TOWARDS A NEW EDUCATIONAL PSYCHOLOGICAL MODEL FOR LEARNER SUPPORT IN SOUTH AFRICA

By

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PORT ELIZABETH SEPTEMBER 2003
DECLARATION

I hereby declare that:

TOWARDS A NEW EDUCATIONAL PSYCHOLOGICAL MODEL FOR LEARNER SUPPORT IN SOUTH AFRICA

Is my own original work, that all sources used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by means of complete references, and that I did not previously submit this thesis for a degree at another university.

SIGNED: C.F. PIENAAR

DATE: 30 SEPTEMBER 2003
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ABSTRACT

This study presents a description of the development and history of learner support, as well as educational psychological learner support, in South Africa. The role and function of the educational psychologist was researched through literature study and empirical research. It was found that whereas this pivotal profession is still vital in any educational system, the nature of contemporary society has necessitated a new dimension in educational psychological service delivery, namely systemic involvement. Guidelines for a new model for educational psychological learner support in the education dispensation are put forward. This model asks for the enlargement of the role of the educational psychologist to include assessment and support of all of the systems that play a role in the learner’s life.

KEY WORDS
Educational psychology
Educational psychologist
Learner support
Inclusive education
Systemic approach
Consultant
Collaborator
TOWARDS A NEW EDUCATIONAL PSYCHOLOGICAL MODEL FOR LEARNER SUPPORT IN SOUTH AFRICA

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION, PROBLEM STATEMENT, AIM OF STUDY, METHODOLOGY, AND PROGRAMME OF STUDY

1. INTRODUCTION

It is a known fact that the population of South Africa’s diverse nation is composed of various peoples, speaking eleven different languages which in turn is each embedded in a specific culture. Learners in South African schools come from these diverse backgrounds. All schools in South Africa however are not necessarily equipped to accommodate these learners, which may lead to the development of learning and behaviour problems. Some learners also enter school with already existing behaviour and emotional problems, maturational lags and physical disabilities.

These problems may be exacerbated even further, if teachers and parents do not support these problems effectively. These learners constitute what the White Paper (No 6) on Special Needs Education (2001) refers to as Learners with Special Educational Needs (LSEN). Most of these learners have to be accommodated in mainstream classes, as part of the Inclusive Education and Training System, also as indicated in White Paper 6 (Department of Education, 2001.) These learners are dependent on their teachers in the classroom and on their parents at home, but sometimes they also need the support of professionals like educational psychologists, occupational therapists, general practitioners, and so forth. Likewise, the learner’s parents and teachers also sometimes need the support and guidance of the educational psychologist in order to effectively support LSEN in inclusive classes, that is, to prevent as well as overcome any possible barriers to learning that these learners may experience. White Paper 6 indicates that these barriers to learning can manifest within the systems that the learner is confronted with on a daily basis, that is, the educational (school and home) system, or within the learner himself.

White Paper 6 makes out a case for an investigation into appropriate educational service delivery (support) for LSEN.
In the previous education dispensation, educational support centres did exist, as auxiliary centres, where educational psychologists were the main service providers, for learners with all kinds of school-related difficulties. After 1994 the education system was drastically changed to suit the new political situation of equal rights for all, in terms of the Inclusive Education policy, for all learners. A merger of the different educational departments occurred, in the effort to give execution to the policy. The educational support centres (i.e. the educational psychologists) could then no longer cope with all the referrals from their combined old and new clients. The acceptance of the policy of Inclusive Education and quality education for all learners in South African, had impacted upon the provision of general education as well as the provision of learner support services to all learners, thereby placing educational support services in South African schools under severe pressure. The introduction of Inclusive Education as the new education policy of South Africa therefore complicated educational service delivery even further. The development of learner support as well as of the service provided by educational psychologists will be dealt with in Chapters 2 and 3 respectively.

Prior to the first democratic election in South Africa (1994), the various ethnic and provincial departments of education held different policies, approaches and viewpoints towards educational support, in terms of the duties and functions of the staff at these auxiliary centres. The result was that educational support services were disproportionately distributed across the various education departments.

After 1994 the education system of South Africa was consolidated under a unified National Department of Education. The previous different departments of education were amalgamated into this single National Department of Education. This amalgamation of the different educational departments had a vast impact on the rendering of educational support services to learners, schools and parents. With this action learners who previously did not have access to support services now had the necessary access and made use of it, which in turn placed severe pressure on the educational support services to provide the necessary support to all the learners in need of support.

This study aims to provide a model for learner support in the present education system, as envisioned by the White Paper, and as it can be supplied by educational
psychologists, since educational psychologists are the professional body who are suitably trained for this purpose. In Chapter 3 it will specifically be pointed out how educational psychologists in private practice as well as those employed by the Department of Education have for a long time played an important part in the support of learners who experience barriers to learning and who have special educational needs. These psychologists also support the teachers and the parents of these learners while at the same time providing the needed therapy (support) to the learners.

The policy of Inclusive Education implies that all learners (in one Grade) be included in the same classroom, which may lead to the fact that learners with special educational needs might need additional support (in as well as outside the classroom). The teachers also may need support to cope with all the needs of all the learners in his/her classroom. Similarly, the parents may also need support and guidance in the education of the learners at home, depending on the nature and severity of that learner’s need. This issue renders a sound learner support model to be essential. No country can drive an inclusive education policy without a sound and applicable model for learner support.

2. PROBLEM STATEMENT

The White Paper on Special Needs Education (Department of Education, 2001) acknowledges the fact that a well-established education support service is an imperative for inclusive education to be successfully implemented. However, the White Paper does not describe the role of educational psychology, nor the role of the educational psychologist, nor this role within these support services. Therefore the main problem of this study can be stated as follows:

**How to establish an educational psychological model for learner support in the new education dispensation in South Africa.**

This main problem statement also poses the following sub-problems:

- What guidelines can be obtained from the provision for special education and learner support in South Africa since 1994, for the establishment of a workable educational psychological model for learner support?
• How does the policy of Inclusive Education influence and provide guidelines for the establishment of such a model?
• What should the role of educational psychology and educational psychologists be in such a model?

3. AIM OF THE STUDY

The main aim of this study is to provide guidelines for the establishment of a new educational psychological model for learner support in South Africa.

The sub-aims presenting from the above, are the following:
♦ To obtain guidelines for the establishment of such a model, from the provision for special education and learner support in the educational dispensation since 1994
♦ To obtain guidelines for such a model from the policy of Inclusive Education
♦ To establish the role of educational psychology and educational psychologists in such a model.

The research methodology for this study will now be presented.

4. METHODOLOGY
4.1 TYPE OF RESEARCH

Authors like Holliday (2002), De Vos (1998 & 2001) and Cresswell (1998) indicate that there is a movement towards the use of qualitative research in the social sciences, due to the fact that the social sciences align themselves with the characteristics of qualitative research.

Education as well as educational psychology fall within the field of social sciences. This study is about people – learners, teachers and psychologists (psychology is one of the social professions) – and the support provided to these learners by the teachers and psychologists, within the context in which these people (the learners and teachers) function. Such support is aimed at preventing (and providing support for) any barriers –
either in the actions (by any of the said people), the conditions of or occurances within the context, or in the perceptions (of any of the people) – that may manifest within that context. As such, this study falls within the field of the social sciences, which renders the qualitative research approach suitable for this study.

The qualitative research in this study will involve the study of relations and interpersonal relationships among people and conditions of the environment (context), and the meanings (perceptions) that people (learners, teachers and psychologists, for the purpose of this study) attach to their different contexts. More specifically, this study will focus on learner support provided within the special education context, and the meanings and perceptions held by the people in this context, as well as the prevailing conditions of this context.

In this regard Schurink (1998:241) describes qualitative research as an interpretative approach, its main aim being to understand social life as well as the meaning that people attach to social life. Schurink (1998:240) further points out that the term “interpretative” refers to the fact that the aim of qualitative research is to understand (interpret) the meanings and intentions which underlie human actions, which makes this approach most suitable for this study, because this investigation aims at the understanding of the development and present status of learner support, as intended, perceived or experienced, and executed by the main service provider (Government, as indicated in the White Paper) and the other providers (inter alia psychologists) within this system (context). Based on the results of this qualitative research, guidelines will be posed for a model of educational psychological learner support within the educational context.

Holliday (2002:4) states that this qualitative approach (in the social sciences) invokes the need to discover as much about how research subjects (people) feel about the information they provide, as to discover the information itself. To be able to discover what the people (subjects) feel or experience, the people about whom the research is conducted, are as much participants as they are subjects, in the sense that they themselves must make clear to the researcher what their true feelings (perceptions) are. The subjects of this study are the educational psychologists employed in the remaining auxilliary centres, providing information about the services they render and their
perceptions thereof, on which results the guidelines for the learner support model will be based.

The role of qualitative researchers in this setting is that they “live with” the phenomenon – the subject’s perception of his/her situation/context, as well as the context itself – immersing them in it and striving to know it as deeply and intimately as possible, to fully understand the whole context. As they “resonate” with the subject, in seeing, hearing, almost experiencing the same as the subject, they come to an essential understanding of the phenomenon (Piantanida & Garman 1999:144).

According to De Vos, (1998:45) the qualitative researcher is of the opinion that the only reality which exists, is that which is constructed by the individuals involved in the research situation, that is, the subject as well as the researcher. Thus multiple realities may exist in any given research situation, namely the reality of the researcher, of the subjects investigated, and of the reader or audience interpreting the results of the research. The relationship between the researcher and the participant in qualitative research is therefore quite different than in quantitative research. In quantitative research there is no ‘relationship’ between researcher and research subject, even though the subject may be a person. In qualitative research, the researcher and subject (participant) are not seen only as the observer and the observed respectively, but the researcher may require of the participant to assist in the interpretation of the data, in terms of comment on the researcher’s interpretation of the data, in order to ensure that the data be truly (objectively; correctly) interpreted and understood (Struwig and Stead, 2001:17).

The qualitative researcher is concerned with understanding rather than with explanation of research data, with observation of a phenomenon (subject) rather than with controlled measurement, and with understanding the reality from the perspective of an insider rather than with the outsider perspective that is predominant in the quantitative paradigm (McRoy, 1995:2009-2015). Interpretative research portrayals are more likely to take the form of text, such as interviews, conversations, autobiographical memoirs or dramatic scenarios (Piantanida & Garman, 1999:133), than the form of statistical or graphic portrayal.
Baumgartner and Strong (1998:174) state that the term qualitative research is an umbrella term referring to several research traditions and strategies that share certain commonalties. There is an emphasis on process, or how things happen, and a focus on attitudes, beliefs, and thoughts, in other words on how people (the research subjects) make sense of their experiences as they interpret their world. Qualitative strategies enable the researcher to record and understand people in their own terms.

The qualitative researcher admits the value-laden nature of his research and actively reports his own values and biases, as well as the value nature of the data gathered (De Vos, 1998:45). It is assumed that the researcher’s values and biases are an integral part of the research process and cannot be ignored (De Vos, 1998:45). The researcher in person is the primary research instrument and can therefore not be divorced from the research process. Holliday (2002:52) argues that the researcher must position himself in relationship to the research.

As qualitative research is a form of interpretative research wherein the researcher is one of the instruments of the research, the qualitative researcher needs to state his personal biases, values and judgements (perceptions; own meanings) towards the phenomenon to be studied (Creswell, 1994:147, Holliday, 2002; Marshall & Rossman, 1995:59), in order to avoid reaching ‘subjective’ interpretations, conclusions and findings of the research. This should be done in order for the researcher to be aware of how his personal perspectives and experiences may influence his interpretations, conclusions and findings (Maxwell, 1996:91). It therefore is appropriate that the researcher in this study describes his professional background as well as his interest in the study briefly.

The researcher is registered with the Health Professions Council of South Africa as an educational and clinical psychologist, and has been in private practice as such for ten years. He is also the director of the “Soteria” Educational Support Centre, a unit for the study of learning difficulties and other special educational needs and for providing educational psychological support to these learners, their teachers and their parents. The Centre operates under the wing of the Faculty of Education at the University of Port Elizabeth. The researcher is also a lecturer and programme manager of Special Needs Education at this university. As programme manager of Special Needs Education, he established a partnership with the Provincial Educational Support Centre in Port
Elizabeth, assisting with learner support, teacher and parent guidance at this Centre. He is also a fully qualified teacher with twelve years of teaching experience at a primary school. It was in these respective capacities that he became aware of the problems concerning learner support and the role of Educational Psychology in this regard within the present school policy of Inclusive Education, which prompted him to research the possibility of providing a model for effective learner support by educational psychologists.

Struwig and Stead (2001:11&226) state that qualitative research concerns itself with phenomenological, ecological psychological, and ethnographical approaches, and employs research methods such as **participant observation**, archival source analysis, **interviews**, focus groups and **content analysis**. The phenomenological approach aims to understand and interpret the meaning that subjects attach to their contexts in which they live (function) (Fouché, 2001: 273). They (Struwig & Stead) further state that qualitative research can be viewed as interdisciplinary, multi-paradigmatic and multi-method. This is applicable to this research, since the researcher will make use of the above-mentioned approaches in the collection and interpretation of the data.

Creswell (1998) describes a phenomenological study as a study of the meaning (experience) that subjects (people) attach to their contexts. The meanings that the subjects (psychologists) attach to their contexts (of service delivery to learners who need support) are of vital importance to this study, because these will provide the guidelines for the construction of a ‘new’ educational psychological model for learner support.

Struwig and Stead (2001:16) argue that the main goal of phenomenological research is to find common themes manifesting from the range of meanings presented by participants. Kvale (1996:38-39) states that a phenomenological research approach includes a focus on the life world of, and an openness to the meanings attached to the experiences of the subjects, a primacy of precise descriptions, attempts to bracket foreknowledge, and a search for invariant essential meanings in the descriptions of the subjects.

In this qualitative interpretative approach to data analysis, the researcher will extract common, central or general themes from all of the meanings attached by the participants.
to their contexts. The data collection techniques for this research will be interviews with and observations of the participants. According to Fouché (2001:273) phenomenological researchers will mainly use participant observation and interviews as methods of data collection, whereafter phenomenological reduction is applied to the data.

Phenomenological reduction can be pictured as a “bracketing”, an attempt to put the ‘common sense’, foreknowledge, or presuppositions about the phenomena, within parentheses in order to arrive at an unprejudiced description of the essence of the phenomena. Phenomenological reduction does not involve an absolute absence of presuppositions on the side of the researcher, but rather a critical awareness and analysis of the researcher's own presuppositions, in order to understand the true nature of the data. This mode of understanding is phenomenological in nature, with the meanings of the subjects as the point of departure, but mingled with the qualitative descriptions of the central/common meanings appearing as is (phenomenologically) from all the participants' meanings (Kvale, 1996: 54-55). In the analysis of the data, the researcher can also appoint an independent transcriber/coder as co-researcher and co-interpreter of the data. The researcher in this study appointed a co-researcher who accompanied him to the research field to assist in (co-observe and co-interpret) the interviews with the participants, as well as an independent coder, for the coding into common themes, as a measurement to limit and control his own influence on and bias towards the participants and the data collected, so that the data could speak for itself (objectively, phenomenologically). After discussions and comparison of data and interpretations (common themes) with the co-researcher and the independent transcriber/coder, conclusions were drawn.

Data collected from the interviews were transcribed into text, after which the common meanings presenting were interpreted hermeneutically. Struwig and Stead (2001:16) state that hermeneutics refers to the way in which meanings are derived from sources such as interviews. Kvale (1996:38) indicates that in hermeneutical understanding of interviews; the common meanings gained from these interviews are pivotal, but that the interpreter’s foreknowledge of the issue at hand to be studied, also plays a role. Kvale (1996:46-47) states that hermeneutics is the study of the interpretation of texts, and that the purpose of hermeneutical interpretation is to obtain a valid and common
understanding of the meaning of the text. According to him (Kvale) hermeneutic methods study the results of human cultural activity as presented in texts, with a view to interpreting them to determine the intended or expressed meaning, in order to establish a co-understanding, or possibly even a consent of the intended meaning of a subject as gained from interviews. In the research interview the oral discourse is transformed into text, to be interpreted by other readers/researchers. In this sense hermeneutics is then doubly relevant to qualitative research, first by producing the text of the interview to be interpreted, and then by clarifying the obvious/common meanings derived from the interviews, which may be conceived as a dialogue or a conversation with the text itself (Kvale 1996: 38-48). These aspects of hermeneutical research were applied in the interview in this study. This hermeneutical ‘circle’ of interpretation consists of a continuous back and forth process between the data of the subject matter, and the researcher/interpretor, in order to gain a global picture/common themes (Kvale 1996: 47-48). This back and forth process was applied during the analysis of the data, by reading through all the data several times to get a global picture and then by coding the interviews individually as well as into general/common themes. After this had been done, the researcher and co-researcher went through all the identified data and themes again, several times, to ensure objective results/themes.

Oral history is another technique by means of which qualitative research data can be obtained. As this study also needed to explore the history of learner support in this country, oral history as a qualitative research method was employed.

Baumgartner and Strong (1998:156) describe oral history research as research conducted through taped interviews with individuals who are able to recall their involvement and perceptions of previous events and conditions. According to them (Baumgarren & Strong) interviewing people who have made contributions to the fields of health and human performance, can supply excellent historical data in the social sciences. The researcher therefore made use of this method, whereby the interviewees were requested to elaborate on the history of learner support as they had experienced it. The researcher also studied historical documents that revealed the history of learner support in this country, thereby applying both the historical method and the oral history method, to collect data.
In order to generate trustworthy data on a possible model for learner support, qualitative research therefore poses itself suitable for the purpose of this study, since this research approach will render the results needed on which to base the guidelines for the model.

In this qualitative research two qualitative approaches will be implemented, namely a literature study and an empirical study. The literature study will consist of a review of literature and documents regarding educational psychology and the development of learner support and specialised education in South Africa.

In the empirical study educational psychologists will be interviewed to obtain their perception on their role in learner support, which will be described in Chapter 4. In Chapter 4 the data collection for the empirical research will be described.

4.2. DATA COLLECTION

4.2.1 Strategies for data collection

In the social sciences, strategies for collecting qualitative data have to develop in dialogue with the unfolding nature of the data gained from the social settings, within the opportunity that the development of relationships between the researcher and the other participants in the research process offers. Qualitative data therefore emerge by itself from the social settings; in effect everything in these settings is data. However, the researcher still has to make sense of the data – the setting does not have ready-made sense that the researcher can merely record (Holliday, 2002:75).

The researcher in this study will make use of interviews, participant observation, and field notes applied during the interviews and the observation, as data collection strategies about the social settings to be studied in this research – learner support centres and settings. Interviews and participant observation are data collection strategies that are fully compatible with qualitative research, and will be implemented for the purpose of this study, as these strategies are suited to obtain the desired information from the participants.
To adhere to ethical constraints in terms of transparency of the aims with this specific research, for the edification of the participants, and in order for themselves to decide on their participation, informed consent of participants is required.

Obtaining informed consent implies that all possible, or adequate, information on the aim of the investigation, the procedures that will be followed during the investigation, the possible advantages, disadvantages and dangers to which participants may be exposed, as well as the credibility of the researcher, be put to the potential participants in the research (Strydom, 2002:65; Hakim, 2000:143, and Williams et al., 1995:30). Informed consent can also only be required if confidentiality of identity can be assured (Kvale. 1996: 153), which will be the case in this research.

The indicated strategies to be implemented in this research, are now discussed.

**4.2.1.1 Interviews**

Kvale (1996:38) says that the researcher should focus on certain qualitative aspects during the interview; these being the interrelations in an interview, the social construction of reality in an interview, and the linguistic differences between oral discourse and written text, apart from the narratives constructed in the interview. To obtain this aim, Kvale (1996:4) argues that conversation as a basic mode of human interaction be applied during interviews in social research. Through conversations (questions and answers) one gets to know people’s experiences, feelings, and hopes, and their perceptions of the world they live in. There are multiple forms of conversations, for example oral conversations in everyday life, as well as oral qualitative research interviews, and then written conversations of everyday life, in literature like novels and dramas, and written documentation of professional conversations, as in journalistic interviews, legal interrogations, academic oral examinations, and articles in scientific journals.

Kvale (1996:6) defines the research interview as an interview of which the purpose is to obtain descriptions (narratives) of the life world of the interviewee with respect to interpreting the meaning of the described phenomena. An interview is a conversation that has a structure and a purpose – it has a careful questioning and listening approach with the purpose of obtaining knowledge. The research interview is not a conversation
between equal partners, because the researcher defines and controls the situation. The researcher introduces the topic of the interview, he also critically follows up on the interviewee’s answers to his/her questions.

The topic of the qualitative research interview is the lived world of the subjects (interviewees) and their relation to it. The data gained from all the interviews are then described in terms of central themes emerging from all the interviews. The qualitative research interview is therefore theme oriented and seeks to understand and describe the meanings in the life world of the subjects; it seeks to cover both the factual and the meaning (theme) nature of the interviews, which as such composes the data (Kvale, 1996: 31-32). According to Potter (1996:96) interviewing is the technique of gathering data from humans by asking them questions and getting them to react verbally on their perceptions. Interviews can be structured or unstructured. Marshall and Rossman in Potter (1996:96) state that qualitative semi-structured informal yet in-depth interviews, are much more authentic conversations than formal structured interviews, because the researcher helps uncover the subject’s meanings and perspective, but at the same time respects how the subject structures his own responses.

Qualitative research studies typically employ unstructured or semi-structured interviews or a combination of both (Greef, 2001:298). This research will employ the semi-structured interview, as specific pre-determined questions are put to the subjects, but questioned further as deemed necessary by the researcher. Struwig and Stead (2001:98) describe how pre-determined questions can be posed to subjects in a systematic and consistent manner, but that subjects are also given the opportunity to discuss issues beyond the questions’ confines. This technique enables the researcher to obtain multiple responses to set questions, and allows for further probing questions and detailed responses.

Bearing this in mind, the researcher will structure each interview in this research in such a way that the above aspects do emerge, ensuring that qualitative analysis of the data gained from the interview will indeed be possible. The narratives to be established with the interviewees in this research (i.e. the data to be gained), are their present and past functioning as educational psychologists within the educational settings where they were/are currently employed, as well as their perceptions/feelings about their present...
and future role in learner support, as educational psychologists. The interviews will therefore be **semi-structured** in nature, posing these (qualitative, semi-structured) questions to the interviewees, on the above-mentioned issues (narratives). If necessary, more probing questions will be asked to obtain clarification of the interviewees’ answers. (See Addendum A for the transcribed texts of the interviews.)

### 4.2.1.2 Observation

In observational research, data are gained from observations of people or programmes (Baumgartner and Strong, 1998:134), through the researcher searches for concepts and categories (themes) as they unfold in the setting (Adler and Adler, 1994: 377-392). As such, observation is a form of phenomenological research. The locale for observation depends on the purposes of the study. The interviews during which the observations also took place, were conducted at the Educational Support Centres of the various provincial departments of Education, with the educational psychologists. Observation may transpire through interaction with the participants or by observing them from a distance only. For the purposes of this study, the researcher chose participant observation in order to obtain more detailed data. Participant observation takes place when the researcher participates in the environment or the setting or activities being observed. It is generally viewed as a qualitative research method and has long been the traditional method of conducting field research. Data are mostly recorded in the form of field notes representing the observer’s perceptions of events that occur (Drew, Hardman & Hart, 1996:37&39). Bruyn (1970:316) also argues that the participant observer seeks the essence of the life of the observed and to find a central unifying principle (common theme).

Coertze (1993:69) points out again that the phenomenological approach is paramount in participant observation, because the researcher endeavours to gain in-depth insight into the manifestations of reality, that is, the subject’s reality. The focus is on the everyday and natural experiences (reality) of the respondents (Mouton et al., 1987:22). As a participant observer, the researcher becomes part of this reality through observation, and may even contribute to it (Graziano & Raulin, 2000: 131). **Interviewing, observation and field notes**, where the researcher writes down everything that he sees and hears, are the three data collecting techniques applied in this research. The co-researcher did the same on accompanying the researcher in the field.
4.3 VALIDITY AND RELIABILITY

Reliability refers to the consistency of the research findings, should the research be repeated at any time. Validity pertains to whether the study investigates what is intended to be investigated in the first instance. Qualitative research should lead to valid scientific findings as long as it is ensured that the research aims are met (Kvale, 1996: 88). According to Holliday (2002:77) it is not quantity that makes data valid, but whether the researcher interprets the data appropriately, that is, in terms of the research aims.

