permission from the Department to the Head of the Institution concerned before any research may be undertaken at a departmental institution.
- > Magavani Chetty has been granted special permission to conduct his/her research during official contact times, as it is believed that their presence would not interrupt education programmes. Should education programmes be interrupted, he/she must, therefore, conduct his/her research during nonofficial contact times.
- > No school is expected to participate in the research during the fourth school term, as this is the critical period for schools to focus on their exams.

for SUPERINTENDENT GENERAL
 KwaZulu Natal Department of Education

APPENDIX 3
LETTER TO DISTRICT OFFICE DIRECTOR

University of KwaZulu-Natal
Faculty of Education
Edgewood Campus

The District Office Director
Pinetown District Office
41 Voortrekker Street
Ashley

Dear Sir/Madam

Request for permission to conduct research

This letter serves to obtain permission to conduct research at three primary schools within the jurisdiction of the Pinetown District Office. The research required is in fulfilment of my PhD study. The aim of the study is to explore teachers' understanding and experiences of providing educational support through collaboration within the context of inclusive education in primary schools.

I will ensure at all times that data collection will not interfere with the educational activities of the school. The information gathered will be used for research purposes only and be treated with strict confidence. Teachers will participate voluntarily and may withdraw at any point of the study. Pseudonyms will be used for all participating schools and participants.

Ethical Clearance has been granted by the University of KwaZulu-Natal. Kindly find attached a copy of the letter of permission granted by the Provincial Education Director. Should you require any further information please contact me on 072 967 8715 or kanthachetty@yahoo.com.

Your cooperation and support in this regard is appreciated.

Yours sincerely

M. Chetty
Student Number: 7609319
UKZN

APPENDIX 4
LETTER TO SCHOOL PRINCIPAL

University of KwaZulu-Natal
Faculty of Education
Edgewood Campus

The School Principal
..... Primary School
KwaZulu-Natal

Dear Sir/Madam

Request for permission to conduct research

This letter serves to obtain permission to conduct research at three primary schools within the jurisdiction of the Pinetown District Office. The research required is in fulfilment of my PhD study. The aim of the study is to explore teachers' understanding and experiences of providing educational support through collaboration within the context of inclusive education in primary schools.

I will ensure at all times that data collection will not interfere with the educational activities of the school. The information gathered will be used for research purposes only and be treated with strict confidence. Teachers will participate voluntarily and may withdraw at any point of the study. Pseudonyms will be used for all participating schools and participants.

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Your cooperation and support in this regard is appreciated.

Yours sincerely

M. Chetty
Student Number: 7609319
UKZN

INFORMATION FOR RESEARCH PARTICIPANTS

You are invited to participate in a research study on the realities of teamwork at three primary schools. The purpose of my research is to explore the experiences of institutional-level support teams (ILSTs) in 3 primary schools. You will be asked to participate in an individual and/or a focus group interview that will be audio and/or video taped. The tapes will be transcribed and your words may be used in professional presentations and publications. The tapes will remain secure and in the possession of the researcher.

Pseudonyms will be selected for all participants and schools. During the course of the study, all data will be secured in a locked file cabinet. On completion of the study, all data will be destroyed.

Your participation will take roughly 60-90 minutes.

I would like to verify the data after writing it up, to discuss it and check that it accurately reflects your viewpoints

I thank you for your willingness to assist me and I am grateful for your time and effort.

=====

I have discussed the research project with the researcher. I have had the opportunity to ask questions regarding the study.

My participation in the project is voluntary. I may refuse to participate or withdraw from participation at any time without any fear of negative consequences.

Pseudonyms will be selected for all participants and institutions. The video taped material will be viewed only by the principal researcher. During the course of the study, all data will be secured in a locked file cabinet. All tapes will be destroyed on completion of the study.

Please tick, if yes or cross, if no the relevant bracket/s

I consent to be audio () and/or video () taped.

I do not consent to be audio () and/or video () taped.

My signature means that I agree to participate in the study.

Participant's signature _____

Date _____

Name _____

Title (e.g. ILST member/Principal)

APPENDIX 6
PROTOCOL FOR UNSTRUCTURED INDIVIDUAL INTERVIEW

1. Tell me about your understanding of providing educational support through collaboration as an ILST member.

2. Prompts:

Earlier you mentioned... please tell me more about that?

Please tell me more about that?