Validity and reliability in qualitative research can be problematic, as most indicators of validity and reliability do not fit qualitative research, and attempting to apply these indicators to qualitative work, may distract more than it clarifies (Rubin and Rubin, 1995:85). In this regard Miles and Huberman (1994) emphasize that there are no infallible decision-making rules for establishing the validity of qualitative research. There are however certain measurements that the qualitative researcher can and should apply to ensure the validity of his qualitative data. Struwig and Stead (2001:144) distinguish between different forms of validity that ought to be considered and ensured in qualitative studies. These are:

- **Descriptive validity.** This refers to whether the information provided is factually accurate. Co-researchers can ensure the descriptive validity of the data. The researcher in this study will liaise with the co-researchers in order to control that the data collected is a true reflection of what the subjects conveyed.

- **Interpretative validity.** This refers to whether the subjects’ meanings or perceptions are accurately recorded. Eliciting subjects’ comments on the researcher’s interpretation of their conveyances is important for the interpretative validity of the results. In this study the researcher will check with the participants to ascertain that he understood them correctly.

- **Theoretical validity.** This refers to whether there is agreement between the researcher and co-researchers about the concepts or theory used to study the phenomena elicited in the research.

Potter (1996:296) makes mention of external validity in qualitative research, which is based on the social significance of the study’s results, as well as internal validity,
which is indicated in the aspects described above, and which can be obtained by cross-checking of observations and results with co-researchers, as described above. The researcher in this study will ascertain validity of the common themes derived from the results, in this way.

Lincoln and Guba (1985) in Creswell (1998:200) pose alternative terms to validity and reliability, that according to them are more applicable to qualitative research. These are credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability. The trustworthiness and authenticity of findings can be indicative of the credibility of a study. Guba and Lincoln (1989) in Drew, Hartman and Hart (1996:172) describe internal validity as the credibility or truth-value of a phenomenon or of research results, and external validity as transferability, applicability, consistency, neutrality, and confirmability.

♦ Truth-value: Poggenpoel (1998:349) states that truth-value in qualitative research is contained in the human experiences as they are lived and perceived by informants. A qualitative study can be considered credible when it represents such accurate descriptions or interpretation of human experience that people who also share that experience would immediately recognise the description.

♦ Applicability: Applicability refers to the degree that the findings can be applied or generalised to other contexts or settings. The latter suggests that as long as the researcher presents sufficient descriptive data to allow comparison between two or more contexts, he has addressed the problem of applicability. In this study the problem of applicability is addressed by investigating the phenomenon of learner support in several provinces that will allow for the comparison of the data to other contexts that are similar.

♦ Neutrality: This refers to the objectivity of the researcher and to the proper distance between the researcher and the data in quantitative studies. In qualitative studies, researchers try to increase the worth of their findings by rather decreasing the distance between the researcher and the subjects. In this regard it is however important to note that according to Poggenpoel (1998:350), Lincoln and Guba (1985) shift the emphasis of neutrality in qualitative research from the researcher to the data, so that rather than looking at the neutrality of the researcher, the neutrality of the data is considered. In this study the researcher will appoint an independent (co-) researcher, so that the data can speak for itself, without any interference from any of the researchers involved.
Transferability: If the researcher has inquired into the phenomenon with sensitivity, rigour and integrity, then the results about the phenomenon may be transferred to other similar situations. In this regard the researcher is of the opinion that this study will be transferable to similar settings and situations. Sruwig and Stead (2001:17) point out that qualitative research is more idiographic in that relatively small samples are employed, with few claims being made regarding the wider representativeness of the sample or the generalisation of the findings, but that the findings might still be applicable to similar contexts.

De Vos, (2001:352) states that a study in which multiple informants or more than one data gathering method are used and compared to each other, can greatly strengthen the study’s usefulness or transferability to other settings. This method is described as triangulation, which will enhance the transferability of a study’s results to other applicable settings. Triangulation as method is supposed to support a finding by showing that independent measures of it agree with it or, at least, do not contradict it (Miles and Huberman, 1994:266).

According to Miles and Huberman (1994:267) and Struwig and Steed (2001: 18-19) there are different forms of triangulation namely triangulation by data source (which can include persons, times, places), by method (observation, interview), by researcher (investigator A and B) and by theory. Duffy (1993:143) describes and distinguish between different kinds of triangulation, that are relevant to this study, namely data triangulation, investigator triangulation and methodological triangulation. In this study the researcher applies different data sources, methods and researchers, which are triangulated with each other, to compare and agree upon the results and findings.

4.4 DATA ANALYSIS
4.4.1 Determining common themes

- Data analysis is the final stage of ‘listening’ to ‘hear’ the meaning of what is said by the research subjects (Rubin and Rubin, 1995:226). As one continues to ‘listen’ in this analysis, the common themes gradually emerge into a broader import to guide your final report. Creswell (1998:148) advises that the researcher searches for themes by reading through the transcribed text, while noting down probable themes and initial codes, whereafter these notes be grouped into
meaning units, or themes. Holliday (2002: 104 - 105) suggests that the researcher searches for natural divisions or themes in the corpus of data, making use of areas of significance as they had already emerged during the collection of the data, which illustrates that arriving at themes can be achieved by formal analysis of transcribed text as well as from what was observed during data collection. Holliday argues that the themes that emerge often may have been growing in the researcher’s mind already during the gathering of the data. The character (name of the theme) of each division (new theme) then has to be established in terms of a heading as the name of the division or theme.

Tech’s (1990:154-156) viewpoints complement those of Creswell and Holliday, in terms of his eight-step data analysis process, as follows:

- The researcher reads carefully through all the transcripts to get a sense of the whole.
- He then selects any transcription to start reading, while asking, “What is this about?”, then writing down the possible theme in the margin, and then trying to identify main categories or themes. This is then repeated with all the other transcriptions.
- A list is made of all the emerging themes. Similar themes are grouped together.
- The themes in the list are then abbreviated as codes, and these codes are then written next to the appropriate segments of the text.
- The groups of themes are then turned into categories, and these categories are grouped together if necessary, if they seemingly belong together, to reduce the list of categories, if need be.
- The data belonging to each category is then assembled from the text, to be able to perform the analysis of the nature of the categories.

4.4.2 Coding
Coding the data is also a form of analysis. To review a set of field notes and to dissect them meaningfully into codes, is the function of analysis. Codes are used to initially organise chunks of meaning together (into themes). The conventional method is to go through the transcripts or field notes with a pencil, marking the units that seemingly cohere because they deal with the same topic, and then to group them into topics (themes) and subtopics (subthemes) (Miles and Huberman, 1994: 57).
Rubin and Rubin (1995:241) suggest that after the themes and their corresponding codes have been set up, the transcripts are then read again and the sections marked with an appropriate code that identifies a certain category or theme. The coding process fragments the transcribed interviews into separate categories or themes. Once the separate themes have been established, they have to be grouped together into categories, as the results of the research, where after an integrated explanation should be offered in the discussion of these results. This procedure was followed in this research.

Bogdan and Biklen (1992:186) state that an identified theme should be a central concept that emerges from the data; it is some signal trend or key distinction. Themes can be formulated in terms of settings, situations, events, human beings, and their behaviour. Identified themes is central concepts in this study.

Piantanida and Garman (1999:144) state that reflection should be part of the data analysis process, in terms of recollection of the process of data collection and analysis. Reflection formed part of the analysis process of this research.

4.5. SAMPLING

In qualitative research the issue of sampling is concerned with gaining access to relevant evidence about the phenomenon to be studied. The two key concepts here are access, which reflects a practical logistical concern, and relevant, which reflects a validity concern. As far as gaining access is concerned, the criteria applied usually are a site that permits access, and subjects that are literate so that they can partake in research. The most often used argument in the selection of an appropriate sampling method, is one of convenience, meaning that the researcher will necessarily have to make use of the most available (conveniently accessible) sites and human subjects required for the research (Potter, 1996:104-105; Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Struwig and Stead (2001:111) also describe convenience sampling as sampling chosen on the basis of subjects that are available, accessible and articulate. They indicate that a sample is selected on the basis of expert judgement by the researcher, who chooses what he believes to be the best sample for the particular study.
In this study the researcher made use of judgement sampling, in terms of selecting educational psychologists still employed by the provincial departments of Education, and in the provinces of Gauteng, Eastern Cape and Western Cape, because these are the only provinces where educational support centres are still in existance. He also had to rely on the willingness and the informed consent of the selected subjects to participate in the research. After this selection process, the number of participants in the sample came to 15.

5. EXPLANATION OF CONCEPTS IN THE TITLE OF THE STUDY

5.1 TOWARDS
The title of this study implies that this study will supply guidelines towards a new model and not yet an empirically verified model as such. For the purposes of this study *towards* then means in the direction of a new educational psychological model for learner support in South Africa.

5.2 EDUCATIONAL PSYCHOLOGY
Educational psychology pertains to the field of psychology as applied within the education context. In this study the term refers to the professional knowledge basis of the educational psychologist, and the role of the educational psychologist in learner support, in the educational (school) context.

5.3 MODEL
The concept *model* refers to guidelines to be presented for the design of a structure for rendering learner support to learners who experience difficulties within their educational (school and home) context.
5.4 LEARNER
A learner is any person who finds himself in any learning context. For the purpose of this study a learner refers to a child who finds himself in the learning contexts of school and home.

5.5 LEARNER SUPPORT
Learner support applies to the assistance rendered to a learner who experiences any difficulty in his school context, with the aim to empower him to learn optimally and to realise his potential.

6. PROGRAMME OF THE STUDY

The course of the study is as follows:

CHAPTER ONE
This chapter provides the introduction to the study, whereupon the problem is stated and the sub-problems posed. The aim of the study and the research methodology are discussed, whereafter central concepts are elucidated.

CHAPTER TWO
This chapter will contain a literature review of the development of special education and educational policy in South Africa, and of the provision of learner support, inter alia through educational psychology, from 1946 to 2002. The aim of this Chapter will be to indicate what effect the development of education policy had on learner support.

CHAPTER THREE
In this Chapter the researcher will describe the role of the educational psychologist in learner support. The educational psychologist's traditional role and his role as a collaborator and consultant will be described. From the above two chapters, the guidelines for the empirical research on the educational psychologist's proposed new role will be obtained, which will be presented in Chapter 4.
CHAPTER FOUR
This Chapter will contain a description of the execution of the empirical research and a discussion of the results of the research.

CHAPTER FIVE
In this chapter the researcher will supply guidelines for a proposed new educational psychological model for learner support.

CHAPTER SIX
This chapter will contain the summary and recommendations of the study.

7. SUMMARY
In this chapter the researcher has introduced the study and described the aim of the study, the methodology, problem statement, data collection methods and data analysis of the study. An explanation of the concepts used in the title was also given.

In the next chapter the researcher will give an overview of the development of learner support in South Africa since 1946 to the present.
CHAPTER 2
THE DEVELOPMENT OF EDUCATIONAL PROVISION FOR LEARNERS WITH SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS IN SOUTH AFRICA

1. INTRODUCTION

Due to the complexity of all the different activities, levels of interpersonal relationships, and interactions, that take place in a classroom, teaching and learning does not always succeed (Van der Merwe, 1984:13). Therefore, the efficient execution of teaching and learning can never be guaranteed, because either one of the participants or both of them (teacher and learner) might participate in an insufficient manner (Van Niekerk, 1985:8). So much more can the special needs of a learner with special educational needs complicate the efficient execution of teaching, learning and education in a classroom.

Since learners with special educational needs are a given phenomenon in classrooms in South Africa, like it is worldwide, the aim of this chapter is to describe the development of educational provision, or educational support services, and the role and function that educational psychologists fulfilled in those systems, for learners with special educational needs in South Africa.

This chapter will illustrate which educational (psychological) support services were in place for learners with special educational needs, before and after the general national elections in 1994, at which time the way was paved for educational reform, inter alia in terms of the amalgamation of all the different departments of education into one national education department, after 1994. Documents that influenced educational policy and educational reform, before and after 1994, will also be discussed.

The literature study reveals that the history of the development of support services is best documented in the Gauteng Province, previously the Transvaal, where these services were more readily available than in the other provinces.

Esterhuizen (1968:4) states that as early as 1946 there already was a demand for the establishment of child guidance services for the treatment of learners that were seen as problem children. These problems included behavioural, emotional and learning problems. At that stage fifty “special classes” had already been established for such guidance service. After the National Party with its *apartheid* policy came into power in 1948, the Act on Special Education 1948 proclaimed these classes legal, and the Act also provided for the establishment of child guidance clinics (Esterhuizen, 1968:4). According to this Act, special education now included the diagnosis and treatment of medical and mental disorders in learners in South Africa (Du Toit, 1996:9), and in that same year the psychological treatment of learners with behavioural problems inside the school system, started officially (Esterhuizen, 1968:4).

The previous government (before 1994) promulgated the 1950 Population Registration Act, which classified all citizens into four racial groups, and the separate development of these groups was promoted by the formation of ten separate homelands were the different African tribes were housed. For these ten homelands within South African boundaries, as well as for groups within the rest of South Africa, separate education also was provided for by separate education departments. This separate education required a complex structure of 17 different educational systems or departments, which ran parallel to each other and were all controlled under central government. Educational support functions, responsibilities and services within these 17 departments were unavoidably duplicated, but unfortunately with vast disparities in the per capita funding of the various education departments. During the apartheid era, specialised education for specifically white learners was both quantitatively and qualitatively expanded.

In 1952 the first clinic school was established in the Transvaal, and new posts for school psychological services established, to assess and support learners with mostly behavioural problems, and to get in touch with the parents of these learners. For the first time then, support was given to both the learner and the parents, by educational psychologists (Joubert, 1975:40) in these clinics and school psychological services.
Thereafter the need for other support services for learners who experienced developmental difficulties, which necessitated medical and para-medical support, which could not be provided for by educational psychologists, quickly became apparent too. Consequently in 1954, posts for speech therapists were introduced into the educational support services. The speech therapeutical service and the psychological therapeutical service obviously had to work together closely, often treating the same learner with both a behavioural and a speech problem. This was the first manifestation of multidisciplinary collaboration within the education system (Esterhuysen, 1968:6). By this time there were 22 permanent posts at the Psychology Services of the National Department of Education (Bosman, 1987:14).

Also during 1948 the Department of Education introduced career guidance as a compulsory non-examination subject in high school (Esterhuysen, 1968:7), which necessitated guidance teachers to be appointed in schools. The duty of these teachers was to give educational and career guidance to all learners in their schools, in collaboration with the career counsellors that also were appointed for this purpose at the school psychological services (Esterhuysen, 1968:8; Joubert, 1975:37).

During 1955 the National Department of Education decided to separate the Psychological Services from the Medical Services. The Psychological services and the Guidance Services were then merged in 1956 and were allocated to the management of the Head of Psychological and Guidance Services, also a newly established post (Barnardt, 1971:26).

A name change then took place in 1966, namely from Psychological and Guidance Services, to School Psychological and Guidance Services. In 1967 the Department of Education introduced school child guidance clinics at central school districts in Pretoria, Johannesburg, Pietersburg, Nelspruit, Vereeniging, Potchefstroom, Ermelo, Boksburg, Krugersdorp and Lichtenburg. An educational psychologist, a counselling psychologist, a speech therapist and a remedial teacher were appointed at these clinics (TED, 1968; Barnardt, 1971:28), which therefore functioned as multidisciplinary institutions.

Special schools for black South Africans were transferred from the missionaries to the separate educational departments, which had been created for each of the different race
groups, during the 1960’s. Special education for non-whites was administered according to the Bantu Education Act, 1964, the Coloured Persons Education Act, 1963, and the Indian Education Act, 1965. Severe discrepancies occurred between the provision for whites and for other population groups in both the quality and the quantity of such provision (Du Toit, 1996:11).

The Act on National Educational Policy (Act no.39 of 1967) stipulated that education should be given to learners according to their abilities and their interests, which brought differentiated teaching of learners according to their different abilities, into the education dispensation (Pistorius, 1982: 354-357). The implementation of this policy in 1972 led to the fact that the Psychological and Guidance Services became much more specialised. Due to the fact that there was a considerable increase in the duties and responsibilities of the staff, a further fourteen clinics had to be established by 1973. The expansion of these clinics meant that by the end of 1973 there were twenty-four established clinics in the Transvaal (Bosman, 1987:18). Additional clinics were established in 1975 in Germiston-North, Johannesburg-Northwest, Pretoria-North and in Van der Bijlpark. A further six clinics were established at Alberton, Heidelberg, Johannesburg-West, Kempton Park, Witbank and Randfontein in 1976. During 1977 another six clinics were created at Brakpan, Brits, Johannesburg-North, Cartonville, Far-West-Transvaal and the Far-Northern-Transvaal (Coetzee, 1984:67-151).

This meant that the Department had established forty-two clinics and four clinic schools. In these clinics, each educational psychologist filled a position ascribed to a specific kind of guidance and service:

- the “Orthopedagogue” serviced learners with behavioural and emotional difficulties;
- the “Orthodidactician”: learning difficulties;
- the “Career Leader”: career guidance in schools;
- the “Socio-Pedagogue”: learners who experience social difficulties, for instance with friends;
- the “Speech therapist” was the only non-psychologist, and functioned as speech and hearing specialist.
This structure stayed in place until 1983 when the name “Educational Support Services” was introduced to these clinics (Bosman, 1987:19; Moller, 1987:29). With the introduction of the new name, the name of the post of the educational psychologists also changed to “Educational Advisor”, as follows:

- The “Career Leader” became an “Educational Advisor: Career Guidance”.
- The “Orthopedagogue” became the “Educational Advisor: Orthopedagogical Matters”.
- The “Orthodacticion” became the “Educational Advisor: Orthodidactical Matters”.
- The “Socio-Pedagogue” became the “Educational Advisor: Guidance”.

This new structure made provision for twenty-five Educational Support Centres and eight Child Guidance Clinics in Transvaal. Provision was made for one Clinic per comprehensive unit, and more than one Centre per unit (Bosman, 1987:21).

An outline of the duties of the different, then newly titled Educational Advisors, who all were educational psychologists at the Educational Support Centres, is given below:

The duties of the “Educational Advisor: Career Guidance” were as follows (Bosman, 1987):

- “Support schools with their educational guidance programme.
- Organise workshops for the “Departmental Heads: Educational Guidance” for the efficient implementation of the educational guidance programme in the school.
- Apply diagnostic programmes with all the standard five learners, in order to help these learners to make responsible subject choices for high school and choosing a career.
- Give group and individual guidance to parents of standard five learners in connection with high school choices.
- Do group IQ testing of standard three to standard five learners.
- Identify learners with problems, for interdisciplinary support.
• Provide career guidance and study guidance to school leavers.
• Support all learners who need to change their courses, subjects and field of future studies.
• Give support with study methods to learners with study problems.
• Provide group and individual counselling to learners and parents in connection with career guidance and subject choices.”

The duties of the “Educational Advisor: Didactical Matters” were as follows (Bosman 1987):

• “To identify learners with learning problems and learning disabilities and to support these learners, their parents and their teachers.
• To give therapy in order to support the learner in such a way that he can overcome his problem.
• Guidance to teachers and parents in connection with the handling and teaching of the learner with a learning problem.
• Give in-service training to teachers to identify, support and prevent learning problems.
• Give guidance to principals of schools in the establishment of aid classes, for learners with learning problems.
• Placement of learners in aid classes, and the frequent evaluation and monitoring of these learners to place them back into the main stream when they have overcome their learning problems.
• Work closely with the learner’s parents, teachers and principal.
• Do school readiness tests.
• Do full orthodidactical investigations and diagnostical assessments.
• Design a programme for the learner with learning problems.
• Placement of learning disabled learners in remedial schools and other special schools.”

The duties of the “Educational Advisor: Pedagogical Matters” were as follows (Bosman 1987):
• Undertake a complete orthopedagogical investigation including the relevant test materials, interviews with parents, school principals, teachers and Departmental Head: Educational Guidance.

• Compile an orthopedagogical report together with a motivated recommendation.

• Decisions concerning further actions and planning of the relevant pedotherapy (psychotherapy for children) in collaboration with other professional staff members, learners, parents, school staff and where necessary the superintendent inspector.

• Compilation and circulation of the classification documents after receipt of the reports from all relevant team members, for consideration of the therapeutical placement of a learner in a school hostel or clinic school.

• Applying pedotherapy to learners classified as having behavioural disorders, as well as guiding school staff members concerning the implementation of the main therapeutical programme.

• Continued care of learners who have completed the therapeutical programme.

• Assessment of the scholastic performance, language ability and intellectual potential of learners who have been referred as a result of poor scholastic performance.

• Decisions and recommendations regarding classification or permanent exemption of intellectually disabled learner, in collaboration with the school principal and other relevant staff members of the Educational Support Centre.

• Research into his field to further his knowledge of the prevention and support of problems.

• Provide guidance on request of institutions like family organisations, churches and welfare organisations.

• Specialised guidance to parents in connection with their children.

• Address parents, teachers and principals at parent evenings at schools.

• Give guidance to parents, teachers and learners in connection with the prevention and the rectification of problematic educational dynamics.”
• Guidance to principals and school staff in connection with the problematic and inadequate educational situations at the learner’s home in order for them to understand the learner better.

The duties of the “Educational Advisor: Socio-pedagogical Matters” was the following (Bosman 1987):

• “Responsible for parental guidance in order to correct the factors that cause problematic educational dynamics.
• Evaluate the progress made in connection with the above-mentioned.
• Conduct a socio-pedagogical evaluation of the problematic educational situation.
• The early identification of learners who do not develop on a cognitive, normative and affective level as they should.
• Serve as a link between the school, the parents and the learner.
• The implementation of a parental guidance programme in order to get the parents’ education on track again.
• Make recommendations, regarding the placing of learners in special and clinic schools, and also about declassification of learners.
• Work closely with the Educational Advisor: Orthopedagogical Matters.
• Rendering assistance and support to learners and their parents.
• To undertake continual research in his field of expertise.”

The Educational Support Centres functioned in this way until 1994. A name change then occurred again, and the name of the Support Centres changed to Education Aid Services.

However, already at that stage the Aid Services could not cope with all the referrals made to them from the schools. This is confirmed by annual reports of the Educational Aid Services in the Transvaal (Jaarverslag van die Opvoedkundige Hulpdiens, 1985:22 en 1986:22), and verified by Steyn (1984:12-13) who found in his investigations at that time that the centres did not attend to all the learners who were referred to them. He also pointed out that the schools themselves should have handled a lot of the cases that were referred to the Centres. The annual reports of the Educational Aid Services also
indicate that the centres were understaffed, and that there already were fifty-seven vacant positions in the Transvaal in October 1986 (Opvoedkundige Hulpdiens: Jaarverslag van die Opvoedkundige Hulpdiens, 1986:1-2).

Eight years later, by 1994 and just before the change in the education dispensation, the situation concerning special education in South Africa appeared to be as follows (Du Toit, 1996: 11-13):

- Limited educational support services that were disproportionately distributed across the different education departments.
- A lack of trained educational psychologists to fill posts in the educational support services and in the field of specialised education.
- A fragmented specialised education system based on ethnic separation and discrimination on the basis of race and colour.
- Unequal access to specialised education, with a system of free and compulsory education for whites, coloureds and Indians but not for blacks.
- The use of varying terminology and categories of specialised education in the various departments.
- Huge disparities between special educational provision in urban and rural areas.
- Inadequately trained teachers, especially in black schools.
- Lack of equipment in some special schools.
- Disparities in per capita expenditure across different education departments and even more so in the case of specialised education.
- Separate schools for children with different categories of disabilities.
- Varying criteria for the admission and discharge of learners with difficulties.
- A medical focus with prescribed clinical admission criteria.
- Duplication and disproportionate allocation and utilisation of facilities, professionals and services.
- Severe discrepancies in the provision of specialised education for different race groups.
Specifically black learners did not have special school facilities, and therefore many black learners who needed placement, had to stay in the mainstream without any support (Hall, 1998:66).

Various reports and documents published by discussion groups on special educational needs, which had convened with the specific aim to discuss policy towards learners with special educational needs, had an influence on educational policy concerning learners with special educational needs, before 1994, are described next.

THE DE LANGE REPORT:
When the Government requested the Human Sciences Research Council (HSRC) in 1980 to investigate all the different aspects of education in South Africa and to make recommendations as far as education policy is concerned, the De Lange commission consisting of 26 members was appointed. The members were representative of all the population groups of South Africa. The following findings by the commission were presented to Government (Hall, 1998:36):

- The divergent nature of the provision of special education through different departments was pointed out as being problematic.
- There is a shortage of adequately trained professional staff to provide in the needs of the learner with special educational needs.
- Problems were pointed out in the support of learners with learning problems in mainstream education, due to a shortage of trained remedial teachers.
- The vast amount of early school leavers, who were milieu-disabled but who did not get any support from the Government.
- The neglect of gifted and talented learners.
- Parent involvement in the education of the learner with special educational needs was not encouraged enough.

The following recommendations were also put to the Government as far as the management of special educational needs was concerned:

- Bigger collaboration between the different departments and the establishment of a centralised educational policy for all the population groups in South Africa, with the emphasis on the provision of special education to all.
• Provision in the pre- and in-service training of teachers in order to empower them to identify learners with problems, and to enable them to help these learners.

• A guidance and remedial teacher should be employed at every primary school, in order to collaborate with the class teachers, the Educational Support Services and the School Clinics.

• Every school should have a social worker who would be responsible for parental guidance and child guidance. The social worker would also assist in the placement of learners in special education.

• Uniform training and standards with minimum requirements for all teachers should be introduced.

• Special schools should be extended further for learners with visual, hearing, physical, mental and neurological impairments.

• The provision of special support in mainstream education was recommended instead of the placement of learners in special schools (Hall, 1998:38-40).

The deduction can be made that the De Lange Report had an influence on the Government’s course of thought regarding special education in South Africa, because the concept of support to learners with special educational needs, was mentioned for the first time in this report.

HUMAN SCIENCE RESEARCH COUNCIL (HSRC) REPORT ON EDUCATION FOR THE BLACK DISABLED:
This report confirmed the inequalities in the provision of special education. It reflected an exceptionally high incidence of disabilities in the black population groups. The nature and scope of disabilities were attributed to the detrimental factors typically operating in a Third World country and associated with poverty, ignorance, traditional birth customs, lack of health care facilities and access to these facilities. Various recommendations to create a more just education system, were presented by the HSRC (1987), which included the following:

• Integration, in order to break down separation on grounds of language, colour, and race.

• Distribution of educational resources in order to provide better education to all the population groups of South Africa.
• Acknowledgement of the multicultural composition of the population in the curriculum, handbooks and medium of instruction.
• Management and control of educational matters should be more accessible to local communities (HSRC, 1987).

Hall (1998:42) states that not much attention was given to these recommendations by the policy writers of the day.

EDUCATIONAL RENEWAL STRATEGY:
The Department of National Education itself was working on an educational renewal strategy for South Africa, and pointed out the following (Department of National Education, 1992(a) and 1992(b); Hall, 1998: 42-45):
• A new educational system should be democratic without any elements of discrimination or domination.
• Unity should be pursued through the establishment of a central education department.
• The racial basis of the educational system that had led to several problems, should be addressed and a single non-racial educational system should be established.
• Learners with special educational needs should as far as possible remain in the mainstream. However, some of these learners’ impairments are of such a nature that they should be accommodated in special schools in order to receive specialised support and the necessary parental guidance.
• The extension of learning opportunities through distant education, adult basic education, compulsory education and career guidance.
• In-service training for teachers.

These early reports as well as the report of the National Educational Policy Investigation (NEPI) Support Services (1992), the report on Learners with Special Educational Needs (1994) and the ANC’s Policy Framework for Education and Training (1994), reflected the general trend regarding the future of specialised education in South Africa (Du Toit, 1996:14).
THE NATIONAL EDUCATIONAL POLICY INVESTIGATION (NEPI) REPORT:
NEPI was undertaken to determine policy options for a new educational dispensation under a new government in South Africa. Different sectors of education were investigated and studied and thirteen reports were written (Hall, 1998:45). For the purposes of this study, a short description is presented of the principles adopted by NEPI in their report on the Educational Support Services:

- A non-racial educational system with gender equality and non-discrimination as an underlying principle.
- A single-unit system.
- Rectification of inequalities.
- Democracy with special reference to the principle of representation.

According to NEPI (1992:4) the inequalities of the apartheid era should be addressed first. Furthermore, all learners at risk, due to their inability to perform academically in over-full classrooms in mainstream education, should be given the necessary attention. Educational Support Services should focus on learners with special needs and on learners that were traumatised by violence, as well as those who did not have access to equal education and therefore are restricted as far as career opportunities are concerned.

NEPI also pointed out (1992:7) that education departments that were divided by race and ethicalities, administrated the Educational Support Services and this lead to disparities in the distribution of resources. The shortage of professional staff, and the fact that available services were not proportionally distributed between all South Africans, were also pointed out as problematic. The NEPI investigation also pointed out that a lack in clearness and focus existed in the Educational Support Services.

According to NEPI total mainstreaming as a model for special education would not be recommendable in the short to medium term because there was insufficient support available to provide for all the learners with special needs. Progressive mainstreaming may work, it suggested, because learners who showed enough progress in the special school could then be placed back into the mainstream (Hall, 1998:48).
3. THE PERIOD AFTER 1994

After the first democratic elections for all South African citizens in April 1994, a period of
democratic decision-making was introduced. Policy-makers, professionals, teachers,
parents and the disabled, all met to plan the future of specialised education together (Du
Toit, 1996:14). The challenge was and still is to establish a transformed just system that
will address the inequalities of educational provision of the past.

Documents appearing after 1994, internationally as well as locally, on special
educational needs, and which also had an influence on educational policy in South
Africa, will now be discussed.

THE SALAMANCA STATEMENT:

At the 1990 World Conference on Education for All, held in Thailand, emphasis was
placed on inclusive education. At a later conference held in Salamanca (Spain) in June
1994, the driving force for inclusive education was realised in the resolution that became
to be known as the Salamanca Statement on Principles, Policy and Practice in Special
Needs Education. Three hundred delegates representing 92 countries and 25
international organisations endorsed this statement (UNESCO, 1994:iii, Naicker,S,
1999:14).

This statement is still influential and served as a key document in guiding the inclusive
education developments internationally. It expresses high hopes for the beneficial impact
on inclusive schools, and proclaims that inclusive schools can provide the most effective
means of educating the majority of learners, which is seen as one way of combating
discriminatory attitudes. This message was clearly articulated and took the following
form:

"We, the delegates to the World Conference on Special Needs Education representing
ninety-two governments and twenty-five international organizations, hereby affirm our
commitment to Education for All, recognising the necessity and urgency of providing
education to all children, youth and adults with special educational needs within the regular education system, and further hereby endorse the Framework of Action Special Needs Education, that governments and organisations may be guided by the spirit of its provisions and recommendations." (UNESCO, 1994:9)

The Salamanca Statement asserted inclusion as a right. This rights view, the creation of inclusive schools, and inclusive education, form part of the creation of an inclusive society. Five principles regarding the rights of learners with special educational needs form the core of the Salamanca Framework (UNESCO, 1994:viii):

- “Every child has a fundamental right to education, and must be given the opportunity to achieve and maintain an acceptable level of learning.
- Every child has unique characteristics, interests, abilities and learning needs.
- Educational systems should be designed and educational programmes implemented which take into account the wide diversity of these characteristics and needs.
- Those with special educational needs must have access to regular schools who should accommodate them within a child-centred pedagogy capable of meeting these needs.
- Regular schools with this inclusive orientation are the most effective means of combatting discriminatory attitudes, creating welcoming communities, building an inclusive society and achieving education for all; moreover, they provide an effective education to the majority of children and improve the efficiency and ultimately the cost-effectiveness of the entire education system”.

The framework defines the scope of inclusion in the following terms:

“ The guiding principle that informs this framework is that schools should accommodate all learners regardless of their physical, intellectual, social, emotional, linguistic or other conditions. This should include disabled and gifted learners, street and working learners, learners from remote or nomadic populations, learners from linguistic, ethnic or cultural minorities and learners from other disadvantaged or marginalized areas or groups.”

It is clear from this statement that inclusion is not only about the reconstructing of the provision for learners with disabilities, but it also includes the extending of educational
opportunities to a wide range of marginalised groups who may historically have had little or no access to schooling.

While developed countries already have sophisticated and well-resourced regular educational systems that by now have effectively included the large majority of learners, developing countries like South Africa face a different situation. In developing countries large groups of learners have as yet not even had access to education. Many of these learners exhibit special educational needs. These developing countries usually have insufficient funds to create a large infrastructure of special schools or to establish special projects and provision for excluded groups. Dyson and Frolin (1999:32) state that the establishment of inclusive schools might be the only way to provide education to the whole population.

The Salamanca Statement also provides guidelines concerning resources, and views the development of inclusive schools as the most cost-effective means of achieving education for all. It further states that the creating of inclusive schools should be a key governmental policy in order to obtain adequate resources to maintain an inclusive system (UNESCO, 1994:41).

Inclusive education requires capital investment in making buildings accessible to all, and in obtaining equipment to uphold a policy of inclusion. It also requires an investment in human resources like the training of teachers, managers and other support personnel like educational psychologists and other professionals to maintain an inclusive policy.

Education, however, has to compete with other social and economic priorities like health care, welfare, defence and so on for its share of the state funds. Therefore, all national governments are under pressure to keep their education budgets under control. In this regard the Salamanca Statement recommended that the human, institutional, logistic, material and financial resources of various ministerial departments like education, health, social, welfare etcetera, should be pooling together to maximise their impact on the combination of both an educational and a social approach to special needs education (UNESCO, 1994:42).
Developing countries' limited support services; particularly educational services, are under increasing pressure by their rapid population growth. Therefore, for both developed and developing countries there are powerful incentives to keep their budgets strictly under control. The Statement however argues that inclusive educational systems must recognise and respond to the diverse needs of all of its learners regardless of any difficulties or differences they may have. The Statement also recognises that support services are very important, and that the state should offer a continuum of support services to ensure the development of inclusive schools. The following recommendations from the Salamanca Statement Document (UNESCO, 1994:31) in this regard are important:

- Provision of support services is of paramount importance for the success of inclusive educational policies.
- Teacher education institutions and the staff of special schools should provide support.
- External support by resource personnel such as advisory teachers, educational psychologists, speech and occupational therapists is important.

The Statement is also clear on the fact that special schools or special classes and units in mainstream schools can provide more suitable education for some learners like the blind or the deaf (UNESCO, 1994:18). In this regard Grebenstein (1994:87) argues that inclusion is not appropriate for all students and that those with sensory impairments requiring Braille or Sign Language may need special classrooms. He continues saying (Grebenstein, 1994:87) that students with severe disruptive behaviour problems should not be placed in regular classrooms before these problems are under control.

The Salamanca Statement is very clear on the fact that there is consensus in the international world that inclusive schools should be developed so as to cater for the education of all learners. It also points out that a child-centred pedagogy, capable of successfully educating all children, including those with serious disadvantages and disabilities, should be developed and put into practice. It argues that a child-centred pedagogy will be beneficial to all learners and society because child-centred schools are the training ground for a people-oriented society that respects both the differences and the dignity of all human beings. It will focus on the potential of all people rather than on their problems and impairments (UNESCO, 1994:6-7).
From this description it is clear that the Salamanca Statement had significant bearing on the manner in which support services will have to operate, because it affects the educational psychologist’s work and conduct.

ANC DISCUSSION DOCUMENT: A POLICY FRAMEWORK FOR EDUCATION AND TRAINING:

When the African National Congress (ANC) won the first democratic elections of April 1994, their vision and policy for education were expressed in the above-mentioned document (ANC, 1994). The focus of this document was the transformation of the apartheid educational system to a more democratic educational system that should be able to provide quality, lifelong education to all.

This document comments on the fact that specialised education and services were administered by various racial orientated and different educational departments, with barely any collaboration with each other. This report also points out that the Educational Support Services were characterised by inequalities in both service and support provision. The development of human resources to meet the need for support services, was extremely neglected. The report further states that the shortage of Educational Support Services in some of the educational departments (especially for blacks), illustrated the apartheid regime’s unwillingness to accept responsibility for the education of all South Africans (ANC, 1994:67).

According to this document disabled persons and parents of disabled learners were insufficiently represented in the structures that made decisions on policies, control mechanisms and institutions (ANC, 1994:68). It also pointed out that the value and inter-dependability of different forms of knowledge should be recognised and that one national credit based framework for qualifications should be established (ANC, 1994:10).

Special educational needs are defined in this document (ANC, 1994:67) as special academic problems, learning problems, physical health problems, emotional problems and social problems, and those learners with serious chronic physical disabilities, sensory disabilities, neurological disabilities and cognitive disabilities, as well as those learners who suffer from multiple disabilities (ANC, 1994:67).
It is clear that this document also had a directional influence on the development of support services for special educational needs.

**EDUCATION WHITE PAPER ON EDUCATION AND TRAINING:**

The Draft White Paper on Education and Training was published in 1994 (Department of Education, 1994). This document received an overwhelming response from citizens, institutions and organisations as well as extensive media coverage. In revised form (Department of Education, 1995(a)), the White Paper served as the first policy document on education and training by the new government of South Africa.

In the Minister of Education’s introductory message he stated the necessity to “…build a system of education and training with which all South African people can identify because it serves their needs and interests. Such a system must be founded on equity and non-discrimination, it must respect diversity, it must honour learning and strive for excellence, and it must use all the resources available to it in the most effective manner possible.” (Du Toit, 1996:14; Hall, 1998:52).

Certain values and principles, which guided national policy for the reconstruction and development of education, are identified in this White Paper (Department of Education, 1995(a)). It includes the following:

- Open access to education.
- A unitary educational system.
- Redress of educational inequalities.
- The basic right to education, irrespective of race, class, gender, creed or age.
- Lifelong education and training of good quality.
- The total development of all pupils, which will encompass academic and vocational, as well as psychological, health and social needs.
- The education of learners with special educational needs (ELSEN) should be provided for within a continuum of integrated services in both ordinary and special schools.
THE HUNTER REPORT:
The then Minister of Education appointed a committee with the instruction to formulate a policy about the organisation, management and funding of schools. This committee was called the Hunter Committee, and its report was published in August 1995 (Hall, 1998:54; Harris, 1998:16-17).

The Hunter Committee made the following recommendations (Department of Education, 1995(b)) regarding the placement of learners with special educational needs in mainstream education:

- The establishment of a sub-committee for learners with special educational needs.
- Inclusive arrangements for learners with special educational needs in mainstream education.
- Aims and priorities for the provision of teachers for learners with special educational needs.
- Arrangements for in-service training for special needs teachers.
- The nature and extent of additional support required from educational support services and from health and welfare services.

As a framework for the policy the committee suggested the following principles (Department of Education 1995(b)):

- Equality – in funding, organisation, and the treatment of all people.
- Rectification – learners with disabilities must share in all the available resources.
- Quality – one of the fundamental problems is the poor quality of educational provision to schools.
- Effectiveness – the redistribution of resources on an equal basis will enhance more effective utilisation of resources.

THE SOUTH AFRICAN SCHOOLS ACT 84 OF 1996:
The Act stipulates that school attendance is compulsory for all learners from the age of seven. The Minister must determine the age of compulsory school attendance for learners with special educational needs. No learner may be refused admission to a public school on the grounds that his parent is unable to pay school fees, or on the
grounds that the learner does not subscribe to the mission statement of the school. Corporal punishment is prohibited (JUTA Law State Editors, 2002:1-224 – 1-238).

Specifically regarding inclusion of all learners, and LSEN, the following aspects are stipulated in the Act (Department of Education, 1996):

- Public schools are obliged to admit learners without any form of discrimination. The governing body, principal or any other person in such schools may not administer any test for admission purposes.
- In the determination of placement of a learner, with special educational needs, the principal and the Head of the Department of Education must consider the rights and wishes of the parents.
- Any learner who was refused admission to a public school, and his or her parent, may appeal against the decision to the Member of the Executive Council.
- The National Minister of Education and Training is compelled to provide education for learners with special educational needs in public mainstream schools, as far as possible. All reasonable measures should be taken to ensure that the psychical facilities are accessible for learners with disabilities at mainstream schools.
- The governing body of a school plays an important role in the development of the school’s potential to provide quality education to all learners. Where learners with special educational needs are placed in mainstream schools, the governing body of such a school must co-opt professionals with the necessary expertise to accommodate the special educational needs of these learners.

**CURRICULUM 2005:**

As already described, during the apartheid era education was characterised by a fragmented specialised educational system that was based on ethnic separation and discrimination on the basis of race and colour. Therefore many citizens were deprived from opportunities to access information and to gain experience, which is necessary for development and growth. The educational system did not encourage learners to develop creative, analytical and critical thinking skills. Learners were not encouraged to form new ideas and to take control of their own learning situations. What was taught at schools did not always prepare learners for the labour market, life, or for further studies.
Educational societies, chambers of commerce, political parties and non-governmental organisations made allegations that the curriculum was not relevant to regularly address the realities of South Africa (Hall, 1998:57).

The transformation of the educational system of South Africa became vital after the democratic elections of 1994, which resulted in a new dispensation and new government. At that stage the groundwork has already been done to prepare for a change from special to inclusive education, as described in all the above documents. In 1997 the National Commission on Special Needs Education, and The National Committee on Educational Support Services, submitted a joint report (see below) recommending that the dual system of education in South Africa with both a special education system and an ordinary system, be changed to a single education system. The reason being that the majority of learners who experienced barriers to learning were already being taught in the mainstream since there was limited special provision for them. The recommendation for a single system was also shaped and influenced by the South African Constitution of 1996, which guarantees the protection of the rights and dignity of all citizens of South Africa, and also by the Disability Movement whose representatives requested that the needs and rights of disabled persons be taken seriously (Naicker, 1999 (a):12-13).

Government then introduced Curriculum 2005, resulting in the changing of the educational system of South Africa to Outcomes-Based Education (OBE), which required a revolution both in thinking and in teaching practices. OBE is inclusive in nature and therefore ought to allow inclusive education to succeed (Naicker, 1999 (a):13).

Spady (1994:9) identified a number of premises on which OBE is based:

- All learners can succeed, but not necessarily at the same time.
- Schools can create the space and possibilities for success.
- Successful learning can result in more successful learning experiences.
- Educators expect all learners to perform optimally.

OBE focuses on what is learned and how it is learned, rather than on what is taught. The learner is actively involved in the learning process and uses skills such as critical thinking, reasoning and reflection. This approach is learner centred where the teacher
makes use of group work and other sources to facilitate learning. Every learner is seen as a unique individual who can be successful (Hall, 1998:58). The role of the teacher is however still vital for the successful implementation of OBE. Teachers therefore will have to be trained to be more flexible and learner centred (Hall, 1998:58).

These stipulations by OBE are however not met in the present education system, as will be indicated by the empirical research results in Chapter 4.

**SCHOOL REGISTER OF NEEDS SURVEY:**

The School Register of Needs Survey was published in 1997. Thirty-two thousand educational institutions were enrolled in the survey. The aim of the survey was to establish whether these schools could meet with the following criteria regarding support for the needs of LSEN:

- Physical conveniences
- Services
- Equipment
- Resources

The findings were that a quarter (25%) of all schools in the country did not even have basics like running water. Forty percent of the school buildings were in a very poor condition and half (50%) of the schools did not have flush toilets (Hall, 1998:58-59).

Furthermore, the survey pointed out that most of the schools did not have a library or a laboratory, and that there was a severe shortage in classrooms, of school desks, chairs, equipment and stationery.

This report held serious implications for the provision of adequate education for all learners by all schools and institutions, and especially for LSEN, but the provision of which has not yet materialised fully.
QUALITY EDUCATION FOR ALL. OVERCOMING BARRIERS TO LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT. REPORT OF THE NATIONAL COMMISION ON SPECIAL NEEDS IN EDUCATION AND TRAINING (NCSNET) AND NATIONAL COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION SUPPORT SERVICES (NCESS):

The Department of Education appointed the NCSNET and NCESS, to investigate and make recommendations on all aspects of special needs and support services in education and training in South Africa, and to establish a policy for the education of these learners, following the recommendations of the Hunter Report. The joint NCSNET and NCESS report stated the following (Department of Education, 1997:i):

- In the past specialised education and educational support services provision, have reflected the inequalities of the South African society with the majority of learners receiving inadequate or no provision. The system was characterised by the provision of specialised education and support to a small percentage of learners in special schools and classes, therefore most of the learners with disabilities have either fallen outside of the system or have been mainstreamed by default.

- The educational system and the curriculum have failed to respond to the diverse needs of the learner population, resulting in massive figures of dropouts and failures.

- The proposals made in this report provide guidelines for transformation of all levels of education in order ensure that all learners have equal access to quality education.

- The vision proposed is that of an educational system which promotes education for all, and fosters the development of inclusive and supportive centres of learning to enable all learners to participate actively in the education process.

- The principles guiding the broad strategies to achieve this vision includes the acceptance and implementation of principles and values contained in the Constitution and in the White Paper on Education and Training, human rights and social justice for all learners, participation and social integration, equal access to a single inclusive educational system, access to the curriculum, equity and redress, community responsiveness, and cost-effectiveness.

- Key strategies to achieve this vision include the transformation of all aspects of the educational system, to develop an integrated system of education, infusing
special needs and support services throughout the system, pursuing the holistic
development of centres of learning to ensure a barrier-free physical environment
and a supportive and inclusive psychosocial learning environment, developing a
flexible curriculum to ensure access for all learners, promoting the rights and
responsibilities of parents, teachers and learners, providing effective
development programmes for educators, support personnel, fostering holistic and
integrated support provision, developing a community based support system
which includes a preventative and developmental approach to support and
develop funding strategies that ensure redress, sustainability and access to
education for all learners.

Some of the key aspects of the new envisaged education system are pointed out as
follows in this report (Department of Education, 1997:ii):

- The education process would prepare learners for life and a future career.
- All learners would have access to lifelong learning.
- Maximum opportunities would be provided for all learners to engage with one
  another in inclusive settings.
- A flexible curriculum which would reflect the ethos of inclusiveness, support, a
culture of teaching and learning, effective community relations and ownership
would be put in place. Centres of learning would be provided with the necessary
support.
- Centre-of-learning-based support structures that would predominantly comprise
of teachers, but which will also draw on community resources and specialist
services should be put in place. Support would be community based at Early
Childhood Development, Further Education and Training, and General
Education and Training levels.
- Parents, teachers and learners would be involved in the governance of all
  centres of learning.
- Education support personnel would receive appropriate preparation through pre-
  service and continuing education programmes.
- Every district or equivalent area would have some form of district support centre
  or facility where specialist and other support services can be accessed by
  centres of learning in that specific area.
This report refers to and describes the implications that the strategies and recommendations would have on assessment, the curriculum, organisation and management, provision of staff, human resources, finances and funding, as well as sustainability. Short, medium and long-term objectives to implement the plan in order to bring quality education to all learners in South Africa are described.

It is clear that this document advocates the total transformation of the organisation and management of the educational system, which will influence the organisation centres of learning, for LSEN as well. What educators are doing in the classroom will also have an influence on the curriculum that is followed. It is also important to point out that the structure of Curriculum 2005 is compatible with the principles of this document.

This joint report emphasises community-based support and the important participation of all role players is constantly pointed out. Tukulu (1997) in Hall (1998:64) pointed out that parents, grandparents, friends, traditional leaders, doctors, and spiritual leaders are all possible role players. The reference to learners with special educational needs in the report is seen very widely and includes categories like teenage mothers, early school leavers, learners taught in a second language, youth at risk, adult learners, and also learners who need support at tertiary level.

This report started the process to transform education in South Africa. It embraces all past reports and gives clear guidelines and strategies to accomplish a fair educational system for South Africa.

**EDUCATION WHITE PAPER 6. SPECIAL NEEDS EDUCATION. BUILDING AN INCLUSIVE EDUCATION AND TRAINING SYSTEM:**

All the above documents and their recommendations lead to the formulation of this White Paper 6 in 2001. In this White Paper the Department of Education (2001) describes how policy will systematically move away from using segregation according to categories of disabilities as an organising principle for institutions, how special schools will serve disabled learners on site, and will serve as a resource to all educators and schools in their immediate areas, in a new inclusive educational system.
It furthermore indicates how learners with disabilities will be assessed, identified and incorporated into special, full-service and ordinary schools, and gives direction for the Education Support System required. It also places an emphasis on a movement away from the medical model to a needs model for the support of LSEN, through district based support teams and full-service schools. Full-service schools are schools that will be equipped and supported to provide for the full range of learning needs among all learners. The White Paper describes (Department of Education, 2001:22) how initial facilities will be set up and how the additional required resources will be accessed, and describes strategies and interventions that will assist educators to cope with a diversity of learning and teaching needs.

In line with The National Disability Strategy which condemns the segregation of persons with disabilities from the mainstream society, and which emphasises the need for including persons with disabilities in the work place, social environment, political sphere and sports arenas, the Department of Education sees the establishment of an inclusive education and training system as a cornerstone of an integrated society and an education and training system suitable for the twenty-first century (Department of Education, 2001:10).

It is also points out that The World Health Organisation has calculated that between 2.2% and 2.6% of learners in any school system could be identified as disabled or impaired. This indicates that potentially 280,000 learners with disabilities or impairments are unaccounted for in South Africa whilst a central feature of the programme to build an inclusive education and training system is the enrolment of these learners in the schooling system (Department of Education, 2001:9, 30).

Internationally educators began to question how services could be organised differently so as to include all learners, also learners with special educational needs as well as previously disadvantaged individuals in communities. Educator’s actions were also guided by the new approach to disability. This approach focused on abilities rather than on disabilities and on social justice and equity rather than isolation and neglect. The movement to establish an inclusive educational system was characterised by the following phases (Engelbrecht, 1999:7):

- ‘normalisation’ in the 1960s;
• mainstreaming and integration in the 1970s and 1980s;
• inclusion.