Give me more details about...?

Are you saying that....?

In what way is that important?

How did that affect you?

What was your experience like in that situation?

APPENDIX 7
PROTOCOL FOR FOCUS GROUP INTERVIEW

1. Tell me about your understanding of providing educational support through collaboration as an ILST member.

2. Prompts:

Earlier you mentioned... please tell me more about that?

Please tell me more about that?

Give me more details about...?

Are you saying that....?

In what way is that important?

How did that affect you?

What was your experience like in that situation?

APPENDIX 8
PROTOCOL FOR OBSERVATION SCHEDULE - IST MEETING

1. Seating arrangements
2. Attendance
3. Number of members
4. Materials handed out
5. Running transcript that identifies:
 - Who spoke when and in what order
 - Issues discussed or not
 - Ethos of meeting
 - Meeting procedures
 - Contributions to discussions: giving & receiving information
 - How decisions are reached
 - Conflict management
 - Values- perceptions of ability of learners
 - Beliefs- is there a shared philosophy about education support
 - Roles- clear
 - Sense of trust- trusting and trustworthy

APPENDIX 9
COMPOSITION OF THE ILST

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
ETHEKWINI REGION

COMPOSITION OF THE INSTITUTION SUPPORT TEAM

CIRCUIT: _____

WARD: _____

	NAMES	TELEPHONE	FAX
School			
Principal			
IST Coordinator			
Secretary			
Team members			

PRINCIPAL'S SIGNATURE
SCHOOL STAMP

DATE

APPENDIX 10
INVITATION TO ILST MEETING



PROVINCE OF KWAZULU-NATAL
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

ADDRESS : PINETOWN DISTRICT	PRIVATE BAG : X 5001	TELEPHONE : :
IKHELI : 41 VOORTREKKER STREET	(SIKHWAMA SEPOSI) : PINETOWN	UCINGO : 031 7162620
ADRES : ASHLEY, 3600	PRIVAATSAK : 3600	TELEFOON : :
		TOLL FREE NO. : 0800 360 6911
		FAX : 031 7026382
ENQUIRIES: T.DAYA - 7162759	REFERENCE : I.L.S.T. WORKSHOPS	DATE : 30.07.08
IMIBUZO : P.MEYER - 7162908	USUKU : :	
NAVRAE : G.SHANDU - 7162623	VERWYSING : :DATUM	

To: Circuit Manager – Mafukuzela – Ghandi Circuit
 Superintendents of Education Management
 Principals of schools
 Institution Support Team members

Dear Colleagues

Workshop for Institution Level Support Team Members

Attached please find the schedule for I.L.S.T cluster workshops. The coordinator and secretary of your I.L.S.T are requested to attend.

The topic of the workshop will be "Managing an I.L.S.T. Meeting". As discussed at the previous meeting, schools are requested to bring one fully documented case to the workshop. A parent interview and an I.L.S.T. meeting needs to have been conducted at the school. Documents submitted should include:

- Written parental consent for referral
- Completed parent interview checklist
- Copies of assessment (Literacy and Numeracy)
- Completed referral form (LSEN 001) with comments from I.L.S.T. meeting on action plan
- I.L.S.T. meeting minutes
- I.L.S.T.school membership list (if not already submitted)