A paradigm shift from a medically based model to a needs model became apparent, since it has been found that a medical based model is unhelpful and sometimes even harmful in terms of meeting the needs of those who require special education. The shift to a needs model implies that provision will be based on what the individual learner needs to realise his full potential, rather than on the label attached to the learner. The causes of special educational needs need to be determined and seen in terms of a continuum. It acknowledges the fact that some special educational needs have intrinsic causes such as disabilities of a physical or neurological nature, while others have extrinsic causes, usually of an educational nature where special needs are created by the environment.

Such extrinsic causes include factors such as poverty, social upheaval, violence and ineffective educational provision. They in turn may cause intrinsic conditions such as malnutrition, a lack of stimulation, delayed development and underachieving. Bernard in Gregg and Ferri (1996:46) describes the concepts of the “in-vironment” as the inner relationships within oneself, that impact on a person’s own thinking and feelings, and the “en-vironment” as the everyday external relationships that change a person’s thinking. Many messages occur in both these “in-” and “en-” vironments. Moreover, discrepancies in these messages from the “in-” and “en-” vironments can lead to confusion and ambiguity.

A central area on the continuum of causes, is when a combination of intrinsic and extrinsic causes occurs, resulting in the reciprocal interaction of intrinsic and extrinsic causes (Gauteng Department of Education, 1996:3). Therefore, a paradigm shift from the traditional specialised support basis, to a spirit of collaboration, consultation and teamwork should take place, in order to include all stakeholders in the community who can form part of the support team, which should include an educational psychologist. This will include all professionals that have an interest in the learner with special educational needs (Hall, 1998:205). According to the White Paper, support services should include all the systems that can influence the learner. After a study of the
legislative foundation for inclusion, Smith (1998:23) concluded that a continuum of services must be available so that an appropriate education could be provided for every learner who has the need for special education. It may also be possible, and is apparent from a judicial point of view, that some learners may be so disruptive to general classroom procedures, that a mainstream education setting is not in their best interest, neither in that of their non-disabled peers in a mainstream setting. Smith (1998:23) provides the following suggestions for the inclusion of learners with special educational needs:

- The determination of the least restrictive environment must be based on the individual needs of the learner.
- The starting assumption should always be that any learner belongs in a general classroom. Exceptions may be made to this assumption based on individual needs.
- A complete continuum of alternative placements and services must be available.
- In making decisions of inclusion the needs of the disabled learner’s peers should also be considered.
- All educators must adopt a sense of ownership for all learners.
- It is critical that parents are involved and that an individual educational programme (IEP) is worked out for every learner with special educational needs.
- It is also critical that there are specially trained teachers and therapists available, and that developmental and therapeutic services are available and presented.

In an inclusive system a wider spread of educational support services will be catering for learners’ needs, in line with the level of support required by learners. Learners who require low-intensive support will receive this in ordinary schools while those who require moderate support will receive this in full-service schools. Learners who require high-intensive support will continue to receive such support in special schools (Department of Education, 2001:15). This White Paper also stresses that the development of an inclusive system must take into account the impact and the spread of HIV/AIDS and other infective diseases (Department of Education, 2001:23).

This White Paper envisages that learners who experience barriers to learning can be identified early and appropriate support provided timeously. Changes to special schools and settings are also required, so that learners who experience mild to moderate
disabilities can be accommodated within mainstream education with support from district-based support teams including special schools and settings (Department of Education, 2001:24).

The White Paper stipulates that to enable mainstream education to recognise and address the causes and effects of learning difficulties in ordinary classes and lecture halls, it is necessary to transform and change the entire educational system. The educational support service should be strengthened in order to reduce barriers to learning. At its core this support would come from new district-based support teams comprising staff from provincial district, regional and head offices, and from special schools. Their primary function would be to evaluate programmes, diagnose their effectiveness and suggest modifications. Further and Higher education at institutional level will be required to establish institutional-level support teams (Department of Education, 2001:26-29).

The White Paper also provides time frames, short-term and long-term goals, and a funding strategy for the implementation of an inclusive system, which should exhibit the following characteristics (Department of education, 2001:16):

- Acknowledging that all children and youth can learn and that all children and youth need support.
- Accepting and respecting that all learners are different in some way and have different learning needs, which are equally valued and are a normal part of human experience.
- Enabling education structures, systems and learning methodologies to meet the needs of all learners.
- Acknowledging and respecting differences in learners, whether due to age, gender, ethnicity, language, class, disability or HIV status.
- Changing attitudes, behaviour, teaching methodologies, curricula and the environment to meet the needs of all learners.
- Empowering learners by developing their individual strengths and enabling them to participate critically in the process of learning.
- Maximising the participation of all learners in the culture and the curricula of educational institutions and uncovering and minimising barriers to learning.
• Acknowledging that education is broader than formal schooling and that learning also occurs in the home and community, and within formal and informal modes and structures.
• Acknowledging that some learners may require more intensive and specialised support to enable them to develop to their full potential.

The White Paper also states that the Ministry of Education believes that the key to reducing barriers to learning within all education and learning, lies in a strengthened educational support service and that this strengthened educational support service will have at its core, new district-based support teams which will comprise of staff from provincial district, regional, head office and from special schools. The primary function of these district support teams will be to evaluate programmes, diagnose their effectiveness and suggest modifications. Through supporting teaching, learning and management, they equip schools, early childhood centres, basic education and training centres, colleges and higher education institutions to recognise and address severe learning difficulties and to accommodate a range of learning needs (Department of Education, 2001: 29).

At institutional level the government will require institutions to establish institutional-level support teams. The primary function of these teams will be to put in place properly co-ordinated learner and support services. These services will support the learning and teaching process by identifying and addressing learner, educator and institutional needs. Where appropriate, these teams should be strengthened by expertise from the local community, district support teams and higher educational institutions (Department of Education, 2001: 29).

Special schools will be converted to resource centres integrated into district support teams so that they can provide specialised professional support in curriculum, assessment and instruction to neighbourhood schools. This will be additional to the service they provide to their existing learner base (Department of Education, 2001: 29).

The White Paper states that progress towards an inclusive educational system will be heavily dependent on more effective usage of current skills in the “special needs” sector, due to the fact that the high learner/educator ratios poses a considerable burden to all
professionals in the system and that the educational system shows an inability to produce adequate numbers of professionals in the short term. In the context of the low growth rate of the South African economy and the relative large slice of the budget which is allocated to education, it is unlikely that significantly more public resources would be allocated to education in the next few years (Department of Education, 2001: 37).

Therefore a realistic time frame of 20 years is proposed for the implementation of the inclusive education system, broken down in short-term, medium-term and long-term steps, as follows (Department of Education, 2001: 37):

- **Short term steps (2001-2003):**
  1. Implementing a national education programme on inclusive education.
  2. Planning and implementing a target outreach programme.
  3. Completing an audit of special schools.
  4. Designing, planning and implementing the conversion of 30 special schools to resource centres/special schools in 30 designated school districts.
  5. Designating, planning and the conversion of thirty primary schools to full service schools.
  6. Implementing the district support teams in the 30 districts.
  7. The general orientation and introduction of management, governing bodies and professional staff to the inclusion model.
  8. The establishment of systems and procedures for early identification and addressing of barriers to learning in the Foundation Phase.

- **Medium-term steps (2004-2008):**
  1. Transforming further education and training and higher education institutions.
  2. Mobilise disabled out-of-school children and youth in line with available resources.
  3. Expanding the number of resource centres/special schools, full service schools and district support teams.

- **Long-term steps (2009-2021):**
  1. Expanding provision in order to reach the target of 380 resource centres/special schools, 500 full-service schools and colleges and district support teams and the 280 000 out-of-school children and youth.
The fact that an ever increasing number of learners require schooling and further education, the shortage of specialised teachers and professionals, the shortage of educational support structures, and also the fact that learners with special educational needs are placed in the mainstream, because of the shortage of special schools and other relevant factors, paved the way for adopting an inclusive education dispensation. Inclusion implies a rethinking on the part of the school to meet all the needs of all its natural population without seeing any group as special. For instance a school should be able to give immediate support and monitoring for as long as is necessary to the learner whose ability to learn is suddenly disrupted by a family bereavement, in the same way as the indefinite support to and monitoring of a learner with for instance a hearing impairment. It is also important to note that all identified needs should be addressed immediately and should not be left for later attendance, since it has been found that learners’ difficulties and needs become worse if neglected, and it then becomes even more difficult to alleviate (Hackney, 2002:9).

The inclusive education dispensation therefore makes a new educational psychological model for learner support essential. The success of the move towards inclusive education depends on such a model. The above all are important guidelines towards the establishment of a new educational psychological model for learner support.

In this regard Vaughn and Schumm (1995:264) warn against the quick implementation of inclusive education since research has proved that if learners with special educational needs are placed in settings where differentiation is not implemented, they may academically perform even poorer.

There are however certain prerequisites that should be in place for a policy of inclusive education to succeed. Schoeman (1996:2) points out that when a country accepts a policy of inclusive education it implies a complete systems change involving the commitment of government departments of education to provide the necessary support and teacher training to make the implementation as successful as possible. Previous
resource systems should now be used in new and different ways to support all learners in mainstream schools.

According to Burden, (1995:49) certain basic structures and conditions should be in place before a policy of inclusion can be implemented. These are:

- A bill of human rights protecting the rights of all individuals.
- Legislation that will allow all learners with disabilities defined in the White Paper to join the mainstream of education.
- Defined roles of the different state departments and other stakeholders and structures in policy-making.
- A system of assessment that will allow learners to make progress on their own merit. This implies curriculum-based assessment.
- Curricula and subject content that meet the needs of each individual child in a very specific manner.
- The use of individualised educational programmes where the needs of each individual are seen as special and not only because of a disability.
- Professionals who are adequately trained, and who are willing to be retrained, and who have a wider perspective.
- People like parents and communities who are willing to become involved and commit themselves to the philosophy of inclusion.
- A specific socio-economic approach that is not too materialistic and that cannot lead to malpractices should form the basis for economic support.

In this regard the Salamanca statement states the following (UNESCO, 1994:21):

“Developing inclusive schools that cater for a wide range of pupils in both urban and rural areas requires the following:

- The articulation of a clear and forceful policy on inclusion together with adequate financial provision.
- An effective public information effort to combat prejudice and create informed and positive attitudes.
- An extensive programme of orientation and staff training.
- Provision of necessary support services.”
Changes in the curriculum, buildings, school organisation, pedagogy, assessment, staffing, school ethos and extracurricular activities of schooling are necessary."

All these prerequisites however are not already in place in the South African education dispensation, although the inclusive dispensation has already been introduced. To its merit, the White Paper on Special Needs Education (2001) does state that all of the existing policies and legislation for general, further and higher education will be reviewed. It also states that The South African Schools Act (1996), the Higher Education Act (1997), the Further Education and Training Act (1998) and the Adult Basic Education and Training Act (2000) already provide the basis for the establishment of an inclusive education and training system (Department of Education, 2001:27). Furthermore, the South African Constitution (Act 108 of 1996) has already founded the democratic state and citizenship of South Africa, on the values of human dignity, equality, human rights and freedom. According to the Constitution every one has the fundamental right to basic education on a non-discriminatory equality basis. This is particularly important for the protection of all learners whether they are disabled or not (Department of Education, 2001:11).

The White Paper on Special Needs Education also describes how the education support services will be strengthened in order to sustain an inclusive educational system. It indicates that the support services will have new district-based support based teams. The necessity for the establishment of a coordinated education support service along a continuum from national through to provincial departments of education, through to schools, colleges, adult and early childhood learning centres, and higher education, is spelt out. Particular attention is promised to be given to optimising the expertise of specialist support personnel, such as educational psychologists, remedial educators and health professionals (Department of Education, 2001:28-29 &41).

The inclusive education dispensation, as envisioned and described above, therefore makes a new educational psychological model for learner support essential. The success of the move towards inclusive education depends on such a model.
The above contributions towards the implementation of Inclusive Education in South Africa, as reflected in the White Paper on Special Needs Education, all are important guidelines towards the establishment of a new educational psychological model for learner support.

4. SUMMARY

In this chapter the history of educational psychological provision for the learner with special educational needs since 1946, was described. Important documents that influenced inclusive educational policy and provision for LSEN were discussed. The prerequisites for the successful implementation of the Inclusive Educational Policy were indicated, pointing to the fact that South Africa is still in the process of putting the right structures in place to achieve this, but that the final product of effective education support has not as yet been established.

This research aims to establish guidelines towards the implementation of an effective educational psychological model for learner support, within the inclusive education dispensation, as stated in Chapter 1.

The next chapter will focus on the role of the educational psychologist in learner support.
CHAPTER 3

THE ROLE OF THE EDUCATIONAL PSYCHOLOGIST

1. INTRODUCTION

In this chapter the researcher will discuss the training, role and function of the educational psychologist, inter alia in learner support. The researcher will indicate that the educational psychologist has always worked with the family and the school system, and by implication has always used a systemic approach. The systemic approach in educational psychology will be discussed, as well as the need for the educational psychologist to broaden or enlarge his traditional role, from the purely family dynamics approach toward the total system approach, within which the learner with special education needs function.

South Africa has recently adopted an inclusive education policy, to accommodate all learners, including those with special educational need, who need learner support. An inclusive educational system therefore necessitates professional educational psychological service to sustain such an education system (Saleh, 1996:14). According to Schoeman (1996:2-4) the concept of a continuum of support services is relevant to an inclusive educational approach, because within such continuum a learner's needs can be met in whatever education context he finds himself in. In this regard the involvement of the educational psychologist becomes significant in learner support, because traditionally he possesses the skills to identify learners' needs and to render the appropriate support. Schoeman (1996; 24) further points out that there should be a watchdog to ensure that government provides the necessary support services to learners with special needs in mainstream education, and that the view that inclusion is a cheap alternative to exclusion (i.e. schools for special education need) must be prevented. Schoeman also recommends that during transformation to an inclusive education system, steps should be taken to prevent a breakdown in the present support services of learners with special educational needs. This recommendation is relevant to the education situation in South Africa, since the National Department of Education is currently introducing inclusive education in this country, which entails a transformation of the education system as discussed in Chapter 2. To prevent a breakdown in
educational psychological school support services, the training, knowledge and applicable skills of educational psychologists functioning within the school system should have been kept relevant to maintain adequate support services for all learners in the new inclusive education system. Since this did not take place, but educational psychological services in schools on the contrary were cut down, the continuing involvement of educational psychologists during the education transformation process is a crucial matter of urgency. The educational psychologist is capable of making significant recommendations regarding the successful transformation of learner support services as required by White Paper 6, to ensure the maintenance of an effective inclusive education policy.

Next, the traditional role of the educational psychologist as exercised within the previous educational support system (see Chapter 2), will briefly be outlined again. The future role as envisioned by White Paper 6 (Department of Education, 2001), also in line with preliminary guidelines of the HPCSA (yet to be constituted but already available as prescribed competencies) (HPCSA, 1999: 9) will then be discussed, in order to illustrate how this role can be implemented and continued within the present inclusive education system.

2. THE TRADITIONAL ROLE OF THE EDUCATIONAL PSYCHOLOGIST

The traditional role of the educational psychologist, as exercised within the previous educational support system (see Chapter 2) consisted of the following general duties (Bosman, 1987: 23 – 24):

- The identification, placement and grouping of learners according to the kind of education that would suit their specific needs.
- Guidance to learners according to their personality structure, their scholastic performance, their future and their social milieu, in order to help them to become significant adults.
- Orthopedagogical intervention in terms of the diagnosis of and therapy for individual learner difficulties and learner-family dysfunctional relationships.
- Guidance to the parents and teachers of learners in the handling of these individual learners’ behaviour, learning and social difficulties.
• Overseeing the implementation of the general guidance programme of the school.
• Collaboration on an interdisciplinary level with other professionals in the field of children’s’ developmental problems in order to provide support to the learner as a total being.

In general, the traditional role of the educational psychologist encompassed assessment, intervention and educational and psychological support.

Added to this traditional role, the future role of the general psychologist as envisaged by the HPCSA (1999: 9) will comprise the following competencies, with the roles as pertaining to the educational psychologist specifically, indicated underneath each.

3. FUTURE ROLES OF THE EDUCATIONAL PSYCHOLOGIST

3.9 Psychological assessment

• The identification and assessment of learners’ intellectual, emotional, behavioural and learning difficulties, or barriers to learning, or special educational need.
• The assessment of the family (parents) and school (teachers and system) dynamics (context) of each such learner, as the possible barriers (causes) of the above difficulties.
• Diagnosing family and school dynamics (context) as the direct or indirect cause (barriers) of learners’ difficulties with learning, and/or of any other difficulties the learners may experience.

As indicated above, the educational psychologist traditionally performed mostly individual assessment and intervention. Individual learner assessment by the educational psychologist traditionally encompassed the following techniques and foci, and it is also indicated how and why these are still relevant within educational psychological context, even if not allowed any more within the school context by the Department of Education, because of discriminatory considerations:
• **Personality testing**, in terms of an IQ Test, in order to obtain a guideline of a learner’s developmental possibilities, and also **behaviour and emotional** testing as indication of a learners’ present level of functioning, were the main ingredients of educational psychological assessment. Within the educational (psychological) context, the assumption of an individual deficit as the central cause of a learning difficulty, has been tied to the determination of intellectual capacity as given potential, and was operationalised by the implementation of IQ tests. The role of the intelligence and the measurement of intelligence still are controversial issues within the broad field of psychology, with no consensus reached as yet on the debate regarding the relevance of IQ and the measurement thereof in the context of learner development and learners with special education needs – it is an area where fundamental disputes remain. Yet despite the controversy surrounding intelligence as phenomenon in learner development, it was and still is accepted as a foundational construct in definitions of learning difficulties (Stanovich & Stanovich, 1996:126).

• An assessment of the learner’s **family relationships (family context)** has always been part of the educational psychologist’s traditional role. Individual learner difficulties can only be comprehended as phenomenon (as is, as well as the causes thereof) within the context of family dynamics and relationships, because the family context mostly **determines** the nature and range of each specific learner’s difficulties. The phenomenon of individual learner difficulties can therefore **not** be fully comprehended **outside** the family context. Moreover, family assessment is still relevant because the nature and structure of the traditional family has been changing for many years now. Currently, worldwide there are many more single-parent families and working families than ever before. Tiegerman-Faber and Radziewic (1998:160) state that the traditional American family no longer consists of a mother, father, children and a puppy. This is also true for South Africa: the percentage of single-parent families and alternative families is now higher than ever before (Donald et al., 1997:184). The fact that (regular as well as alternative) families function as social systems whose members are interrelated and interdependent, creates new challenges for both the inclusive school system and the educational psychologist to deal with. Parents’ and children’s (a learner’s) behaviour (and emotions) is inextricably related to the each other within the framework of the total ecological family environment. The parents’ behaviour can also only be comprehended by
identifying (through assessment) the critical ecological variables which influence the system and functioning of the family. These variables include internal and external factors, which have an impact on the individual as well as collective family functioning of family members. Each family is unique and family members create their own highly idiosyncratic microsystem (Tiegerman-Faber & Radziewic, 1998:163). According to Tiegerman-Faber and Radziewic (1998:163), research on special education has described the phenomenon that a learner with special education need, impacts on the family system in the same way, as does the learner without special need. Parents of learners with special need often describe an emotional transition process that involves a series of steps and stages related to the acceptance and recognition of the learner by the family members. This often creates a tremendous amount of stress within a family, and can affect the harmony of the whole family ecosystem. Such parents describe a sense of shock and disbelief, which changes to anger and frustration, which is sometimes displaced and externalised to the spouse, to the other siblings, and/or to members of the extended family. Some parents turn their anger inward and blame themselves for their child’s difficulties. Parents need support to cope with the stress factors of having a learner with special need in the family system. The educational psychologist as a systemic (family) consultant is able to harmonise the mentioned stress factors, in order to restore the equilibrium of the family system – to harmonise the dynamics of the family. As indicated before, the traditional family to a large extent no longer exists, but a huge number of families consist of a single working parent, extended family or a combined family, consisting of children from previous marriages and relationships. As this has an impact on the learning dynamics of children from these families, it and should be taken into consideration by teachers, schools and other professionals involved in an inclusive educational system (Tiegerman-Faber & Radziewic, 1998:167). Specifically the single parent is usually a working parent who is highly stressed, may have scheduling problems, and is not available for school meetings during the day. Their children are often left alone at home, taken to a day-care centre, or left with a non-English speaking babysitter or relative in cases of multicultural communities, while the child attends an English school. Combined families can consist of divorced parents who remarry with the result that stepsiblings can further complicate sibling relationships. Children raised in combined families often complain about differences in child-rearing practices between the adults in their
extended family. Lovey (1988:27) states that children who live in chaotic and stressful homes often experience additional stress at school. Items such as uniforms, physical education gear and other learner equipment have low priority in such families, which can place the whole family ecosystem under strain.

This assessment role of the educational psychologist demonstrates that the specialist area of the educational psychologist lies closely with the family system and the school system of the learner, especially the learner with special education need.

3.10 Psychological intervention

- Rendering support and intervention strategies to individual learners as well as learners in groups, to address, overcome and alleviate their needs and difficulties.
- Rendering support (guidance) and intervention strategies to teachers and parents to address, overcome and alleviate these needs and difficulties, within the context that all these people (learners, teachers and parents) are functioning in.

3.11 Programme design, implementation and management

- Designing and presenting support programmes for groups of learners with or without special educational needs.
- Designing and presenting support programmes for teachers and parents of learners who experience difficulties or special educational needs.

3.4 Referral expertise

- Referring these people to other professionals in the field of children's difficulties, if deemed necessary by the educational psychologist, e.g. medical specialists.
- The co-ordination of the services rendered by these other professionals, within a multi-professional team.
3.5 Policy formulation and standards setting

As this is not the main professional role of the psychologist, it will not be discussed here.

3.6 Expert opinion

The same applies as to 3.5 above.

3.7 Collaborator

Coufal (1993) as cited by Tiegerman-Faber and Radziewicz (1998:193) made the following statement about collaboration, in the special education context: “Collaboration requires a substantial amount of time, professional effort and interpersonal negotiation. Part of the collaborative process assumes a philosophical change in the decision-making approach to special education. Specifically, no single individual, professional or parent can problem solve the complex issues underlying special education decision-making. Collaborative consultation provides a systematic process of planning and problem solving that stimulates active involvement from diverse individuals”. This indicates that comprehensive programmes for learners with special needs can be developed and applied within the most appropriate context, through collaborative consultation.

Collaboration as practised by the educational psychologist within the special needs education context requires a cooperative working relationship among all the team members in this context, including the parents and teachers.

According to Tiegerman-Faber and Radziewicz, (1998:193-194) there are certain competencies, which collaborative team members should have at their disposal for successful collaborative consultation and teamwork. These are the ability to:

- establish and maintain report
- learn from others
- be flexible, open, and receptive
- respect another person’s input, opinions, and criticisms
- communicate clearly
• incorporate another person’s suggestions within one’s own interpersonal framework.
• support the viewpoints of others
• manage conflict
• develop alternative strategies
• formulate clear ideas, plans, objectives and decisions.

The complex nature of special educational needs demands the involvement of other professionals involved in learner development, such as speech and language therapists, occupational therapists, medical specialists, paramedical staff, and also the parents as partners in the collaboration team (Hackney, 2002:9). All of these partners should be involved in the whole (total) intervention process in terms of the assessment and support of learners with special educational need. It is for the educational psychologist to coordinate the collaborative team in order for the professionals to decide together (collaboratively) on the information required regarding a specific child with special needs, the assessment equipment to be used, where the assessment will be performed, and by whom (of the team) (Moore, 1997:128).

Teamwork is nothing new for the educational psychologist. As indicated in Chapter 2 it traditionally was standard practice for the educational psychologist to function in multidisciplinary teams within the education system.

As collaborator within this multidisciplinary team, the educational psychologist also functions as consultant, the role of which will now be discussed.

3.8 Consultant

Collaboration defines how team members interact, whilst consultation defines the professional intervention role each member plays in the professional team (Tiegerman-Faber & Radziewicz, 1998:194).

International trends and developments indicate that consultation has evolved into one of the major professional functions of educational psychologists (Burden, 1993 in Moolla, 1996:7).
Consultation challenges the notion that the school is strictly a place of teaching the three “R’s”. It incorporates a “whole school approach” which involves reaching out to groups within the system, empowering the people within the system, building individuals’ and groups’ capabilities to handle and come to terms with issues, and to understand the dynamics of the system in which they function. This kind of consultative work by a professional requires a preventative as well as a curative, groupwise as well as individualistic approach. As indicated in Chapter 2 this approach is essential for the successful implementation of inclusive education in this country, as all the people in this specific system have to function within this system, and can be successfully facilitated by the educational psychologist. In this sense educational psychological consultation entails a move away from the individual approach in intervention, towards a whole system-approach in terms of assessment and support of all the factors (people) that have an influence on the daily life of the consulted – the learner with special educational need. These factors can be the school and all its sub-systems, the family, and/or the community, in other words the whole or total context in which the consulted (learner) lives (Moolla, 1996:26).