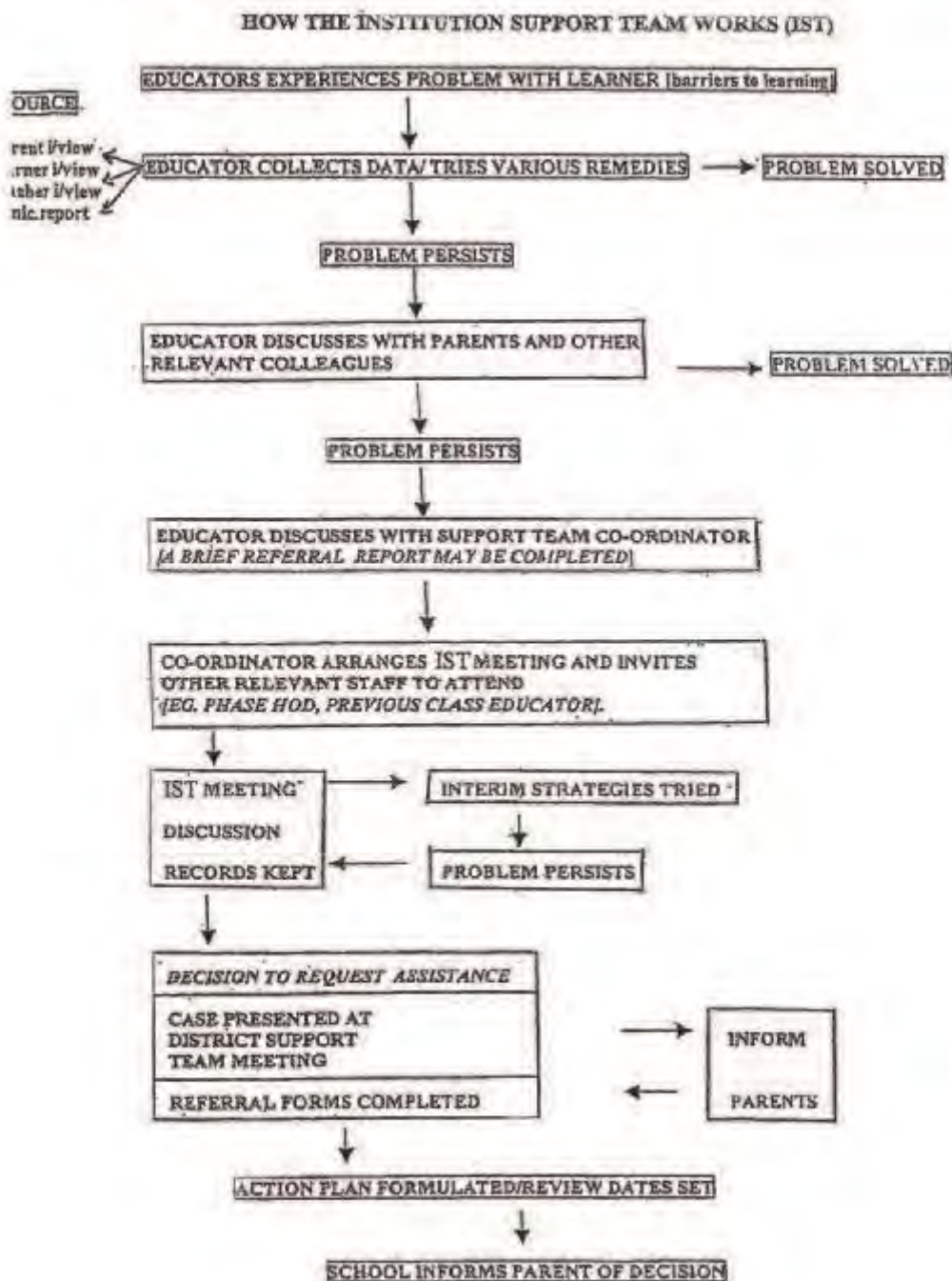
All workshops will commence at 13h00 and will finish by 15h00. The clusters of schools and dates are indicated in the attached schedule. Please note the date and venue for your school. It is especially important that schools marked with an asterisk attend the workshop as records show that they were not represented at the previous workshop.

If there are any enquiries please do not hesitate to call any of the above numbers or fax the enquiry to the District Office.

Yours faithfully

 E.M. Kganya
 District Director

APPENDIX 11
HOW THE ILST WORKS



APPENDIX 12: SAMPLE OF TRANSCRIPT
INDIVIDUAL INTERVIEW
COORDINATOR: PS 2

K: OK now we can start. Thank you once again. Please tell me about your understanding of providing educational support through collaboration as an ILST member.