Educational psychologists already possess the necessary skills and personal characteristics acquired through their training, to act as effective systems consultants. These consultative skills and characteristics comprise the following, according to Jones and Frederick (1990) and Plas (1986) in Moolla (1996:26):

- Listening, which entails reflection, paraphrase, clarification and elaboration;
- Problem-solving, which involves problem identification, generating solutions, brainstorming alternatives, implementation, monitoring and evaluation;
- Non-verbal skills, which entail eye contact, avoiding nervous taking of notes, radiating calm concern and respect;
- Feedback;
- Patience and caring;
- Ability to keep one’s ego distant from the process;
- Self-control;
- Commitment;
- Adherence to ethical standards.
Authors like Burden (1981), Gillham (1980), Jones and Frederickson (1990), Conoley and Conoley (1982), Plas (1986), Reynolds and Gutkin (1984) and Wynne et al (1986) describe consultation as a non-supervisory, problem-solving relationship between professionals of differing fields, where the mode of interaction is accepting, non-judgemental and empathic. According to these authors the aim with consultation is:

- To achieve the most effective use of the own experience, skills and resources of the consultee;
- To enhance the problem-solving capacity of the consultee;
- To place the responsibility for change with the consultee;
- To assist the consultee to develop a heightened level of objectivity and a greater sense of self-efficacy in order to empower him to be more functional in the system. Within which he functions.

In addition Moolla (1996:23) lists the following goals of the consultation process:

- “Enskilling” and empowering the consultee in order to act independently whenever the situations which lead to problems arise again;
- Increasing the general level of functioning of the consultee, regardless of the presenting problem;
- To enhance the consultee’s growth and development of objectivity;
- Increasing the consultee’s problem solving skills;
- Enhancing the consultee’s coping skills;
- Empowering individuals, groups and the system as a whole;
- Increasing the consultee’s ability to freedom of choice;
- Empowering the consultee to take up his commitment to the choices they have made.

Jones and Frederick (1990) and Conoley and Conoley (1982) in Moola (1996:24) describe various types of consultation which may be employed in the educational psychological practice, individually or in systemic consultation, which are the following:

- **Mental Health Consultation.** This form of consultation recognises that not all behaviour is rationally motivated, as consultees’ subconscious minds may cause ineffectiveness in their work. Verbal or non-verbal assessment strategies are employed in analysing the motives and psychological make-up of the consultees,
and intervention strategies can include the creation of non-hierarchical, co-operative relationships, building skills and knowledge, and increasing self-esteem of the consultee.

- **Behavioural Consultation.** In a systemic consultation process the focus is on the consultee’s (learner’s) behaviour with the clear objective to improve the behaviour or performance of the consultee. In this instance a more direct, straightforward information-sharing approach is adopted. Behaviour skills to be developed by the consultee can include the defining of the problem, analysing the problem by defining the environmental variables which influence or instigate the problem, devising environmental manipulations to reduce the probability of continuance of the problem, and follow-up assessment. Behavioural consultation essentially adopts a problem-solving approach and requires collaboration between consultant and consultee – the learner and his caregivers, be they parents or teachers or family.

- **Agency-orientated Consultation.** The goal here is to assist the whole system in solving a problem. It is crucial that the consultant is not regarded as the one who will solve the problems, but rather as the one who will facilitate the system to reach it’s ideals and objectives. The consultant in this sense is viewed as an issue-specifier, group process resource person, and an objective, externally based problem manager.

- **Advocacy Consultation.** The consultant may find himself entering a battlefield during systemic consultation, where one group is fighting the other for greater benefits, and may recruit the consultant to take sides. It is therefore important that the consultant (educational psychologist) facilitates the common goal of the system, as presented by all the members of that system (the learner as well as his family and teachers), in order to be beneficial to everybody within the system, and therefore to the system as a whole. It is thus essential for the educational psychologist to remain aware of own bias and to retain neutrality in order to serve all the members’ interests and achieve benefit for all.

- **Process Consultation.** Here the consultant recognises overt and covert events occurring within the system, and acquires an understanding of the effect of these events on the productivity, morale and aims of the members of the system. In this type of consultation the consultant explores the interactions between the
members of the system, enhances their interactional skills, and improves their problem solving and decision making skills.

According to Moolla (1996:25), the process, agency and advocacy types of consultation may become more common in schools in South Africa, due to the rise of teacher unions, and to the emerging team approach to instruction, remediation and support services in schools.

It is however not possible to propose any one specific kind of the described types of consultation, as the consultative decisions have to be taken by the educational psychologist depending on the system within which the consultee (learner) finds himself – the barriers to learning which many learners with special educational needs are facing, rest as much within themselves as within the (family, school and community) systems in which they function on a daily basis (Gregg et al., 1996:13). As already indicated, traditionally the educational psychologist works with all these systems. This implies that a systemic approach to learner support for learners with special educational needs is vital, because it serves to -

- understand the development of learners in a more holistic and in interactive terms;
- understand the families, classrooms and schools as the systems within which the learner functions;
- understand how the origins and maintenance of, and solutions to social problems and special needs cannot be separated from the broader context and systems within which the learner functions (Donald et al., 2002:57).

In such a systemic approach applied by the educational psychologist, both the uniqueness as well as the diversity of the systems involved, are of vital importance.

The above necessitates a discussion on the systemic approach, which follows.

4. THE SYSTEMIC APPROACH

No individual exists in isolation, but is part of a system (context). A system is characterised and composed of sub-systems. A learner is also part of a system and its
sub-systems, for instance a family, with its sub-systems like siblings, and also a school with its sub-systems of teachers, classes, friends, and etcetera. The school itself is part of a broader system or context, namely the community in which it is situated. The work places and careers of the father and mother as well as their contributions to the community can also be seen as sub-systems of the community context. The whole system and the sub-systems are interconnected, interrelated and interdependent, and they all influence one another. In order to understand the phenomenon of a (any) learner with special educational needs, within his context, it is therefore necessary for the educational psychologist to conduct collaborative systemic consultation.

According to Donald et al. (2002:41) the systemic approach to consultation is currently influencing educational psychological theory, in terms of the fundamental viewpoint that people are influenced and shaped by their own social context, as much as that they in turn shape their own context in which they function. This circular link between individual and context can be described as the **ecosystemic** perspective in the social sciences.

The ecosystemic perspective’s main concern is to illustrate how individual people and groups of people at different levels of the social context are linked in **dynamic**, **interdependent** and **interacting** relationships. **Dynamic** in this sense means continually moving, shifting and interacting, as opposed to being static and fixed. **Interaction** in this sense suggests the way systems or phenomena influence each other – for example a community can influence the way a school functions, and the school in turn can influence the way the community functions. **Interdependent** in this sense suggests a situation where two or more systems or phenomena need each other for their physical survival or social functioning (Donald et al., 2002:44-45).

The **ecosystemic** perspective has evolved from a combination of the **ecological** and the **systems** theories. From the ecosystemic perspective, different levels of a system in the social context influence, and are influenced by one another in a continuous process of dynamic balance, tension, and interplay. A system can have sub-systems functioning within it at different levels. These influence the functioning of the system as a whole. For example a school as a system consists of sub-systems, e.g. the staff, consisting of a principal, head of departments, teachers, and other sub-systems e.g. learners and their parents. These systems and sub-systems also interact with other whole systems.
Donald et al (2002:45) give a useful example to understand ecological theory by comparing it with a spider’s web. The spider’s web is a whole, which indicates that anything that happens in any part of the web is felt in all the other parts. Donald et al (2002:45-46) further point out that it is crucial to take note of the notion of ecological dissonance when conducting systemic consultation. In this regard family dissonance was described as disharmonious family dynamics by Van Niekerk (1986), who highlighted the primary and essential role of the educational psychologist as the assessment and diagnosis of (the learner with any difficulty within his) disharmonious family context. When the relationships and cycles within the family as a “whole” context are in “harmony”, the individual segments of the system, as well as the whole system, can retain its equilibrium, its “harmony.” When there is dissonance, however, the relationships and interdependence may become so disturbed that the survival of the whole is threatened. It is this phenomenon that is crucial to be assessed by the educational psychologist in systemic consultation, to be able to establish harmony in the whole system (family) again.

A family is composed of different members who are in different relationships with one another; therefore although the family is composed of different individual members, it will tend to function in ways which preserve its own characteristic patterns as a whole. Individual members shape and are shaped by these patterns in a continuous process of dynamic tension and adjustment. If a tension arises in one part of the family, it affects the whole family, but the whole will tend to respond to this tension in terms of characteristic patterns and ways of functioning (Donald et al., 2002:47).

Systems characteristically have sub-systems within them, which interact with the whole. Sub-systems within the family system can consist of the grandparents, parents, and children, while the family as a whole, may interact with systems outside of it, like other families, a school, a church, the work places of the mother and the father, and so forth.

Within systems the occurrences and events are seen as triggering and affecting one another in cyclical, often repeated patterns, which are experienced as unwritten “rules” which govern the whole. These may bind the members to particular ways of relating to one another. For example, a pattern of “taking it out on others” might become
established in a classroom, because the teacher “takes it out” on certain children. These children then “take it out” on others, and their reactions “cause” the teacher to continue the pattern. In this way a vicious cycle is established. The more it is established, the more it becomes a “rule” of the way things happen, and are expected to happen, in that system (the classroom in this instance) (Donald et al., 2002:49). This functioning of the (family) systems and sub-systems have to be comprehended, as the phenomena to be studied by the educational psychologist.

For the educational psychologist practising systemic consultation, there are certain essential elements of a system which have to be taken into consideration in understanding the (family as) system. These include:

- **The goals and the values of the system.** A system’s obvious and openly stated goals and values, as well its hidden goals and values, influence and are influenced by the system. As an example Donald et al (2002:49) state that an open goal of a family could be to survive economically, but a hidden goal could be to maintain male domination within the family. In a school education the teaching and learning could be the openly stated goal, but a hidden, and also more powerful goal, could be to sustain authoritarian discipline and control in the school.

- **Sub-systems within the system.** It is important to be aware of the way in which sub-systems can influence the system and vice versa. Donald et al (2002:49) argue that different generations may constitute sub-systems within a family. One sub-system may also overlap with another sub-system, for example males and females within the same family. Classes may be sub-systems at school, but these may overlap with sub-systems based on gender or race.

- **Communication patterns within the system.** Communication patterns become established between the system as a whole and the systems outside of it as well as between the sub-systems within the system. Donald et al. (2002:49) say in this regard that communication between parents and children as sub-systems, may be unclear (mixed or contradictory messages) or indirect (not addressing the person concerned). This may create tension between these sub-systems, and dissonance within the whole system.

- **Roles within the system, their nature, and how they are defined.** It is important to take note of how roles are defined within the system, and how they
act in persevering the openly stated goals and particularly the hidden goals of the system, because this is an important feature of how the system functions as a whole. In this regard Donald et al (2002:49) mention as an example that family members may have a number of different roles that often overlap and are sometimes contradictory. Common roles may be as parent, child, income earner and nurturer. Contradiction may occur where a child, for instance, is expected to take the role of parent for the other siblings in the absence of the parents.

- **Boundaries between sub-systems, and between the system as a whole and the systems outside of it.** Donald et al (2002:50) state that how rigid, closed, flexible or open the boundaries around a system or sub-system are, affects its functioning in various ways. For example the openness or closedness of a school in relation to the local community in which it is situated may influence both its effectiveness and the community itself.

- **Time and development.** Systems also function in terms of time and development. Developmental changes within parts of the system influence the whole system. For example, the development of children from infancy to adulthood has profound effects on the way in which a whole family functions and develops at different stages (Donald et al., 2002:50). Developmental changes in one system also interact with developmental changes in other systems. Therefore families, schools and communities are systems, which change and develop continually. The nature of the development in the one system influences the nature of the development in the other system in continuous interacting cycles. According to Bronfenbrenner in Donald et al (2002:51-52) child development should be seen as occurring within the following four systems:

  **The microsystem** This consists of systems in which children are closely involved in various patterns of daily activities, roles, and relationships, e.g. family, school and the peer group.

  **The mesosystem.** At this level the peer group, school and family systems interact with each other. Therefore, what happens at home or in the peer group can influence how children give meaning to experiences and respond at school, and vice versa.

  **The exosystem.** At this level other systems in which the child is not directly involved, but which may influence him or may be influenced by his microsystems, are included. For example a brother/sister’s peer group, the parent’s workplace, their problems at work, and community events, may influence the child in some way.
The macrosystem. This level involves dominant social structures, as well as beliefs and values which influence and may be influenced by all other levels of systems. This is equivalent to the social system as a whole (Donald et al. 2002:50-53).

The above four systems all interact with the chronosystem (time system), which represents the interactions between the above-mentioned systems and their respective influences on individual development as they during separate developmental time frames. For example the family of a child may be in a process of developing itself, in terms of e.g. becoming economically more advanced over time. This ‘developmental’ process in turn interacts with the different stages of a child’s development, which occur at the same time as the family development (Donald et al., 2002:53).

With the above traditional and future roles of the educational psychologist in mind, within the systems approach of intervention (assessment as well as support), and within the inclusive education setting as described in Chapter 2, the role of the educational psychologist is provisionally proposed to be enlarged as follows, by other educational psychologists in the field, both locally and abroad. Pending the results of the empirical research in this regard to follow, the final proposal will be put forward in terms of a model for educational psychological support for learners with special educational need.

5. PROVISIONALLY PROPOSED ENLARGEMENT OF THE ROLE OF THE EDUCATIONAL PSYCHOLOGIST

As pointed out above, the educational psychologist has always worked with the family and the school system of the learner who experiences difficulties, or with special educational needs. It is still proposed by educational psychologists that the traditional role of the educational psychologist be maintained, but also be broadened in order for the educational psychologist to function as a collaborative systemic consultant, thereby placing more emphasis on group consultation with a preventative aim, and less on individual curative work, although individual work will always have to remain an integral part of educational consultation, as individual curative work will always have to be performed for those learners who require therapeutic support for their difficulties or barriers, within their context.
With the above description of the microsystem and the mesosystem also in mind, it is clear that the educational psychologist has traditionally worked on the level of both of these systems. Educational psychologists propose that the role of the educational psychologist should be enlarged to also include all of the above-mentioned systems. According to these psychologists, they should therefore work within the exosystem and the macrosystem too. These perspectives are described more fully underneath.

The traditional role, responsibilities and accountability of the educational psychologist have been extensively debated in South Africa and internationally. Locally it is pointed out that there is a great need for educational psychological service to become more accessible, practical and concrete. Moolla (1996:33) for instance points out that all psychological services traditionally have largely been curative in nature, with little emphasis on psycho-education and prevention of difficulties. It is argued that the scope of the educational psychologist's work should therefore be enlarged to enable him to also do systemic consultation as well as preventative work.

Van der Horn (1994) in Moolla, (1996:5) argues that in order to achieve appropriate service provision in education and mental health, a paradigm shift must be made towards an ecosystemic approach, which should include a health and solution-orientated focus and not only focus on the “illness” or problems of the individual (child) within the dissonant family context. Educational psychologists therefore should be willing to accept contributions to educational psychological theory from other social science fields, because that knowledge may prove to be relevant towards educational psychology (Donald et al., 1997:41). This ‘reconstruction’ of educational psychology needs to decrease the emphasis on individual work and to focus also on preventative and group work, and the enhancement of the school and family contexts for the sake of the well-being of the individual within that context – the learner with special educational needs. This may imply that the educational psychologist should aim his preventative work at the organisation, policy, and structure of schools (Moolla, 1996:5).

Nevertheless, this shift should not be totally away from individualistic curative work towards a systemic and preventative practice, but rather should educational psychology
broaden its traditional repertoire and focus more on preventative systemic consultation. This implies that other members in the education system, like teachers and principals, ought to broaden their own functioning too, in order to accommodate this collaborative consultant teamwork with the educational psychologist. In other words, the whole educational system towards learning and learner support should change in such a way as to empower the educational psychologist to work and function in a more efficient way, that is, to support learners with special educational needs more effectively, in terms of harmonising the dissonant or disharmonious educational context of the learner with special needs.

Burden (1993) in Moolla, (1996:5) however warns against the danger in creating this kind of paradigm shift in educational psychology, by pointing out that if educational psychologists do not maintain their traditional skills of individual intervention, their services can become impoverished and less effective. The paradigm shift and the change process must rather be characterised by enlarging educational psychologists’ repertoire and not by deskilling them, by e.g. hindering them from still performing individual intervention and focussing on the systems only. Since human systems are made up of individuals, such hindrance would render educational psychology service ineffective because systems cannot be changed without changing the individuals within that system.

The argument is therefore not for the abandonment of everything – the training, expertise and experience which educational psychologists already possess. It is, however, an argument for the incorporation and integration of the educational psychologists’ existing knowledge and expertise into a systemic consultation process.

The ‘new’ role of the educational psychologist will be to engage in preventative intervention, with learners with special needs, as well as with the systems in which these learners function, in order to prevent the development of barriers to learning. It is the educational psychologists’ responsibility to build protective (preventative) measures that will guard the (family and school) system from experiencing any dissonance, into the educational system. The educational psychologist will have to act as an agent of change within the whole educational system, that is, to consult with learners and their parents, as well as to consult with the education policy makers.
According to Donald et al. (2002:222-225) these key protective factors, which can be capitalised on by the educational psychologist for preventative actions, fall into three main categories:

- Personal or individual characteristics of a learner.
- Characteristics of a learner’s family.
- Characteristics of formal and informal social support networks within which the learner functions.

Each of these will be briefly discussed.

**Individual characteristics:** The following are some of the most important characteristics that should be developed in learners, by the educational psychologist through preventative intervention, in order to empower them to overcome the risks faced by them to develop barriers to learning, special educational needs, and to overcome their existing barriers to learning and development:

- Effective communication and problem-solving skills. These skills will empower learners to express their needs, thoughts and feelings and will also enable them to confront life problems. The acquisition of these skills will avoid them feeling overcome and helpless in the face of difficult situations.
- A positive self-concept, feeling of self-worth, and strong interpersonal skills. If learners feel good about themselves, they are empowered to engage actively and positively with their parents, peers and teachers.
- A strong internal locus of control linked to a sense of hope and future-directed goals. Without an internal locus of control, learners feel powerless and passively subjected to whatever powers may befall them. When they are convinced that they can be effective, it becomes possible for them to hope, to plan, and to set goals.

**Family characteristics:** Several studies have shown that a caring, supportive, and stable family is a key protective factor in the lives of learners who have been able to rise above their circumstances. The family characteristics that have been identified as being protective, are as follows:

- A healthy, caring relationship with at least one stable caregiver. According to Werner and Smith (1989) in Donald et al (2002:223) this element has been found to be
particularly important in infancy and early childhood. This relationship is usually with a mother or father, but it may not necessarily be the case. In many families in South Africa it is a grandmother or another relative who fulfils this role.

- A family who encourages competence and who supports the learner in developing skills and goals that link in with the broader social settings e.g. becoming involved in projects and other activities in the community.

- A family who has a strong, consistent and coherent set of values. These values can relate to a consistent set of expectations, rules, and structure within the family, and are also often in the form of a religious belief.

**Characteristics of social support networks:**

The following types of supportive networks have been shown to fulfil a protective function:

- The peer group. Acceptance, identity and values as accepted by the peer group can be crucial for the learner who lacks other support, such as family support. Since peers have a powerful influence on the development of any learner, the educational psychologist should therefore capitalise on this phenomenon in the rendering of support to learners with special needs.

- People beyond the family with whom the learner might identify as positive role models. According to Werner and Smith (1989) in Donald et al (2002:223) research has indicated that teachers and others who hold positions of social responsibility can frequently act as counsellors to learners and can have a positive influence on their self-concept

In the opinion of Moolla (1996:9) as well as Van der Hoorn and Adams (1994) educational psychology sadly has lacked the authority and power to shape its own future and that it has allowed itself to be prescribed to by educational policy debates about its interconnectedness with or relation to specialised education, school health, career education, the teaching of life skills, and the prevention of difficulties, barriers to learning, and of dissonant family dynamics. On the other hand Lazarus and Moolla (1995) point out that it is crucial for educational psychologists to be involved in and to participate in educational policy discussions and debates, because in failing to do this, educational (school) support services will be endangered to remain at the bottom of the educational policy agenda, and consequently could be declared redundant or be grossly decreased
during rationalisation of staff or services. This would have disastrous effects on those learners (with special needs) who are dependant on these services. The demise of the previous educational support services proved this case in point, because educational psychologists did not assert their expertise and right to deliver their specialised services, at the time when educational transformation took place (Moolla, 1996:9). Fortunately, the White Paper on Special Needs Education makes provision for educational support services within the inclusive educational policy, although it does not specify how these services are to be delivered (see Chapter 2). This may leave the field (of the educational psychologist as systemic consultant) open to the possibility to be drawn into a battlefield of power struggles between policy makers and service deliveries, as indicated above.

In this regard Moolla (1996:38), as well as Johnson and Johnson (1991), point out that power is a substantive issue in systemic consultation, since all human interaction involves power and influence, but that the issue of power should be part of the educational psychologist’s professional systemic intervention, that is, to empower learners and their caregivers to function harmoniously in their educational contexts. Therefore educational psychologists should not get themselves entangled in power struggles with policy makers and other role players in the educational context, but should be free to exercise their professional duties towards learners with special needs. In this regard Wynne et al (1986:33) state that “…becoming an unwitting agent to one side in a power struggle (which already exists within the system) is incompatible with effective professional consultation.” Systems consultation should focus on the constructive use of power and influence, for example, to increase co-operation among the members of a system and to enhance the system’s effectiveness. The educational psychologist, as a systemic consultant, should assist individuals and groups (learners and their parents and teachers) in the educational system to be aware of their power, to take responsibility for the implementation of this power, and to make sure that the power patterns in every educational system (family and school) are employed in a constructive manner, so as to build effective and harmonious relationships through collaboration.

Dowling and Osborne (1985) and Wynne et al (1986) specify the kind of questions that should be ask by the educational psychologist in systemic consultation in order to explore the power issues in each specific education system (family or school):
• Who makes the decisions?
• Are decisions made through consultation or imposition?
• Are there explicit rules related to new decisions?
• How are these rules communicated?
• Who constitutes the executive sub-system?
• Who are the key members of the system, and how will they be involved in shaping the goals and methods of the consultation?
• Who participates directly, and who indirectly?
• What are the important hierarchies, coalitions, triangles and boundary problems in the system?
• How do key individuals, different sub-systems, and the system as a whole perceive the consultant?

As a role player in the whole education system, and as an agent of change, the educational psychologist should address all the interrelated areas and problems within the system. One such area where the educational psychologist will have to play a major role, is in determining the number of children in an inclusive classroom, since this is just as important as the consideration of the individual differences of learners in order to provide quality education for all. Tiegerman-Faber and Radziewics (1998:131) argue that determination of the number of learners in an inclusive classroom depends on the individual needs of all the learners as well as on the collective needs of the classroom as a group or system. This will require the expert advice of the educational psychologist. They further point out that schools may have to base (inclusive) class size requirements on the instructional dynamics of that specific class, determined by both the individual needs of the learners in that classroom as well as by the learner dynamics within the (class) group or system as a whole. This renders the involvement of the educational psychologist crucial, because he is fully equipped by his training and skills to determine the (special) needs of all the learners in the classroom. Based on such findings, he would be able to determine how many learners (with or without special needs) a specific teacher would be able to handle in his classroom, by also taking into account the abilities of the specific teacher.
6. SUMMARY

In this chapter the traditional as well as the future role of the educational psychologist in learning support was discussed. It was specifically pointed out that the educational psychologist has always worked with the family and the school systems within which a learner with special needs functions, and as such the educational psychologist has always been implementing a systemic approach in his professional intervention. The systemic approach as such was also discussed.

In the next chapter the empirical research will be described.
CHAPTER 4
THE EMPIRICAL RESEARCH: EXECUTION AND RESULTS

1. INTRODUCTION

The aim of this chapter is to present a description of the execution and discussion of the empirical research, culminating in an integrated discussion of the results which emanated from the full research, including the literature study.

3. METHODOLOGY

2.1 QUALITATIVE RESEARCH

As indicated in Chapter 1, a qualitative research approach, in terms of an interpretative method of inquiry, was deemed necessary for the purpose of this study, which was aimed at the understanding of the specific phenomena of this study, namely learner support, the role of the educational psychologist in learner support, and the meaning that educational psychologists themselves attach to these aspects. As indicated in Chapter 1, the qualitative researcher is concerned with understanding a phenomenon rather than the explanation thereof, to which purpose observation of the phenomenon within its natural context, proves to be the best instrument (McRoy, 1995:2009-2015). The portrayal of such gained data are more likely to take the form of, for example, the transcribed text of interviews and conversations, autobiographical memoirs, or portfolios of case studies (Piantanida & Garman, 1999:133).