R: You know what I feel is that I agreed to do this interview with you and I'm agreeing to give you all information that I've learnt, my experiences for the simple reason that I feel it is only going to go positively it's going to do good for these children. *I am very passionate about these children.* I've been with them for the last 4 or 5 years and I feel that lots needs to be done. *These children are being compromised like I said in schools because you find that the attention is on children that are gifted, children that are above average, even average. But these children that have learning problems, that have barriers to learning are not even recognized in some instances. They are not children that are just merely lazy or not performing, not doing homework or not doing what the teacher is requesting. These children cannot do sometimes, they are struggling. So one needs to see that. And being with them and communicating with them and I found so much from them. I learnt from them (lowers voice and stresses on words). And I find we got to be very careful when we handling these hmmm these children because they don't like the terminology and department has stated categorically that they must not be referred to- given certain terms that they are called. Like even yesterday we had a teacher came in to do a half an hour lesson, just half an hour and yet I am with them for hours and she called them 'mental' and she said things like that. When I returned to them they all were at my table and they told me. And I said tell your parents and make sure that some action following that because it's my colleague and I can't say those things to the management all right. So I agree totally with WP6 and inclusivity for the simple reason that we shouldn't isolate these children, they should be part of society after all they live and dwell with society so they must have skills to cope with society. They cannot be isolated it doesn't work. But I'm finding some schools are isolating them. And I'm gonna say this but there is a danger here that I could be victimized at my school which I would ask you to please honor. And this is that our school has set a classroom aside. Now in this classroom we have children that are of the type that cannot cope. They are children with barriers and they are ranging from grade 2 right up to 7. Putting 12 year olds with 8 year olds and 7 year olds. It's not good I don't think it's a healthy situation. All right I do agree that that 12 year old is functioning at the very level that the 7 year old is but we should give them some dignity and make them that they're older and grown up and keep them separately. But I suppose we have problems with teachers the department is not giving us educators to handle this kind of set up, so that is why we have this situation at our school.*

K: What are the kinds of barriers that these children experience?

R: All right. *I am fortunate at our school because the children that come that have these barriers aren't like blind or deaf or disabled who don't have the use of an arm or in a wheelchair. I have children that have learning, the psychiatrist has seen them and their reading, you get a 12 year old girl whose reading level is 6 years you know, or they're struggling with their numeracy or even life skills. They cannot, they're not on par with even the average of their age group. So they have terrible learning barriers and some of them take months to even write on a line. They write in the middle, some of them take even so long to learn to space their writing or to identify shapes and*

puzzles and stuff like that. They, they don't have that mentality. So I sometimes I bring in so much of activities, I make it a diverse thing where I take them out and I have stuff on the grounds and to make, to bring it out, to try and let them shine a bit. And they get so excited when they can do something and they're being praised for that. And there are times, like reading it's a no-go area, sentence construction is a no-go area, and I'm on that at the moment. I'm doing that. Simple sentence like, "My mum is ill" is a mountain for them. You may not understand it until you work with them. But they have, it is a struggle for them they cannot cope.

K: You've told me a lot about the kinds of learners you have, can we just go back?

R: All right let me make another point now. IST does not only involve children with learning problems. We've had other areas of problems in the school (lowers voice). For instance we have children that have home background. You know it is so painful because they don't have a happy home situation. They, some of them even their nutrition; you can actually see the marks, the pigmentation that shows undernourished child. Things like that, you have children that are coming from a setup where the mother is a alcoholic and it's rubbing off, and she's, she's, she's involved with men and she's trying to and it's affected the daughter now. The daughter now, I'm talking of a case, an actual case in my class where the child has been truanting, she's been away from school, she's been you know apparently, allegedly, she's been. I also investigated but I cannot truly say that it is true that she's been with this person. I cannot truly say she's been with this older man. Because I've seen this situation, I went there with the permission of management and it was true there was younger boy and there was this older man and she had money which wasn't given to her by her parents. You know and apparently she's. This is IST can I, can I? (feels anxious about divulging this kind of information). You know it's IST it's highly confidential

K: Go right ahead, whatever you tell me is in confidence.

R: It's highly confidential and it's been brought out that she's been raped and (lowers voice, difficult to hear what she is saying) I even heard today that it's gone so far that a family member told me that she maybe pregnant and it could be true because she is wearing her coat very puffed up and she's insisting on wearing that jacket. So I haven't seen it so tomorrow I'm going to very aware of it because I only found out today. And I think the needs are so great even financially, I mean it's a 12 year old girl she has needs and she went so far as today I was even more upset than her because she carried my bag to the staffroom and she had stolen. She had taken 3, some money from my bag and I didn't upset her. I just said to her, I didn't even know how much it was, I said to her, look this is what happened you took my bag with me, she insisted on carrying my bag to the staffroom and I said you opened it and you tampered with it and I find some and she came out with what she's taken, but she says her mother gave her that to give to the old man. I don't know if it's the same old man. It was mine, she gave it, she ended up crying and I told her look here I'm not even taking it to the office, I'm telling another child, I'm telling another teacher, because my heart went out to where she's coming from. And I held her and pacified her and I said to her it's wrong what you've done, but leave it now tomorrow when you and I have slept over it we will discuss it properly and you need to learn from that it's not a good thing that you've done and most of all your teacher you know. And that's one and then I have like a case where I'm suspecting it.