Also as indicated, Baumgartner and Strong (1998:174) state that in qualitative research there is an emphasis on the process of the research, and a focus on subjects’ attitudes, beliefs, and thoughts – in other words, how people (subjects) make sense of their experiences of the world. Qualitative research strategies enable the researcher to record and understand subjects on their own (subjective) terms. The strategies in this research therefore were aimed at recording and capturing the subjects’ experiences authentically – at the same time objectively (as the phenomenon speaks for itself in its natural setting) as well as subjectively, as the true authentic experiences and meanings
of the subjects. In this respect the qualitative approach is relevant for this study, since it focuses on understanding and portraying the phenomenon in this study, namely the reality of the educational psychologist’s authentic perception of and meaning attached to his role in learner support, subjectively as well as objectively.

As also indicated in Chapter 1, the qualitative researcher is of the opinion that the only reality, which exists, is that what is constructed by the participants involved in the research situation (De Vos, 1998:45). Thus multiple realities may exist in any research situation, namely as many as there are participants in the research. Furthermore, the qualitative researcher interacts with participants, attempting to minimise the distance between him and participants, so that participants may feel free and secure enough to openly and honestly relay their meanings and perceptions about their settings/contexts/situations. The relationship between researcher and participant in qualitative research is therefore quite different than in quantitative research. Researcher and participant are not merely the observer and the observed respectively, but the researcher may require the participant to check his interpretation of the data, to ensure that the researcher objectively (authentically) portrays the perspective presented by the participant (Struwig & Stead, 2001:17).

The researcher in this study gave each interviewee the opportunity to check the transcription of the interview, as well as his interpretation thereof, in order to establish whether it is a true (objective, authentic) reflection of the participant’s perceptions and meanings.

According to Holliday (2002:8) qualitative research:

- looks deep into the quality of the phenomenon that is studied. The aim of this study is to look deeply into the quality of learner support in South Africa as perceived by educational psychologists, and to propose a model for educational psychological learner support, based on the results of this “look”;
- locates the study within particular settings that provide opportunities for exploring all possible variables of the phenomenon. In this study the settings are the learning support centres in three provinces in South Africa;
- lets themes emerge. Analyses of the data in this study led to the identification of several common themes, which are presented below.
The instruments of enquiry used in this research are described next.

2.2 INSTRUMENTS OF INQUIRY
2.2.1 INTERVIEWS

The interview was chosen as data collection method because it enables the researcher to build trust relationships with the participants and thereby to ensure that authentic data be obtained. The following introduction to such an interview (Spradly, 1979:34) captures the spirit of what the researcher in this study wanted to convey to the interviewees about the aim of the interviews, concerning their views and perspectives on the role of educational psychologists in learner support:

“I want to understand the world from your point of view as far as your involvement in this issue goes. I want to know what you know in the way you know it. I want to understand the meaning of your experience, to walk in your shoes, to feel things as you feel them, and to be able to explain things as you explain them. Will you help me understand this?”

This would enable the researcher to come to an understanding about their perceptions and experiences concerning the role of educational psychologists in learner support.

In order to reach this understanding, the researcher needed to enquire the following information from the participants (interviewees), after the above introduction:

♦ how they are presently functioning as educational psychologists in the rendering of learner support;
♦ how they were appointed, and functioned, in the past, as well as at present;
♦ what their feelings and perceptions are about the changes that took place and about their present role in learner support;
♦ how they see their future role in learner support in South Africa.

The above would be elicited from the interviewees by way of a semi-structured questionnaire, containing the following open-ended questions:
♦ what kind of learners’ problems were referred to them by the schools, in the past as well as at present, for support for such learners;
♦ what kind of referral, diagnostic and support procedures were followed in the past and at present;
♦ what the learner support specifically, entailed in the past as well as at present;
♦ what kind of liaison, cooperation and referral systems exist, if at all, between the support centres and the schools, about learner support in general and about the specific learners who are referred to them;
♦ what kind of support services they were and are expected to deliver outside of learner support services;
♦ what kind of difficulties they experience now and in the past in the fulfilling of their duties;
♦ how they implement the White Paper on Special Needs Education, and what difficulties they experience in this regard, if any.

The semi-structured questionnaire would provide the opportunity for the researcher to conduct the interview in a personal conversational and trustworthy style, by initially putting the above open-ended questions to the interviewees, and if necessary, asking for clarification or putting forward some follow-up questions in relation to what they convey. In most of the interviews the interviewees spontaneously started talking directly after the introduction without elicitation through any of the above questions, and moreover provided all the necessary information without the need for further questions. The transcribed texts of the interviews are attached as Addendum A. The interviews, which were conducted in Afrikaans, are transcribed in Afrikaans, in order that the original meaning would not be lost in the English translation thereof. The interviews were all taped on audiotape and then transcribed into written text. As will be noticed in the transcriptions, the questions were not exactly formulated in the same way, sequence, or total number, in all the interviews, depending on the course and slant each interviewee would take in his presentation of the facts to the researcher. The transcriptions are therefore presented verbatim, with language deviations retained (therefore not linguistically correct in all instances), to present the data (phenomena) in their most authentic form, as the literal utterances of the subjects’ personal views, perspectives and meanings.
2.2.2 OBSERVATION

Participant observation was also implemented as a means of collecting data for the purposes of this study, and was applied during the interviews, which enabled the researcher to obtain a holistic interpretation of the phenomenon investigated – the participants’ perceptions together with the factual data provided by them, as observed to be by the observer, and written down as field notes. This entailed that the researcher was accompanied by a participant observer to the interviews, who also acted as the co-researcher, to observe and write down (as field notes) the proceedings and to correlate his observations and field notes with the researcher afterwards, to ensure that all the data were fully and correctly observed and transcribed. This co-researcher also assisted with the coding of the themes. (See paragraph 3 further down.)

2.3. SAMPLE GROUP

In qualitative research the issue of sampling is concerned with gaining access to relevant data about the phenomenon. The two key concepts here are access, which reflects a practical availability concern, and relevance, which reflects a validity concern.

Struwig and Stead (2001:111) describe convenience sampling of subjects, as sampling on the basis of availability. Subjects are selected because they are accessible and articulate. They (Struwig & Stead) also describe judgement sampling as a sample selected on the basis of expert judgement, exercised by the researcher who is the expert in his field and therefore is in the position to choose what he believes to be the best sample for the aims of that particular study. Moreover, purposive sampling is the selection of a sample group that is rich in data, in order to gain in-depth data and to come to an understanding of the phenomenon under study (Patton, 1990; 169).

In this study the researcher made use of a combination of judgement sampling, convenience sampling and purposive sampling, for the reasons described here. He specifically had to make use of the convenience sample, because subjects (educational psychologists) who were readily available and accessible, had to be targeted.
Since the aim of the study is to obtain and provide guidelines for a new educational psychological model for learner support in the education system in South Africa, educational psychologists presently employed at various provincial governmental learner support centres were selected for the sample group, to be interviewed, providing that they had to have been employed as educational psychologists in support centres in the previous educational dispensation too, in order for them to be able to reflect on their past as well as present working conditions and methods in learner support. Moreover, not all of the departments of education provide(d) such learner support centres; therefore the sample necessarily could only be drawn from those provinces that do.

From these ‘available’ provinces the researcher obtained the names of all the centres in these provinces, and thereafter established which of the psychologists employed at these centres comply with the above condition for participation (employment as educational psychologists in the previous as well as present education dispensation). From these selected psychologists the researcher had to establish which of them were readily accessible and willing to participate in the research.

Also determining the number of participants in the convenience sampling, was that it was necessary to liaise with and access the psychologists via ‘gatekeepers’, that is, the managerial staff of these centres, with whom the researcher was acquainted and who were willing to provide permission and admission to the researcher to interview the educational psychologists at that centres, with the necessary past and present experience in learner support.

Travel expenses were also a matter of convenience concern to the researcher, as the researcher had to travel to the centres in the various provinces to personally conduct the interviews with the participants.

Eventually the following three provinces were selected for data collection purposes, as a result of convenience, judgement and purposive sampling:

- Gauteng
- Western Cape
- Eastern Cape
Gauteng was selected because it is one of the provinces that have already made progress on the implementation of the White Paper on Special Needs Education. Redeployment of and the absorption of educational psychologists from the previous educational support centres into district-based support teams were already happening in Gauteng. Gauteng is also the province where most of these support centres were previously situated. Moreover they are (still) situated in the urban areas where schools are clustered together in close proximity, and services therefore readily available and accessible, and where learners from mostly the previous model C schools are accommodated (see Chapter 2).

The Eastern Cape was selected because this province is the ‘poorest’ province in the country, which would presumably bring balance to the results in terms of provincial provision for learner support. As this province also is the province where the researcher has been rendering personal professional educational support for a considerable time and is familiar with most of the psychologists employed in the provincial departmental support centres, it was easy to gain access to participants in this province.

The Western Cape was selected because a gatekeeper at the Western Cape Department of Education was available through whom access to participants could be obtained and arranged, at centres that already are delivering service in learner support. (The research in this province could also be combined with other professional duties of the researcher, in that province at that specific time, which would save on travelling costs.)

The gatekeepers in these three provinces identified fifteen participants (educational psychologists) altogether, who were willing to participate in the research and who eventually all did.

4. EXECUTION OF THE RESEARCH

The researcher and the co-researcher interviewed the 15 participants. The interviews were audiotape recorded and transcribed, together with the observations as written
down in the field notes, by both the researcher and co-researcher independently. The transcribed texts were taken back to the interviewees to establish whether the transcriptions were true (authentic) reflections of the interviews in terms of the respondents’ perceptions; in other words, whether the content of the transcriptions were valid.

The researcher, co-researcher, as well as another independent coder, each transcribed and coded the texts separately, as an integrated version of the interviews and the observations, into identified common themes. Thereafter a meeting was held and consensus reached about the identified themes. As described in Chapter 1, the procedure of co-opting an independent coder and a co-researcher, was built into the study by the researcher to protect the results from bias and self-delusion on the part of the researcher. This consultation and the checking of individual findings were performed for the purposes of research triangulation, to ensure that the findings were not a biased reflection of the results; therefore to ensure that true phenomenological research was performed.

The coding of the data is described in Addendum B.

4. RESULTS OF THE EMPIRICAL RESEARCH

After being coded, the following common themes emerged from the data obtained from all the interviews, and are presented in terms of the education dispensations of before and after 1994 respectively:

BEFORE 1994:

- The educational psychologists in this study are of the opinion that working methods of educational psychologists were characterised by professional conduct and ethics, which included a multi-disciplinary team approach.
- There were supportive, well-defined empowering structures in place, like adequate transport arrangements and the necessary administrative structures, to assist and enable educational psychologists and other professionals functioning within the educational support centres, to perform their duties.
• Workloads were manageable before the amalgamation of the different educational departments in the country.

**AFTER 1994:**

• After the amalgamation, confusion about working methods and the roles of the perspective different (educational and other) professionals employed at these centres became apparent.

• The educational psychologists are of the opinion that there is no understanding and appreciation of the value and the role of educational psychology in learner support, by the ‘new’ (amalgamated) Department of Education.

• The seeming ignorance of educational psychology as profession by the Department of Education is deemed by the educational psychologists to be problematic.

• Staff shortages (of educational psychologists) hamper educational psychologists’ ability to function adequately.

• The educational psychologists are of the opinion that their new duties concerning teacher training in Teacher Support Team projects, are too time consuming and not relevant to their professional role as psychologists.

• They experience the training and functioning of these Teacher Support Teams as problematic – inadequate to provide in the needs of all learners.

• The educational psychologists feel disempowered to do their jobs.

• They state that they do not have time to do preventative work with learners who experience barriers to learning.

• Their compulsory involvement in the community, at the cost of school service delivery, is perceived as problematic.

• They are convinced that schools still need the involvement of educational psychologists as professional service deliverers.

• They also are convinced that individual learner support is still necessary and very relevant in the new educational dispensation that caters for all learners with or without special educational needs.

• The qualifications required by the Department of Education for appointment as educational psychologists, are not sufficient for the professional services that are required.
Next, each of these results of the research, are discussed in terms of the implications thereof.

5. DISCUSSION OF THE RESULTS

- The educational psychologists in this study are of the opinion that before 1994 the working methods of educational psychologists were characterised by professional conduct and ethics, which included a multi-disciplinary team approach.

All the interviewees indicated that their work was characterised by high standards of professional conduct and ethics in the past. They worked in multi-disciplinary teams, and discussed cases and intervention strategies in official meetings. The keeping of records and reporting back on cases were held in high esteem. Everyone knew what to do and what was expected from them – they went to schools and assessed learners’ emotional, intellectual, behavioural, social and learning needs.

After this assessment process the case was always discussed in a multi-disciplinary team, where after they rendered the necessary learner support for these diagnosed needs. They also rendered the necessary parent guidance and teacher guidance, in order to support the parents and teachers to cope with the diagnosed needs and to guide the education process. Afterwards there always was report back to the multi-disciplinary team on the progress made. They also did preventative work at schools, in terms of presenting short training workshops on the identification of learners’ needs within the classroom by teachers.

These results are a confirmation of the description in the White Paper on Special Needs Education of the roles of educational psychologists employed at educational support centres, as described in Chapter 2, as well as of the traditional roles of the educational psychologist, as described in Chapter 3.

This implies that the role of the educational psychologists in learner support was acknowledged and held in high esteem by previous educational departments. The role of
the educational psychologist was clearly defined and described in education policy documents of the education dispensation before 1994, as described in Chapter 2.

- There were supportive, well-defined empowering structures in place before 1994, like adequate transport arrangements and the necessary administrative structures, to assist and enable educational psychologists and other professionals functioning within the educational support centres, to perform their duties.

The interviewees are in agreement that educational psychologists could function optimally in the education dispensation before 1994, because of the fact that administrative and functional structures were in place that empowered them to perform their duties professionally. Especially the transport arrangements were adequate, so that they were always able to get to the school where their appointments were scheduled for that day, or when urgently therapeutic intervention was suddenly required. Most of the interviewees had a governmental car allocated to them for their exclusive use; others received a travelling grant to enable them to visit the schools.

Administrative structures designed to assist the educational psychologists in the carrying out of their duties, were well planned and in place. Referrals from schools were received on a prescribed form. The secretary at the centre opened and kept files for each case – every specific learner with his unique difficulties, needs, diagnosis, and support programme. Cases were discussed at regular multi-disciplinary meetings and allocated to staff members (educational psychologists). After each ‘case’ was finished, the file was closed by the educational psychologist and handed back to the secretary for filing. Secretaries also assisted in the making of appointments and other administrative work, like the typing and mailing of reports to schools and the parents of each learner. This enabled the educational psychologist to focus on his educational psychological duties only and not on administrative work. These results are a confirmation of the literature findings in Chapters 2 and 3.

The above-mentioned structures enabled the educational psychologist to function optimally. An inclusive educational system, as indicated by White Paper 6, implies that administrative and other empowering structures are essential for educational
psychologists to function effectively. In fact, the inclusive education system validates the educational psychologist's role as it traditionally was, as well as broadens the role towards a systemic consultant and preventative counsellor.

The new dispensation which brought other physical constraints indicated above, like transport constraints, also disempower them to do their jobs. One interviewee told the researcher that a school recently phoned her for urgent attention to a learner threatening to commit suicide. She (the psychologists) struggled for more than two hours just to get hold of a government vehicle to drive to the school. Other interviewees told the researcher that the Department failed to pay their electricity bills at the support centre, which caused prolonged periods of delay in their professional and administrative work. They also did not regularly receive the necessary stationery, or funding to buy their own needed stationery, rendering it impossible to type reports and letters. For a long period also the department did not maintain their equipment like computers and photocopiers, forcing them to bring their own private equipment from home and drive in their own private cars to schools, in order to be able to perform their professional duties.

The implication of the 'new' role of educational psychologists is that they will need even more administrative and logistical assistance to carry out these broadened duties. The designing and implementation of a full range of empowering structures and the acknowledgement of the importance of the role of the educational psychologist in learner support, by the national Department of Education, is vital, if the policy of inclusive education is to succeed.

- **Workloads were manageable before the amalgamation of the different educational departments in the country.**

The interviewees pointed out that their workloads were manageable before the amalgamation of the different educational departments into one national educational department. This, and the fact that their roles were acknowledged in learner support, together with the support structures being in place, enabled them to experience job satisfaction and to be able to make a difference in the lives of learners with special educational needs, their parents, and the teachers of those learners.
Some interviewees indicated that in their opinion one educational psychologist for every 500 learners would be adequate. However, at present they each had plus minus ten schools for which they were responsible, for one level of support only, for instance only emotional or only scholastic support. In the previous dispensation in most instances there were two educational psychologists responsible for every school; one who specialised in emotional and behaviour difficulties, and one who specialised in learning and scholastic difficulties. Those educational psychologists referred and cross-referred cases to colleagues at the multi-disciplinary meetings of the support centres, for instance to a speech and hearing therapist, who also were allocated one each to every school.

As the quality of learner support depends on the workload of the educational psychologist, it is clear that an over-worked educational psychologist cannot render effective learner support to learners and their teacher, as well as parental support, as it is required by the inclusive educational system, as described in the white Paper on Special Needs Education. A manageable workload for educational psychologists in the new educational dispensation therefore is still, as it was in the past, of utmost importance to ensure effective learner support, and should therefore receive the attention and acknowledgement from the Department of Education.

- **After the amalgamation, confusion about working methods and the roles of educational psychologists became apparent.**

The interviewees are of the opinion that the amalgamation of the different departments of education into one National Department of Education caused confusion about their roles and working methods. The fact that newly appointed learner support staff are not all educational psychologists, caused a decline of the standards of professional service delivery. Apparently it is difficult to find consensus among the amalgamated departments’ support staff, on what the best working methods would be. As indicated in Chapter, 2 the best-staffed and resourced department of education was the one that serviced the white population. Of these departments of education the Transvaal Education Department had the most comprehensive model of learner support in place. Some of the other provinces’ departments of education not always even had educational psychologists on their staff; some only had a clinical psychologist on their staff. Others had none. The result of the amalgamation of all the departments of education was that
the role of the educational psychologist in learner support was not acknowledged, because it was unfamiliar to the other departments from the previous dispensation. An aggravating factor is that the White paper on Special Needs Education rejects the medical model of support in terms of individual support, which was what educational psychologists mostly did because it rendered the most effective results in terms of a faster improvement in learner achievement and progress.

The literature findings in Chapters 2 and 3 also indicate that although professional intervention has to move away from the medical (individual) model as model of service, towards a more preventative community focussed model, the medical model and individual work will always have a place in an inclusive educational model, since learners with special needs all still have individual needs which have to be individually met, in order to improve their scholastic performance and progress. In the previous dispensation, in the more privileged departments of education, the head of the educational support centre usually was an educational psychologist. At present, the head of learner support is not necessarily an educational psychologist, who may not have the appreciation for or the knowledge of the modi operandi of educational psychologists. Therefore this person cannot fully make use of the expertise of the educational psychologist in his service. This may lead to learners with special educational needs to be neglected.

- **The educational psychologists are of the opinion that there is no understanding and appreciation of the value and the role of educational psychology in learner support, by the ‘new’ (amalgamated) Department of Education.**

The interviewees are of the opinion that the educational officials do not understand the role that the educational psychologist can play in learner support and in educational guidance in general. Therefore they cannot value the contributions that educational psychologists can make to the educational system.

They also indicate that whereas the educational support centres had previously functioned as a recognised unit of learner support, they now are absorbed into the different provincial districts, where the head of that district support team not necessarily
is an educational psychologist. This implies that these heads of the district support teams may be ignorant about educational psychology and the role of educational psychologists in learner support. It is also indicated in the results that these heads also exhibit a lack of understanding the role and function of the educational support centres, and as they have no experience of the functioning of these centres previously as they were not involved or employed in such positions, they also are ignorant of the fact that the previous tried and tested model of support centres may successfully be adapted to be applicable in the new dispensation.

- **The seeming ignorance of educational psychology as profession by the Department of Education is deemed by the educational psychologists to be problematic.**

The interviewees indicate that because of the fact that their superiors do not understand the function and role of an educational psychologist and therefore do not have any appreciation for their contribution and possible input as far as learner, teacher and parent support goes, they find themselves appointed to all kinds of administrative and other menial jobs, that any other (untrained) person could have performed. They are of the opinion that they are given tasks that do not justify their highly specialised skills and training, for example the monitoring of school exams and of the feeding scheme in schools.

The interviewees indicate that although the White Paper on special Needs education stress the importance of the identification of barriers to learning and of support of learners with special educational needs, it does not materialise into practice, due to the lack of insight in this regard on the part of the officials.

Furthermore in this regard, the interviewees indicate that barriers to learning are not always identified by persons with the necessary professional training and expertise. They feel that there is a lack of interest in and acknowledgement on the part of these officials, of what really is the core content of educational psychological learner support.

Educational psychological professionalism and conduct are also neglected, they feel, in the sense that record keeping seemed to have gone out of vogue, and that the
assessment of learners’ needs and difficulties is performed haphazardly. The researcher found one of the interviewees in a state of panic, because on arrival at her office she found that all her files and records were missing, and that her office had been allocated to an administrative person, without notice. She subsequently was unable to perform her duties. She was in such a panic that she requested the researcher to accompany her to her superior to enquire about the matter. This official is not a psychologist at all, and could not understand what the issue was about. Even after the educational psychologist had explained to the official that the Health Professionals Council of South Africa requires psychologists to keep records, and that she needs the files to write reports, he still did not understand the matter.

Another interviewee said that all of his time was taken up by monitoring the matric examination; he had to hand out exam scripts, take them in, put them in alphabetical order, and had to monitor the whole examination process in order to see that everything was done according to regulations. Apart from these tasks, he spends twenty-five percent of his time on administrative tasks, and forty percent on the feeding scheme. Consequently he has little or no time for educational psychological intervention and learner support.

Some interviewees also state that they are prohibited from doing any individual intervention or to carry out any educational psychological assessment, but they still are requested to perform school placements, sometimes even without the necessary investigation. Often they have to rely on only the teacher’s version of the case.

Incidents like these as well as the apparent ignorance of what an educational psychologist is capable of may cause learner support to deteriorate up to the level of total disfunctionality. The foundation of learning support in an inclusive educational system, on sound educational psychological intervention, is clearly not the case.

- **Staff shortages (of educational psychologists) hamper educational psychologists’ abilities to function adequately.**

The interviewees indicate that severe staff shortages hamper their ability to render adequate professional learner support. They state that vacancies that still exist for
educational psychologists are not filled. When educational psychologists resign or retire, they are not replaced. One of the interviewees states that there were 12 educational psychologists at their centre before the amalgamation. Now they have only three, while their workload has increased tremendously. The amalgamation brought about a heavier workload at the existing centres, because all the schools of the other departments have now been incorporated into districts, that have to serve all the schools geographically designated to that district. Thus, although they already have a heavy workload due to the fact that no vacancies are filled, their work is intensified by the incorporation of all schools in the vicinity of one district into the support centres of that district. This causes educational psychologists not to be able to function properly. They report in this regard that there are clients who have to wait longer than a year for an appointment at any centre, as indicated by long waiting lists at the centres. One interviewee states that after the incorporation of the schools from the other departments into districts, the educational psychologists at that centre are now responsible for the support of 100 000 learners, while the number of educational psychologists at that centre has decreased from twelve to five. This caused a decline in the quality of the service that they render. This stands in stark contrast to the tenet in the White Paper, that inclusive education is founded on the basis of quality support structures.

• The educational psychologists are of the opinion that their new duties concerning teacher training in Teacher Support Team projects, are too time consuming and not relevant to their professional role as psychologists.

Although the interviewees acknowledge that they have a role to play in in-service training projects of teachers and in support strategies like the HIV/AIDS project, they find these projects to be too time consuming and an extra burden on them; to such an extent that they cannot render their primary duty – that of quality educational psychological support to learners, teachers and parents. They find that the new dispensation has brought many new different projects, most of which do not need the involvement of an educational psychologist, for example the feeding scheme and the monitoring of the examination process. Furthermore they are not in a position to take a stand to protect themselves from tasks that other people in the department could be performing, mostly because their superiors are not educational psychologists who understand the work of an educational psychologist.
The implication of this workload over and above their ordinary duties as psychologists, is that quality learner support will suffer and is already suffering due to the ignorance about educational psychologists’ expertise.