K: Raj, we'll talk more about specific cases.

R: Tell me where you want me to go?

K: For now I would like to know when was the first time you heard about IE?

R: Oh, I heard about it a long ago. In fact I was a principal before I came to this school. I was in Eshowe. So I heard about WP6 and I went to workshops and I knew about IE. And I know about the problems they having. There is not, there is no facilities at schools, mainstream schools to cater for these children and I agree with that. *Even the teachers that are qualified to teach mainstream classes aren't qualified to teach, to handle these children. So it is a major, major problem. They need to be workshopped. They need to even understand how to even identify these children in their classrooms.* I'm very much in that process now because I'm sending out a list for them to tell me who for next year 2008. I need participants, I need candidates now that I must assess and call parents in and see whether they happy with their children being put into the ELSEN programme. We have an ELSEN programme. And teachers don't have, some of them don't have the least idea of how to identify them. So I sit with the problem after they've identified cause I do an assessment which takes me like half an hour or an hour. And that doesn't tell me much because the teacher knows more but the teacher doesn't know how to identify these children. *They just take this naughty one that's always doing things wrong or always not doing homework and that's an ELSEN and that's not necessarily so. Right, so we having that kind of problem in mainstream schools.*

K: So you heard about it as a principal in Eshowe. Was this through the department?

R: Yes, no one else. Through the department, I went to meetings of principals and we were told about IE and we are to be aware that it will be coming through, the programme and I went to many workshops. Even here while I am in Hopeville I went to ELSEN workshops and networking with Greenbury, with Pat Meyer, with Daya, Sushila, all of them.

K: And what does inclusion mean to you?

R: *Well, what is it as this like I said to you you cannot treat these children in isolation, they belong to a world and they need to have skills and they need to, they need to function with the mainstream people because that's how they gonna live with them. They cannot be in isolation I do not agree with that. So even in the school situation they shouldn't be isolated it is not my view of the way they should be handled. But mainstream teachers aren't skilled to handle that situation. And I feel inclusivity will only work when teachers are brought on board, networked and workshopped and and because it's not really there yet in their minds. They don't understand how it works, they don't understand these children like I said the teacher just came and called them 'mentals', 'mentals'. That's not right. If you are networked and workshopped you won't use that terminology in their presence. You will understand fully. They need to understand these children. How they function. A teacher will stand in front and go on with the lesson not knowing there's a little one there that doesn't know a thing about what she's saying. So that child is playing with his pencil or his little pen or sharpener or whatever, because he doesn't understand what you're saying. He's not with you.*

K: So about this whole concept of IST.

R: Mmm, mmm

K: At your school you call it an IST. Am I right?

R: Yes, yes. We have it.

K: Where, when was that initiated and who initiated it?

R: *That was very recently done uhm in a structural manner right. But we have been doing we have been performing before all this. So it was very easy for us to set the structure up. We had teachers that were already, like I was communicating with certain teachers when I had problems. Teachers from management and they were very cooperative, very supportive. So I had no problem. I had like this young lady I was telling you about and then there was another, there's some children in our school that are very, they are in the mainstream as well, that are really difficult to handle they are problematic (with emphasis). And the reasons are not their fault it's their home situation. You know it's the lack of things, they don't have what they want, their peer situation that make them behave like that. So we have a, we are very fortunate at our school. Did Mr. M tell you, we have a Vee, an intern psychologist that is she is now interviewing these children, she's doing little tests with them. And I am so pleased to tell you that today she started therapy with a child. Right, so this child was very excited. She says to me ma'm, ma'm did art with me with crayons and I enjoyed myself. I was drawing so she's, this child comes from a home where she witnessed her father kill her mum 2 years ago. She was taken to court. I don't know how the courts can ask an 8 year old to give evidence like that and apparently every time they have the case and all that it comes up to her mind and her performance goes down and that's why she's in ELSEN but she's a normal, she's supposed to be in mainstream. Now I want to work there, I want to push her back into mainstream but the psychiatrist told me be careful because this girl slips into that it brings her down, it depresses her, it affects her performance. So these children have various things, even I as the teacher now of the class don't know. Maybe there are children in my class who come with home situations I'm not even aware of.*

K: Sure, can you tell a little bit about the structure of the IST?

R: Well we have the chairperson, I am and then we have the secretary and we have teachers from management, they are HODs, we've got a senior primary and a junior primary that's with us. We have The principal is quite happy to assist. And we've got, we've got about 8 of us.

K: And how were these people put on board, were they elected, nominated?

R: no they actually when I asked they volunteered and I chose them because I knew these teachers would be of benefit in the IST. I didn't just go and at random pick teachers, I chose these teachers because I knew their sentiments and they will cooperate and I knew I'll get full support. These HODs will help me, they management level so I can get things done at management level as well. So it's a very, very strong team we have. And we have no problem getting together you know. We don't all get together, sometimes 3 of us. You know the senior primary, if the child is from senior primary and if it's from junior primary. Junior primary we don't have many problems, mostly the senior primary we have problems.

K: Now I'm just gonna move on to ask you. I'd like to tell me about your experiences from the beginning being the coordinator of the IST?

R: OK, What I do is, I must tell you Kantha it's not something that's done verbally or on the spot and stuff like that. We've got files, I've got a file and everything is filed so if we are talking of a child that the IST is gonna be involved with, a report is made, so I have reports, we have reports. Vee has files. She has a separate file for each child that is interviewed by her, the parents are called in and interviewed and tests are done-you know reading tests, she does maths tests, neurological tests and we find out where this child is. Now we at that stage. The way forward, I just told you Vee has just started this-therapy thing and I think that's the way to go. But in the classroom now it's very difficult because like I said you don't know, we are teachers that have been taught, we've been trained to handle mainstream children but I am learning and I want to enter special education. So it's, it's, it's a learning curve even for us as educators because it's a new thing. I'm sure you agree with that. What is the problem at the moment, a big, big problem is that space. I have children in my class that are, that need to go a special school. That are not functioning, that are not coping, that are highly dependant. These children cannot cope in a mainstream sort of a set up, they need to be in, they need extra support, and they need specialized education for them that will suit their needs. You know they need to work with plastecine and moulding clay and things like that you know. There are a few of them. I have a child who was epileptic and was on medication. And we spoke to a district official

K: Yes

R: And he saw the child and he actually asked that the child goes off the medication. The mother took the child off the medication – he went (raises hand and clicks fingers) on a tangent after that. He started getting into trouble and all that. It was to keep him calm, was to relax him. But the district official said it would make him far too passive (puts emphasis on the word and cringes) and he was on it for a long time that's why he think he decided he should be weaned off it. And the mother said that if she takes him off it he's a problem even tat home. Then we have this case here with this epileptic child, the mother says he is on medication and I (drags the word) feel that we keeping these children on medication for far too long, they become so highly dependant on the medication (shows sad emotions, lowers voice), they don't know what it's like not to be on medication. I don't know (feels sad-low tone)

K: Can you tell me a little bit about your experiences just working in a group?

R: all right, I must say to you it is a very healthy thing because you get various opinions and viewpoints, but I find at the end of the day it just becomes mine, my, my baby(pauses)....totally. You know and I don't blame the other teachers because they are sooo (emphasis) busy with the mainstream, there's so much of work to do there that the IST means you'll need more time. You know, you need time to handle this whole new concept in school.

K: Mmm

R: There is far too little time because we have so many meetings (dog barks in the background) that we have to fight for time. Now I'm gonna schedule a meeting now to handle this identification of children for 2008. and it's gonna be very, very hard for me to slot myself into the school schedule, school plan, school schedule, they have their meetings and all that going but I'll have to slot it in because it has to be done. For me to tell these teachers how they are to identify these learners you know. You know, I found that having this class, having it's it's a stigma really because

in assembly now, say you having an assembly and they refer to them "The ELSEN class" (raises voice as though making the announcement) and they come to the classroom and they tell me, "ma'm you heard them ma'm called them ELSEN class (lowers voice)". I said what am I going to do how else are they going to address you, cause the other classes are grade 6, so and so grade 7. You are the ELSEN class but it hurts them, really it does a lot of damage to them. And in a staff situation where we are all together they very cooperative. They very supportive, the staff when we together, when we having staff meetings and the ELSEN issue is brought out. And even they put on, I train them, and they put on items to the assembly and they're such an applause and they say you know what we can't believe it's the ELSEN class because they just as good as mainstream," because I train them rehearse them and they perform very well. But ummm I think we need this IST team of ours. We need to have a workshop, I wish the department will have a little workshop, even if it's during the weekend.