- **Educational psychologists experience the training and functioning of Teacher Support Teams as problematic.**

In line with The White Paper, educational psychologists are currently establishing Teacher Support Teams (TST). These teams will be the first line of referral for learner support at schools. The establishment of these teams encompass the training of teachers to identify problems and to render support, in school where the barriers to learning, or special needs, arise. The educational psychologists are an inherent part of the TST’s. However, the interviewees indicate that there are numerous problems in the establishment of the TSTs. Teachers are already overworked in their classes and in the school system as a whole, and some of them (the teachers) feel that the TST is another burden to carry. They do not have the necessary training to do this work and some are not interested or willing to be taught by the educational psychologists. Some of the interviewees openly declared that it is as impossible task to train teachers in such a serious matter in a few workshops only, because the knowledge of teachers about special educational needs and the identification of barriers to learning range from very limited to totally inadequate. Subsequently their ability to be retrained and to function adequately on a TST pose an extreme, close to impossible, challenge. Most of the interviewees are of the opinion that the TST’s will never work, due to these encumbrances.

At the schools where there are already established and well-functioning TST’s in place, they find that the cases (learners with special needs) that are referred to them by the team are of such a serious nature, that it needs the intervention of an educational psychologist. They state that in practice they have to do much more than just guide the TST, but they have to perform the intervention themselves in any case. In fact, most of the cases that are referred to the support centres from the TST’s, are extremely serious cases and not just moderate cases that the TST themselves could handle. It is also pointed out that teachers are depressed and that they are not emotionally healthy. Thus
when they have to face anything that they see as an extra, it usually is the last straw that breaks the camel’s back, and causes teachers to break down.

The interviewees also indicate that teachers’ knowledge and abilities to function in inclusive settings, as well as their skills to identify barriers to learning and learners with special educational needs, are very poor or non-existing. In most instances they cannot cope with the demands of an inclusive classroom, because their training was not based on an inclusive educational model. The interviewees state that they sometimes find the lack in teachers’ knowledge and skills to be of such a nature that a few workshops on how to identify problems in the classroom as well as the skills to serve on the TST, is not sufficient to get them to an acceptable level where they can cope. Some of these teachers even lack basic teaching skills, and to get them to a level where they can identify problems in the classroom, poses to be a daunting, close to impossible, task. In the opinion of the interviewees.

This, in turn, leads to the fact that they do not have time for preventative actions. Moreover, this state of affairs may also strengthen the notion in the Department of Education that educational psychologists should be appointed for the sole purpose of the training of TST’s at schools, because the existing teaching staff cannot cope with the learners in their classes experiencing special educational needs.

- **The educational psychologists feel disempowered to do their jobs.**

The interviewees pointed out that they feel disempowered by their superiors to do educational psychological assessments and intervention. They feel that the issue of learner support for learners with special educational needs is neglected due to this fact. Another interviewee indicated that she had ten schools allocated to her in the past. Now she has 65 schools in addition to all the extra responsibilities that she must handle. She finds it impossible to cope.

They also express their frustration because of the fact that they are prohibited from rendering quality educational psychological assistance to learners, parents and teachers. As a result they feel that their professional dignity has been violated, which causes further feelings of depression, demotivation and helplessness. They state that
they were not consulted when all the changes were made, and furthermore are not consulted when professional decisions regarding each case of service delivery are decided upon by their superiors. This lack of recognition of their expertise and professionalism in terms of a lack of autonomy to decide upon and to perform their professional duties as only they themselves know how to, is a great concern to all, creating a fear that the presiding state of conditions will have a negative impact on the very people they were originally appointed to serve: learners with special educational need.

- The educational psychologists state that they do not have time to do preventative work with learners who experience barriers to learning.

The White Paper on Learners with Special Educational Needs states that preventative work is essential. The interviewees indicate that it is impossible to do preventative work, since schools have a dire need of (educational psychological) professional services to address existing problems, like the HIV/AIDS problem in schools. This need is aggravated by the severe reduction of professional staff at the support centres, in relation to the number of schools.

Although educational psychologists are equipped to perform preventative counselling, due to their specialised training in learner development, the interviewees indicate that they do not have time to give attention to this aspect of their work, mostly because of too heavy workloads and other projects that they are involved in, as described above.

This implies that one of the vital aims of the White Paper, namely the prevention of barriers to learning, cannot be put into place. Preventative actions by the educational psychologist, within the present inclusive educational system, should be viewed as very important and cannot be neglected, if the Department of Education is serious about the success of the implementation of inclusive education in South Africa.
• Their compulsory involvement in the community, at the cost of school service delivery, is perceived as problematic.

The White Paper indicates that community involvement of professionals in private practice, especially in terms of parental involvement, is important, also in the rendering of learner support. The interviewees are however of the opinion that this can be problematic, and can only be feasible for parents who can pay the fees of a professional in private practice from the community. Professionals in private practice, like (educational) psychologists, cannot be expected to render their professional services without payment, because they are dependent on their income.

The interviewees mention that some of the professionals in private practice are willing to assist school support centres by charging a special lower fee than usual and some are also willing to see (only) a few learners free of charge. But in spite of this ‘availability’ of private professional services, the range and depth of specific problems that learners experience, e.g. learners with poor sight and who need glasses, are still too big for these few private professionals who are willing to render their services free of charge, so that effective services are still not delivered to learners with special educational needs. Moreover, the ‘vital’ services of the Department of Health, like clinic sisters’ visits to schools, have been terminated. Consequently learners are not screened any more as a matter of course as in the previous dispensation, to prevent and to identify primary health problems like sight, hearing and feeding problems. The interviewees point out that there is a big discrepancy between the needs of such learners, the services that are available, and what parents can afford to pay for. The interviewees are of the opinion that this is especially the case regarding educational psychological, occupational, and speech therapy services. The implication of this problem is that the Department of Education may come to be held liable by parents for the remuneration of such private professionals in the community whom they had to consult for the services needed by their children.

An aggravating factor as pointed out by the White Paper itself, is that this suggestion concerning community involvement cannot be met, especially in rural areas, because there are fewer services available than in urban areas. Some professionals who are willing to do so, are already providing extra services by combining a couple of towns to
which they travel on a regular basis, and are therefore not eager to donate their services to further free community commitments.

- **They are convinced that schools still need the involvement of educational psychologists as professional service deliverers.**

Due to staff shortages and the fact that they are now allocated various other tasks, the educational psychologists do not have sufficient time to perform the services schools require, such as educational psychological assessment of and intervention for learners with special educational needs. This lack of time results in the accumulation of backlogs of cases that they still have to attend to over and above all their newly allocated tasks, a situation which has had a further negative snowball effect, to the extent that their educational psychological services had to be scaled down, in favour of these new tasks.

The interviewees indicate that this state of affairs led to the more affluent schools of their own accord appointing private educational psychologists on their staff to render the required learner, teacher and parental support. In their opinion this is unfair to the majority of schools in this country that cannot afford to go this route. Some of the interviewees point out that parents could sue the government for neglect, because they do not provide the necessary official learner support for learners with special educational needs, as indicated above already.

- **The educational psychologists are convinced that individual learner support is still necessary and very relevant in the new educational dispensation that caters for all learners with or without special educational needs.**

The interviewees all are of the opinion that individual assessment is still necessary in order to identify each learner’s unique (special) needs and to plan and provide the necessary support for that specific needs. They emphasise that it is potentially dangerous to give advice of only a general nature, if a proper assessment had not been performed – learners’ specific needs may go unidentified and may be aggravated over time if left unattended, and may even develop into barriers to learning. In the new educational dispensation it is envisaged by the White Paper that the role of inter alia the
educational psychologist should be retained, to identify all possible barriers to learning that may have a detrimental effect on learners, and contribute to the development of special educational needs in such learners. This fact implies a systemic approach, where any barriers to learning should be identified within, as well as from within the systems that learners are functioning in. Moreover, to successfully enable the educational psychologist to address all barriers to learning, individual assessment and support of all the systems within which such learners function, is necessary. Preventative support will be futile and may even hamper learner development if not approached from an individual perspective too.

- The qualifications required by the Department of Education for appointment as educational psychologists, are not sufficient for the professional services that are required.

In the previous dispensation the requirements for appointment in a post at an educational support centre were a MEd degree and registration as psychologist with the former Medical Board. These requirements have now been lowered to an ‘applicable’ B Ed degree, which may not even always encompass training in learners with special educational need. This may have major implications for learner support in the new educational dispensation, since inclusive education actually requires more, and more specialised, support of learners with special needs, than in the previous dispensation, which only properly trained and qualified professionals can provide. Thus the lowering of appointment standards and requirements may yet prove to be disastrous for effective learner support and for the success of inclusive education.

As also indicated above already, the heads of district-based support centres are not necessarily qualified psychologists any more, or registered with the Health Professional Council of South Africa (the former Medical Board). As also described, this position holds serious implications for service delivery to learners with special needs. Furthermore, professional decisions on service delivery being taken by any person other than a professional and registered psychologist, will lead to ethical ramifications in terms of Education Department staff that may be sued for unethical and unallowed treatment of conditions reserved for the treatment of professional only.
Some interviewees suggest that in order to prevent such conditions arising, each primary as well as secondary school should have an educational psychologist on its staff, to prevent malpractices of the kind described above, and so that learner support can be put back on track again in the new education dispensation in South Africa, and also to prevent more serious barriers to learning from developing, as it will result in learners' problems and needs to be identified and addressed at primary level, before they can develop into more serious and long-lasting barriers to learning. Some other interviewees believe that there should be one educational psychologist appointed for every three schools.

Next, the above-integrated results will be discussed as the **findings** of the research, in terms of further deducted common themes from the already identified themes presented above as the results of the research, as the most apparent and uppermost issues appearing from the above results. These themes can be identified as –

- Autonomy
- Training and qualifications
- Professional Practice approach
- The roles of educational psychologists

7. **FINDINGS**

6.1 **AUTONOMY**

From the above discussion of the results of the empirical research as well as the literature study, it is clear that the educational psychologist had autonomy before the amalgamation of the different departments of education into one national Department of Education. They could take professional decisions about intervention strategies on their own and they discussed their actions in multi-professional teams.

The results of the empirical research indicate that their superiors deprived educational psychologists of their autonomy, after the amalgamation of the departments of education into the one Department of Education. The new superiors of the educational psychologists apparently have little understanding and no appreciation of the role of
educational psychology or the educational psychologist, in the prevention and identification of barriers to learning and the rendering of support to learners, parents and teachers. Psychologists are instead allocated all kinds of tasks that fall outside the professional domain of educational psychology, resulting in limited time to fulfil their educational psychological role in learner support.

As the success of inclusive education relies on a professional basis for learner support, this misunderstanding and denial of the role of the educational psychologist by the National Department of Education, is alarming and potentially detrimental to learners with special educational needs.

Furthermore, to enable the educational psychologist to function as a systemic collaborative consultant, within the inclusive educational system, as described in Chapters 3 and 2 respectively, his autonomy ought to be recognised and reinstated in the new educational dispensation, preferably through the establishment of a psychological model for learner support in such a setting.

6.2 TRAINING AND QUALIFICATIONS

The results of the empirical research and literature study point out that an MEd degree and registration as educational psychologist with the former Medical Board of South Africa (now The Health Professional Council of South Africa) was required for appointment as an educational psychologist in the previous departments of education. This requirement has now been lowered by the Department of Education to a BEd qualification.

This is alarming because the demands on the educational psychologist are even higher than in the previous dispensation, due to the requirements of inclusive education as far as learner support is concerned. Furthermore, these demands on learner support have broadened the role of the educational psychologist to such a extent that it is impossible to expect staff who hold only a BEd degree, to cope with these demands. As also indicated, this state of affairs may even be unethical in nature and to the detriment of learners, as unqualified and untrained staff may cause even more barriers and deterrents to learners' development.
Fully qualified and registered educational psychologists therefore appears to be a prerequisite for effective and ethically sound learner support in inclusive education, and should therefore be built into an educational psychological model of service delivery to learners with special educational needs, within an inclusive education setting.

6.3 PROFESSIONAL PRACTICE APPROACH (assessment; support; logistical arrangements)

It is clear from the empirical research and the literature review that in the previous dispensation the educational psychologists’ working methods in terms of assessment and support represented high standards of ethics and professionalism. There were also support structures in place in the support centres, in terms of administrative and logistical structures, that enabled them to perform professionally.

Moreover their superiors were educational psychologists themselves, who supported them in their professional functioning. Also, in case of emergencies, they could intervene rapidly and efficiently, due to all arrangements that were in place and functioned effectively.

After the amalgamation of the departments the above changed drastically, as indicated, in terms of a reduction in the appointment of and posts for educational psychologists, an increase in workloads not related to the domain of psychologists, a lowering of employment requirements, a lowering of standards of professional support, and a decrease in administrative and logistical services.

The factor with seemingly has the most serious effect on the functioning of the psychologists, is that the heads of the support centres no longer are educational psychologists, to provide empathy to the educational psychologists like before, for the demands of educational psychological services. Consequently learner support is suffering, as the educational psychologists are not in the position to render professional service to learners with special educational needs, and their superiors seemingly do not understand what their capabilities and skills are and how these can be deployed. They do not understand the nature and purpose of the educational psychologist’s role in
learner support. Therefore little or no support structures and logistical arrangements are in place for the educational psychologist to function effectively. In addition, psychologists are sometimes also prevented from doing individual assessment and support as the case may be.

The above findings are alarming, in the light of the literature findings, as discussed in Chapter 3, that the educational psychologist needs to enlarge his skills and not to deskill, in order to render quality learner support in an inclusive educational setting. It is also indicated in the literature findings that the medical model in terms of individual intervention should be maintained because it allows for applicable assessment, diagnostic and support strategies to be applied. The individual (curative) as well as community (preventative; system) focus of learner support ought to be incorporated in a new educational psychological model for learner support in the inclusive education setting.

6.4. THE ROLES OF EDUCATIONAL PSYCHOLOGISTS (community involvement; collaborator)

These roles are described in Chapter 3 of this study and are confirmed to be of necessity still, by the empirical research. Traditionally educational psychologists assessed learners’ intellectual, emotional, behavioural, social and learning needs, and rendered the necessary individual support for all of these needs. They also rendered parental and teacher guidance, curative as well as preventative, individually as well as within system context, and as professional collaborators they coordinated multi-professional teams as needed for learner support.

The inclusive educational policy makes this traditional role of the educational psychologist in learner support even more important, since the White Paper on Special Needs Education acknowledges the important role of learner, teacher and parental support for the sustaining of an inclusive education system.

Therefore educational psychologists are par excellence equipped to:

- reinstate normal successful (harmonious) education and teaching dynamics by means of learner support and teacher and parental guidance;
facilitate the functioning of multidisciplinary teams;
identify, assess and support the needs of (individual and groups of) learners and of several schools within their communities (systems).

The above skills are relevant and of vital importance in an inclusive educational system. According to the White Paper an inclusive educational approach to addressing barriers to learning, is consistent with a learner-centred approach to learning and teaching. The White Paper further recognises the fact that developing learners’ strengths and empowering them to participate actively in the learning process involve identifying and overcoming the causes of learning difficulties. The skills of identifying of and support to learning difficulties encompass the specialist area of the educational psychologist’s skills and expertise.

The White Paper further stipulates that an inclusive education approach is also consistent with a systemic and developmental approach to understanding learners’ problems, and planning action, as indicated in Chapter 3. The traditional role and training of educational psychologists already render them able to identify, assess and support learners with special educational needs, in school as well as family and community systems. This places an even bigger emphasis on the importance of the involvement and role of educational psychologists in learner support, in an inclusive educational system.

The validity and importance of the educational psychologist’s involvement in learner support thus has thus not changed over the years, but are presently even more apparent, in the demand for learner support within an inclusive education dispensation.

This research also indicated that educational psychologists in private practice in the community can provide only limited intervention, since they are self-employed and not officially employed by the Department of Education for this purpose.

7. SUMMARY

In this chapter the execution and the results of the empirical research were described, in terms of common themes that emerged from the data. These results were then
integrated with the literature review, to reach common themes emerging from the total research, about the role of the educational psychologist in learner support for learners with special educational needs in an inclusive education system.

It is therefore vital that these themes concerning the roles of educational psychologists be re-mapped in relation to the all the systems involved in education. In the next chapter the researcher will present guidelines towards the remapping of the roles, in a model for educational psychological service delivery for learners with special educational need, within an inclusive education system.
CHAPTER 5
TOWARDS A PROPOSED NEW EDUCATIONAL PSYCHOLOGICAL MODEL FOR LEARNER SUPPORT

2 INTRODUCTION

The aim of this chapter is to present guidelines towards a possible new educational psychological model for learner support within the new educational dispensation in South Africa. The researcher bases this model on the guidelines as obtained from the literature studies in Chapters 2 and 3, about learner support in the education system in South Africa, and the traditional and the new prescribed roles of the educational psychologist, respectively, as well as the empirical research.

2.1 AUTONOMY

As indicated in the previous chapter, it is vital for the rendering of responsible educational psychological learner support that the educational psychologist’s autonomy be reinstated by the National Department of Education.

As indicated in Chapter 3 and the previous chapter, educational psychologists by the nature of their training are expertly equipped to provide professional intervention, by means of learner assessment and support, teacher support, parental guidance, systemic intervention by way of individual and community assessment and support, and the facilitation of multi-disciplinary teams. Therefore it is clear that the educational psychologist, bound to his professional training and ethical code of conduct, is especially equipped to make responsible decisions about the assessment and support of special
educational needs of all the parties in the education system. It is imperative that this expertise and professionalism be recognised by departmental officials of the National Department of Education in order to effectively address the challenges of inclusive education.

From the above-mentioned it is clear that optimal, responsible learner support is impossible without the involvement of educational psychologists by acknowledgement of and allowance to perform their professional autonomy. Furthermore inclusive education prescribes a systemic, collaborative team approach to learner support, as discussed and indicated in Chapter 3. As mentioned in Chapters 3 and 4, the educational psychologist is skilled and equipped by his training to coordinate and head multi-professional teams. Therefore it is necessary that an educational psychologist should head the newly established district based support teams in this country and also be involved in the newly established Teacher Support Teams (TST) at schools. If the school or the community does not have access to an educational psychologist that can be involved in the TST of the school, the Department of Education should provide an educational psychologist from the district based support teams to assist the TST on a regular basis.

Learner support can succeed in this country, only if the above-mentioned recommendations are put in place by the National Department of Education and if an educational psychologist, who understands this specific profession’s contribution to learner support, heads support teams and educational psychologists employed by the Department of Education. If the educational psychologist is denied autonomy and is prohibited from playing his professional role in educational psychological learner support, inclusive education will not be able to succeed. As pointed out in the results of the empirical research, the most crucial vulnerability for learner support lies in the fact that if the autonomy of the educational psychologist and his skills are denied, the services of the educational psychologist can become impoverished, leading to decreased learner support. Educational psychologists should assert their right to impact on learner support policy and practice due to their unique expertise.
2.2 TRAINING AND QUALIFICATIONS

In the previous dispensation, appointments in an educational psychological position at the then called Educational Support Centres, required a MEd degree with registration as an educational psychologist, with the then called Medical Board. The latter requirement was to ensure ethical professional behaviour from all psychologists, because persons with lesser training are not aware of or able to render ethically correct services.

The empirical research reveals that persons with BEd degrees are presently appointed in psychologists' posts. The interviewees in the empirical research indicated that such persons lacked the appropriate training to effectively address the extreme and diverse challenges of learner support, barriers to learning and special education needs, and often overstepping ethical boundaries in terms of performing (or not performing) appropriate intervention.

Furthermore it was pointed out in the empirical research that teachers do not have the skills to identify barriers to learning and special educational needs in their classrooms. They also do not have the training to function in inclusive education, within collaborative teams. Therefore only the educational psychologist, due to his unique expertise and professional training, should be involved in the in-service training of teachers to function in their new prescribed role in Inclusive Education, as stipulated by The White Paper on Special Needs Education.

2.3 PROFESSIONAL PRACTICE APPROACH

A professional practice can only function if the necessary logistical supportive structures are in place as provided by the National Department of Education, to assist the educational psychologist to provide professional assessment and support within inclusive education for learners with special educational needs.

2.3.1 ASSESSMENT

The educational psychologist ought to be allowed autonomy in the assessment and support of learners' special needs or barriers to learning. It is unacceptable (and
unethical) to provide support without having conducted a thorough educational psychological investigation into the educational situation (system) of the learner, as indicated by the empirical research.

The present education dispensation renders the assessment of special educational needs very important, as stipulated by the White Paper. The vast majority of learners never had the privilege of educational psychological intervention, and still does not have access to these services, due to a lack of educational psychological staff, as pointed out by the empirical research. This renders educational psychological investigation into the problems and lives of learners with special educational needs an imperative. The Department of Education should rather increase the number of educational psychological posts and appoint such persons in learner support structures, like for example in the Teacher Support Teams, since the inclusive educational system demands a systemic approach to learner support and preventative actions from the educational psychologist.

As experts in the identification and assessment of barriers to learning and special educational needs, the autonomy of the educational psychologist to decide on the assessment procedures and techniques, should therefore be recognised by the National Department of Education. The educational psychologist should have the freedom to decide what assessment strategy is best, whether it be individual testing or community assessment. It is unacceptable and unethical that governmental officials who are not educational psychologists are allowed to prescribe to the educational psychologist how to function, as indicated by the empirical research.

2.3.2 SUPPORT

The same aspects pertaining to assessment, described above, are applicable to the support of learners with special needs, too – educational psychologists should be allowed the autonomy to decide on the appropriate professional and ethical support procedures and techniques.
To enable the educational psychologist to fulfil these professional duties in learner support, the necessary logistical support structures should be put in place by the Department of Education. This aspect is next described.

### 2.3.3 LOGISTICAL STRUCTURES

The empirical research indicates that there are not sufficient logistical structures in place for the educational psychologist to operate professionally.

It is suggested that the following logistical structures be put in place by the Department of Education to empower educational psychologists to function professionally and autonomously:

- A well-planned and organised referral system, which will include a well-defined referral procedure and an appropriate referral form.
- Administrative support, for example a secretary or administrative officer, who can receive referrals, open files, place files in the archive, answer phones, take messages, type reports, make appointments, take minutes at multi-professional or any other meetings, make arrangements for such meetings, notify all members of meetings of forthcoming meetings, duplicate and distribute documentation to members – all of which will allow the educational psychologists to perform their professional duties only.
- Multi-professional structures should be put in place for the educational psychologist to be able to function professionally in a collaborative multi-professional team. These structures should include regular multi-professional meetings concerning the appropriate professional intervention for learners with special educational need, and the follow-up of the professional services already rendered. The educational psychologist should chair such meetings due to his expertise and training in the varied nature of learners’ development.
- Transport arrangements. Each educational psychologist attached to a support centre should have a designated governmental car available to him to drive to schools whenever services are needed. When an emergency at a school occurs, for example a learner threatening with suicide, the immediate attention of the educational psychologist is required and vital lifesaving time cannot be afforded
to be lost to first make logistical arrangements in order to get to a school on time.

The proposed various roles of the educational psychologist are presented next.

2.4 THE ROLES OF THE EDUCATIONAL PSYCHOLOGIST.
2.4.1 RETAINING OF THE TRADITIONAL ROLE OF THE EDUCATIONAL PSYCHOLOGIST

It is clear from the research that the educational psychologist cannot abandon his/her traditional roles in learner support and that he should maintain his traditional roles and skills. The traditional roles of the educational psychologist are summarily presented again:

- The assessment and support of barriers to learning and special educational needs, through assessment of learners’ intellectual, emotional, behavioural and learning needs.
- Educational psychological guidance and support strategies to assist teachers and parents to address and overcome the identified needs and barriers.
- The coordination of multi-professional services to learners with special educational needs.
- Designing support programmes for groups of learners, with or without special educational needs.

In general, the traditional role of the educational psychologist encompassed assessment, intervention and educational and psychological support, mostly on an individual basis.

It is however clear from the research results that the educational psychologist cannot abandon his traditional roles in learner support, as the range of the present special needs still necessitates individual intervention. What rather is needed is the expansion of educational psychologists’ intervention to include preventative and systemic, collaborative consultancy work, since the White Paper on Special Needs Education prescribes a preventative systemic approach to learner support for learners with special educational need within an inclusive education system.
The following visual presentation (Figure 1) of the proposed new educational psychological model for learner support encompasses all the above aspects, as described in terms of the findings of the research:

**FIGURE 1: A proposed New Educational Psychological Model for Learner Support**

**AUTONOMY**
- Recognition of skills
- Appropriate tasks
- Appreciation of roles in learner support
- Involvement in policy decisions
- Autonomous decision-making in service delivery

**ROLES**
- Retaining of traditional role
- Enlargement of roles and skills to include a systemic approach
- Collaborating and consulting
- Preventative work
- Co-ordinating of the multi-professional team

**EDUCATIONAL PSYCHOLOGIST**
Collaborative Systemic Consultant

**APPROPRIATE TRAINING AND QUALIFICATION**
- MEd-degree
- Registration with the Health Professions Council of South Africa as Educational Psychologist

**PROFESSIONAL PRACTICE APPROACH**
- Assessment
- Support
- Logistical structures

Inclusive education relies on an effective system of learner, teacher, and parental support, in which the educational psychologist has a crucial role to play. It is suggested that this role be enlarged as follows.
2.4.2 ENLARGING OF THE TRADITIONAL ROLE AND SKILLS OF THE EDUCATIONAL PSYCHOLOGIST.