K: Have you had any training?

R: We haven't had that kind of training we haven't, we just had like, we had a nice one recently and they did a bit on how to handle an interview, how to interview the parent and how to go about the actual interview. We had that recently, but even there we had some principals present and they stated that that is not the job, not our job you know PGSES should take that on, there should be bodies in place to handle these issues because we are teaching at schools and we don't have that kind of time. You know, but we are prepared to assist, we are prepared to do it if we are even trained to do it. I'm sure we'll go in whole-heartedly and I think certain teachers should be specifically trained to handle this. They really have to because the mainstream teacher is too busy with the mainstream children. Their hands are full.

K: Does the IST have, like when you're having staff meetings do you have a slot in the agenda?

R: Ya, we do mention, we are (drags on the word) given place, in other words, we are spoken, our children are spoken about. Our deputy principal is very much into it. He always gives us our space and I think that's why he's created this class. So that we have our special class and we have our time together and all that. And it works, to an extent that also works but I think in the broader spectrum you know it would be better to let them be included amongst the mainstream children so they will feel a part of them. Where they really feel very embarrassed and awkward is when like we having a show or something and they sitting with their class they feel that some of the children tease them and stuff like that, they don't really enjoy, I mean it's embarrassing for them. Especially the big girls and the little children in the same line.

K: What kinds of support do you get from the school, district office?

R: I really work, ummm you know there's just like The principal will call me and ask me to do a report or something like that and I do it all on my own. I do the assessing...assessments, I do it. So it's really I'm doing all of that but there are children in the mainstream classes that are problematic and the teachers are identifying them and they go to the office and they go The principa is handling those cases those issues and they are going to Vee and she's handling that side. So it's Vee coming into our school is a great, great help, to me. Really she is because she's taken a big load of mine, so I can get on with the actual teaching of these children, assisting them with their numeracy and, and in the ELSEN class it's just numeracy, and LLC1 that we focus on. They have a little of

the Afrikaans, the isiZulu and they have like technology, science and EMS, but very, very little like half an hour slots for the week which is very minimal. So my problem there is when a child comes to grade 7 in the ELSEN unit the child is not ready for high school. The child has not been exposed to enough science, enough technology, the child has only been pumped with LLC1 and maths. So how does this child go into a mainstream class you tell me? *But most of these children cannot go into the high school that is a major, major situation because I mean problem because last year I had 8 of them, grade 7's and I had to go out of my way, go to Phoenix Tech get the forms and speak to Pat Meyer and speak to my principal and see where we could fit these children in. so most of them are in Phoenix Tech. one or two are gone to Daleview. But apparently they even struggling there. So what we, we had a meeting recently, umm the IST unit and they suggested that these children be pulled out after grade 9 let them go to at least grade 9, pull out and they can go for a trade or a some other like dressmaking or hairdressing or floral arrangement something where they could have a skill. Skills based training. So that went well some of the parents are very pleased with it and I came back from that and I called some of these bigger ones parents and they said oh yes that's the way to go because high school these children cannot cope. Now they want to know if after grade 7 they don't go into a high school, they go straight to a skills based colleges. Now there too space is a problem. S Dass has a waiting list of about 50 children, waiting and Phoenix where I'm teaching the children are ELSEN where are they gonna travel in a taxi, they wouldn't know how to pay their fare and what change to get and how to get to town and get Alpine Rd. Westridge or to go Tongaat even. Their parents are so scared that somebody will take advantage of them.*

K: Now coming back to the functioning of the IST. How often do you get a chance to meet?

R: Well we've just formed, we are very new.

K: How long?

R: This year we've formulated. We've had some major issues but we handling it not all of us together, 2 of us 3 of us are aware because we're trying not to make certain situations bizarre. We trying to keep it, like I said to you we believe that confidentiality is so important. Because even when their parents when they come they are so embarrassed about you know the situation so we keep it like that. We keep it very, very close knit. So if we don't have to tell the whole of the IST, just 3 of us if we know we are handling it and we know what we doing.

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