As the research indicates, inclusive education makes a systemic collaborative approach to education and learner support necessary. This poses the necessity that the educational psychologist should also function as a collaborative systemic consultant. The systemic approach will encompass the inclusion of the microsystemic, mesosystemic, exosystemic, chronosystemic and the macrosystemic model, as described in the literature study of this research.

Summarily described again, these systems function as follows:

- The **microsystem** includes sub-systems such as the learner’s family, school and peer group, with whom the learner interacts. The learner is involved in daily patterns of activities, roles and relationships in these systems. Therefore these sub-systems have an influence on the learner and on the system as a whole. In the microsystem, the learner’s family system consists of different sub-systems, like the parents’ relationships with the learner and his siblings. Another sub-system is the learner’s own relationship with his siblings. Other family members like grandparents, and other occupants in the house, like an uncle or aunt that lives with the family, also are possible sub-systems that affect and influence each other. The learner’s school system consists of the principal and his managerial team, (which will include the heads of departments) teachers, other learners, the peer group of the learner, the parents of the learner and other learners’ parents, the curriculum and the Teacher Support Team.

- At the level of the **mesosystem** the peer group, school and family systems interact with one another. Therefore what happens with a learner at home might influence how he reacts and responds at school and in his peer group or vice versa.

- The **exosystem** includes other systems in which the learner is not directly involved but which may influence or be influenced by the learner. These systems are for
instance the parents’ workplace, the siblings’ peer groups, and other community organisations, like churches.

- The **macrosystem** includes the system as a whole, with all of its sub-systems, within which the learner functions. This includes social structures, beliefs, values and cultures of the total system.

- A learner is always in a certain developmental stage until he reaches adulthood. The learner’s stage of development will impact on all the above-mentioned different systems. To complicate matters further the learner’s family can also be in a certain developmental stage. For instance, his older siblings may be in the process of leaving the home, which changes the family’s micro-relationships, as well as the learner’s functioning in all the other systems. Thus all of the above-mentioned systems, and their interactions with each other, are influenced by *individual and group developmental time frames* that will have an impact on the other systems. This brings the **chronosystem** into focus, which comprises not only the learner’s stages of development, but also the developmental time frames of all the other systems, and the combined impact of all these developmental stages and time frames on the learner’s affective, cognitive, normative and social functioning.

Figure 2 constitutes the researcher’s schematic interpretation of these sub-systems within systems, and how they all influence each other, and in the final instance, how they all influence the learner. This schematic interpretation is based on the results of the literature review in Chapter 3 and on Bronfenbrenner’s discussions on child development in Donald et al (2002:51-52). The reciprocal relation among all the systems and their sub-systems, are indicated in the figure by arrows pointing both ways between every system.
Figure 2: **Sub-systems within systems**

To assess these systems and how they all influence the learner, the educational psychologist should undertake an educational psychological investigation into the roles
that the learner plays in all the systems, into the nature and quality of the relationships within all the systems, and how these relationships influence the learner at affective, cognitive, normative and social levels.

This way of assessing the micro and mesosystems in which the learner functions, is nothing new to the educational psychologist, as it has always been part of his traditional role, as already described.

However, the assessment on exo, macro and chrono levels, are new to the educational psychologist, and should be incorporated into his professional practice, for him to successfully function within a systemic model of service delivery to learners with special educational needs in an inclusive education system.

Concerning the exosystem, the educational psychologist will have to take note of and assess the structures in which the learner is not directly involved in, but which may influence his functioning on affective, cognitive, normative and social levels, as indicated in the description of the exosystem above, for instance the siblings’ peer relations, and the workplace and work situation of the parents.

Concerning the macrosystem, the educational psychologist will have to assess the following aspects of this system, as indicated in the description of the macrosystem above:

- In the first instance the educational psychologist will have to determine what the goals and values of the different systems are and also what the hidden goals are and how they influence all the systems and sub-systems of the whole system. For example, a family’s goal can be economic survival, but a hidden goal of the family may be to maintain male domination.

- Secondly the educational psychologist must determine how the roles are defined within the system and how the roles are acted out in order to sustain the open and the hidden roles of the system. This is very important since these roles affect the way in which the entire system functions. For instance, family systems consist of a number of different roles that often overlap and are sometimes in contradiction.
Common roles are for example parent, child, nurturer, and so forth. Where the child is expected to take the role of both parent and child, contradiction may occur which might influence the system adversely.

- Thirdly the educational psychologist should investigate communication patterns between the system and systems outside the system, because that may influence relationships and behaviours within the different systems. For instance, communication between a family and a school may be inadequate and affect the way that learners are dealt with in the two systems.

- Fourthly, the educational psychologist must be aware of the openness and closeness of the boundaries between systems and sub-systems, because that can influence the effectiveness of the system. For example, how open or close the boundaries of the school system are, will impact on how much influence the family of the learner can have on the education of their child.

Concerning the *chronosystem*, the educational psychologist has always assessed the learner within his own developmental level. The assessment of the developmental level of all the *other* people in that system, and how that may influence the learner, however has not formed part of the educational psychologist’s repertoire up to now, and will therefore have to be incorporated.

Figure 3 constitutes the researcher’s schematic interpretation of educational psychological systemic assessment of learners with special educational needs, within all the systems they function in, as described above, based on Bronfenbrenner’s discussions on child development in Donald et al (2002:51-52). How the reciprocal relation between every sub-system ought to be assessed by the educational psychologist, in his systems approach in assessment, is indicated by the arrows in the illustration pointing both ways between each sub-system.
Figure 3: *Educational Psychological Systemic Assessment.*

Next, the way in which the educational psychologist can act in the roles as collaborator and consultant, as well as in a preventative way, and within this systemic assessment.
approach, will be discussed within this new proposed model, as it has been indicated by the empirical research that these roles are neglected in the present education dispensation. Therefore the instatement of these roles into the professional practice of the educational psychologist, ought to prove beneficial to learners who experience special educational needs in the present education dispensation.

2.4.2.1 THE EDUCATIONAL PSYCHOLOGIST’S ROLE AS A COLLABORATOR AND A CONSULTANT

Collaborative systemic consultation is described in Chapter 3. It is now indicated how the educational psychologist can and should function as a collaborative systemic consultant in the new educational dispensation of South Africa.

As described, collaboration defines how people interact and work together with each other in a mutually beneficial manner for the purpose of joint decision-making towards a common goal. Professional educational psychological collaboration with other people (professionals) who work with learners with special educational needs, requires a cooperative working relationship among all the team members, which should not only include the professionals but also the parents and teachers, to work towards the goal of supporting each specific learner who experiences special educational needs, or barriers to learning.

The complex nature of special educational needs and barriers to learning demands the involvement of other professionals such as speech and language therapists, occupational therapists, medical doctors, social workers and other paramedical staff, and also the parents as partners. All of these (professional) people should be involved in the assessment process and in the planning of a support strategy. The collaborative consultation team approach towards assessment and support of learners with special needs, will benefit the whole (all) system(s) in which such a learner functions.

It follows, then, that the educational psychologist will have to work in collaborative consultative multi-professional teams. Because of his expertise and training in learner development, the educational psychologist ought to chair and coordinate these teams. Collaborative consultation in a multi-professional team is an interactive process, which enables people (professionals) with diverse expertise to generate creative solutions to a
mutually defined problem, that is, the support needed for every specific learner with special educational needs. The outcome of such collaborative consultation can produce more effective solutions than what individual team members are able to produce on their own. Applicable and comprehensive support programmes for learners with special educational needs can thus be developed through this approach, to be effective in all the systems in which the learner functions.

The educational psychological collaborative consultation approach incorporates the “whole school approach” which involves reaching out to and empowering all people or groups of people within the (school) system, to understand and deal with the dynamics in the system. Consultative intervention by the educational psychologist requires a systemic, preventative as well as a curative, and if deemed necessary, an individualistic approach from the educational psychologist, towards the learner with special educational needs. For the learner (with special educational needs) in inclusive education to be successful in his school career, this approach is essential.

This approach by the educational psychological entails a move into all the systems that have an influence on the daily life of the learner, rather than merely individual assessment of the learner’s individual situation. The relevant systems in any learner’s life can be the school, the family, the community, and all their respective sub-systems; in other words, all the systems described above, from the micro to the macrosystems.

The incorporation of all relevant team members in such a multi-professional collaborative team approach entails that the educational psychologists’s immediate superior at his centre of employment, ought to be a professional person too, like an educational psychologist, as himself. This can be achieved only by appointing educational psychologists as the superiors at educational support centres, who will have a sound knowledge of the skills and expertise of educational psychologists and how they ought to be applied to their proper professional duties – as assessors of learners with special educational needs, within all the systems that they function. Presumably this act will at the same time protect educational psychologists from performing tasks like the monitoring of feeding schemes and exams, while there is a dire need for their professional service in educational psychological learner support. The existing superiors at these centres can also be trained to cooperate with the educational psychologists to alleviate barriers to learning and special educational needs, through a consultative
systemic approach. However, to ensure effective (professional) learner support, it can be ethically correct only, that an educational psychologist should be appointed in the position of superior at such a centre, and also be in charge of learner support delivered in that district in the Department of Education. It also follows that an only an educational psychologist can be in charge of the teacher support teams at the school in their district.

In this position the educational psychologist will need support from the Department of Education, as part of (and partner in) the collaborative team, to be able to deliver preventative as well as curative services in the fields of barriers to learning and special educational needs. In this regard the Department of Education can and should ensure that parents, principals and teachers all be enskilled, through for example workshop training for parents and in-service training for teachers, to collaborate towards the support of learners with special educational needs. Due to his expertise the educational psychologist should be the key person in such training, in order to give execution to the vision of the White Paper on Special Needs Education in this regard.

This also implies that workloads of educational psychologists attached to these centres should be manageable. The Department of Education will have to address the situation by the recruitment and appointment of additional educational psychologists to be appointed at these centres, to address the demand for learner support, as stressed by the White Paper. A further way of implied support can be that the Department of Education requests and allows tertiary institutions to train larger numbers of educational psychologists, to provide the educational system with suitably equipped professionals for learner support.

It is important to stress that these proposed new roles and appointment of educational psychologists, is not an argument for the abandonment of the traditional training of educational psychologists. *It is however an argument for the incorporation and integration of the educational psychologist's existing training and expertise into a systemic consultation process, instead of the traditional individualistic approach only.* None of the traditional training and roles should be banned from the repertoire of educational psychologists.
As good collaborative systemic consultants, educational psychologists should be trained in and apply such skills and characteristics as already described in Chapter 3, which are the following:

- listening, which entails reflection, paraphrase, clarification and elaboration;
- problem-solving, which involves problem identification, generating solutions, brainstorming alternatives, implementation, monitoring and evaluation;
- giving and receiving of feedback;
- patience and caring;
- adherence to ethical standards;
- establishment and maintaining rapport;
- learning from others;
- flexibility, openness, and receptiveness;
- respect for other people’s (professionals’) input, opinions, and criticisms;
- clear communication;
- incorporation of the other people’s (professionals’) suggestions;
- management of conflict;
- development of alternative strategies;
- formulation of feasible ideas, plans, objectives and decisions.

As also indicated in Chapter 3, the aim of collaborative consultation is the following, which ought to be incorporated by educational psychologists in their proposed new role:

- to achieve the most effective use of the experience, skills and resources of those being consulted – that is, the whole multi-professional team;
- to place the responsibility for change with the consultee – that is, the learners with special educational needs as well as their parents and teachers – whoever requested the intervention of the professional at their local support centre;
- especially to assist the consultee to develop new knowledge and skills, in the effort to overcome or lessen the specific special educational needs or barriers to learning;
- to support the consultee in order to empower him / them to be more functional in the system within which he/they function;
- to increase the general level of functioning of the consultee, regardless of the presenting problem;
to empower individuals, groups and the system as a whole.

As also described in Chapter 3, there are various types of consultation, not one only, which may be employed by the educational psychologist within this systemic approach to learner support. These are:

- **Mental Health Consultation** - This form of consultation recognises that not all behaviour is rationally motivated, as consultees’ subconscious minds may cause ineffectiveness in their work. Verbal or non-verbal assessment strategies are employed in analysing the motives and psychological make-up of the consultees, and intervention strategies can include the creation of non-hierarchical, co-operative relationships, building skills and knowledge, and increasing self-esteem of the consultee.

- **Behavioural Consultation** – In a systemic consultation process the focus is on the consultee’s (learner’s) behaviour with the clear objective to improve the behaviour or performance of the consultee. In this instance a more direct, straightforward information-sharing approach is adopted. Behaviour skills to be developed by the consultee can include the defining of the problem, analysing the problem by defining the environmental variables, which influence or instigate the problem, devising environmental manipulations to reduce the probability of continuance of the problem, and follow-up assessment. Behavioural consultation essentially adopts a problem-solving approach and requires collaboration between consultant and consultee – the learner and his caregivers, be they parents or teachers or family.

- **Agency-orientated Consultation** – The goal here is to assist the whole system in solving a problem. It is crucial that the consultant is not regarded as the one who will solve the problems, but rather as the one who will facilitate the system to reach its ideals and objectives. The consultant in this sense is viewed as an issue-specifier, group process resource person, and an objective, externally based problem manager.

- **Advocacy Consultation** – The consultant may find himself entering a battlefield during systemic consultation, where one group is fighting the other for greater benefits, and may recruit the consultant to take sides. It is therefore important that the consultant (educational psychologist) facilitates the common goal of the system, as presented by all the members of that system (the learner as well as
his family and teachers), in order to be beneficial to everybody within the system, and therefore to the system as a whole. It is thus essential for the educational psychologist to remain aware of own bias and to retain neutrality in order to serve all the members’ interests and achieve benefit for all.

- **Process Consultation** – Here the consultant recognises overt and covert events occurring within the system, and acquires an understanding of the effect of these events on the productivity, morale and aims of the members of the system. In this type of consultation the consultant explores the interactions between the members of the system, enhances their interactional skills, and improves their problem solving and decision making skills.

It is however **not possible to propose any one specific kind** of the described types of consultation, as the consultative decisions have to be taken by the educational psychologist depending on the system within which the consultee (learner) finds himself – the barriers to learning which many learners with special educational needs are facing, rest as much within themselves as within the (family, school and community) systems in which they function on a daily basis. As already indicated, traditionally the educational psychologist works with all these systems. This implies that a systemic approach to learner support for learners with special educational needs is vital, because it serves to -

- understand the development of learners in a more holistic and in interactive terms;
- understand the families, classrooms and schools as the systems within which the learner functions;
- understand how the origins and maintenance of, and solutions to social problems and special needs cannot be separated from the broader context and systems within which the learner functions.

The last point brings the matter of **power relations** between members within systems, as well as between systems, into focus: the educational psychologist as a collaborative systemic consultant should be aware of possible **power relations within and among systems**, especially if he performs advocacy consultation as described above. As described in Chapter 3, it is crucial for educational psychologists to be involved in and to participate in educational policy discussions and debates, because in failing to do this, educational (school) support services will be endangered to remain at the bottom of the
educational policy agenda, and consequently could be declared redundant or be grossly decreased during rationalisation of staff or services. The demise of the previous educational support services, proved this case in point, as shown by the empirical research, because educational psychologists did not assert their expertise and right to deliver their specialised services, at the time when educational transformation took place.

Within his professional sphere however, the issue of power should be taken into account by the educational psychologist, in his professional systemic intervention, that is, to ensure that learners and their caregivers are empowered to function harmoniously in their educational contexts. Systems consultation should focus on the constructive use of power and influence, for example, to increase co-operation among the members of a system and to enhance the system’s effectiveness. The educational psychologist, as a systemic consultant, should assist individuals and groups (learners and their parents and teachers) in the educational system to be aware of their power, to take responsibility for the implementation of this power, and to make sure that the power patterns in every educational system (family and school) are employed in a constructive manner, so as to build effective and harmonious relationships through collaboration.

In order to build such harmony between and among systems, the attitudes of all members in the system(s), have to be assessed, because this will provide further insight into the development and up keeping of the power relations within every system in which a learner functions. Furthermore, a learner’s own attitudes – his normative functioning – determine his cognitive, emotional, social and scholastic development and progress, which in turn determine whether he will develop special needs. In other words, learners’ own attitudes may act as barriers to learning themselves, and cause special needs to arise. The educational psychologist therefore has to assess everybody’s attitudes within all the power relations within all the systems a learner functions in.

Finally, the preventative role of the educational psychologist, as another new role within the proposed model, is discussed.
2.4.2.2 THE PREVENTATIVE ROLE OF THE EDUCATIONAL PSYCHOLOGIST

The role of the educational psychologist to engage in preventative actions, in order to prevent barriers to learning, and special educational needs, from developing, has become a crucial issue. The White Paper also states that preventative actions should be taken to avoid the development of special educational needs and barriers to learning. The educational psychologist is able to identify possible problems within learners as well as within the systems in which they function, even before they can start to develop, and to implement applicable preventative actions. It should therefore be part of the educational psychologist’s role to build preventative measures into the education system, that will protect and guard the whole education system from problems that may arise, in the learner himself or within the systems in which he functions.

The key protective factors, which can be capitalised on for preventative actions, as described in Chapter 3, from the empirical research appears to be absent from the practice the educational psychologist is allowed to exercise in the present education dispensation. These factors, that can be effectively implemented by the educational psychologist in learner support, are briefly again the following:

- the personal or individual characteristics of a learner;
- the characteristics of a learner’s family;
- the characteristics of the systems in which a learner functions.

In essence, these preventative factors are nothing but the systems and sub-systems which the educational psychologist ought to assess, in his systemic assessment of learners experiencing special educational needs, as described above in the systemic assessment of the educational psychologist. As a preventative measure, this implies that *continuous assessment* of all learners has to be applied throughout their school career, of all the systems they function in, in order to prevent the development of possible barriers to learning, or of special needs. In this regard the teacher in the classroom, or the teacher support teams (TST’s), ought to be able to fulfil this role as adequately as the educational psychologist, as this aspect is part of the teacher training curriculum.
Preventative measures that the educational psychologist *can* build into his *professional systemic practice* are the design and presentation of parental and teacher guidance programmes. These programmes should be presented at schools, so that teachers and parents will be able to attend them. Such programmes ought to include the following advice and recommendations to parents, to ensure the systemic wellbeing of all the systems in which the learner functions:

- Different educational styles can be applied to the different children in one family, to accommodate each child’s individual needs concerning parenting, and to ensure the *microsystem* to function harmoniously.
- Guidance to the teachers of toddlers at pre-primary schools, on the education of the preschool learner, to ensure proper school progress, as well as the proper functioning of the *meso, exo and macrosystems*.
- Guidance to parents and teachers on all the developmental stages of the learner, to ensure the proper functioning of the *chronosystem* of the learner.

3. **SUMMARY**

In this chapter the researcher proposed guidelines towards a new educational psychological model for learner support in South Africa. The guidelines for the proposed model consist of the following:

- Recognition of the autonomy of the educational psychologist by governmental officials of the Department of Education. This recognition entails the recognition of the skills and the important role of the educational psychologist in learner support. Therefore it is recommended that the educational psychologist should be part of and be consulted in policy decisions, regarding learner support.
- The traditional role of the educational psychologist should be retained, but enlarged to include a systemic approach to learner support. The educational psychologist should function as a collaborative systemic consultant. As a collaborative consultant the educational psychologist should be the co-ordinator of the multi-professional team. The educational psychologist should also take
preventative actions to minimise barriers to learning and special educational needs. Group work as well as individual work is important.

- The Department of Education should only appoint people in the position of educational psychologist if they have at least an MEd degree and are registered with the Health Professions Council of South Africa as an educational psychologist.

- The professional practice of the educational psychologist ought to be enhanced by the reinstatement of the full spectrum of support structures, such as administrative and logistical structures, so that the educational psychologist can focus on his core professional role in his education dispensation: learner support within inclusive education.

The next chapter presents the conclusions and recommendations of this study.
1. SUMMARY

In Chapter 1 the problem statement of and the aim for the study were presented. The research methodology was described, and the programme of the study provided.

Chapter 2 contains a description of the history of special needs education and learner support in South Africa since 1946 until 2002, in terms of events and discussion documents that influenced educational policy, especially inclusive education policy.

In Chapter 3 the traditional role of the educational psychologist in learner support is described, as well as the need for the enlargement of this role. It was indicated in Chapter 3 that the educational psychologist has traditionally worked with the micro and mesosystem, but that his/her role should be enlarged to also work with the exosystem, chronosystem and the macrosystem. Furthermore it was indicated that the educational psychologist should also be aware of and able to identify power relations within the whole education system, and how these can be applied to the benefit of the whole system. The educational psychologist's role as a collaborator and consultant was also described.

A discussion of the execution and the results of the empirical research are presented in Chapter 4. The main results of the empirical research are the following:

- Educational psychologists had for the most part lost their previous autonomy in the learner support system.
- Skills and training qualifications of the present learner support staff are hugely inadequate to effectively serve learners with special educational needs.
- The remaining educational psychologists' superiors at the support centres do not realise or acknowledge their role in learner support.
These results obtained from the literature review and empirical research as documented in Chapters 1 - 4, accumulated in guidelines towards a proposed new educational psychological model for learner support in South Africa, which are presented in Chapter 5.

2. CONCLUSIONS

This results from this research lead to the following conclusions relating to the research problem.

2.1 FIRST SUB-PROBLEM

What guidelines can be obtained from the provision for special education and learner support in South Africa since 1946 to 2002, for the establishment of a workable educational psychological model for learner support?

The research established that as early as 1946 there already were demands for support to learners with special educational needs, which culminated into several discussion groups and committees publishing their views and recommendations regarding the structure of such support structures. These reports’ findings and recommendations had significant influence on the establishment of the inclusive education policy as reflected in the White Paper on Special Education Needs. The White Paper in turn provides guidelines and prescriptions regarding support services for LSEN.

2.2 SECOND SUB-PROBLEM

How does the policy of inclusive education influence and provide guidelines for the establishment of such a model?

The White Paper on Special Needs Education provides ample guidelines and prescriptions regarding support services for LSEN. The Policy also inherently makes out a case for a systems approach towards learner support.
2.3 THIRD SUB-PROBLEM

What should the role of the educational psychologists be in such a model and in the establishment of such a model?

The research into the traditional role of the educational psychologist in learner support revealed that the educational psychologist has always employed a systemic approach, because he traditionally works with the learner and his family, parents and teachers. The research also established that the educational psychologist should enlarge his role to include the exosystem, macrosystem and the chronosystem. From the empirical research it was found that the educational psychologist should be included in and form part of the educational policy decision-making process of the government. The research also established that the role of the educational psychologist in learner support is also to take preventative actions in order to eliminate the development of barriers to learning and that the educational psychologist’s role in learner support should be that of a collaborative systemic consultant. The research pointed out that the educational psychologist ought to be the coordinator of multi-professional service delivery teams for LSEN.

From the research findings clear guidelines could be established for educational psychological learner support in South Africa. In short they are the following:

- Acknowledgement of the autonomy of the educational psychologist in learner support services and structures.
- The traditional as well as an enlarged role of the educational psychologist ought to be integrated into learner support.
- Appropriate training and qualifications for appointment as educational psychologists should be retained
- A professional practice approach should include professional assessment and support of LSEN.

An educational psychological model for learner support should therefore make provision for the following:

- The autonomy of the educational psychologist, re-instated in the Department of Education.
• The specialist staff appointed at education support centres for learner support staff should only be qualified educational psychologists, who also are registered with the Health Professions Council of South Africa as educational psychologists. This is the only way to ensure that ethical and responsible learner support, teacher and parent guidance will be applied in South Africa.

• The educational psychologist should fulfil the role of a collaborative systems consultant in the learner support centres. Teachers and principals of schools should receive in-service training, in order to empower them to collaborate with health professionals and to function in collaborative teams towards learner support.

• The Department of Education should implement the proposed new educational psychological model in order to achieve successful inclusive education.

3. RECOMMENDATIONS

This study focused on the development of guidelines towards a proposed new educational psychological model for learner support in South Africa. The following recommendations are presented, following from this research:

Towards educational psychologists:
• Educational psychologists ought to declare themselves willing to be appointed in education support centres, where they can render expert service to LSEN, instead of only pursuing private careers.

• Educational psychologists already employed in education support centres, should see to it that they collaborate and consult with everybody in the education system regarding learner support.

Towards the Department of Education:
• The Department of Education should implement the proposed new educational psychological model in order to achieve successful inclusive education.

• Teachers and principals of schools should receive in-service training, in order to empower them to collaborate with health professionals and to function in collaborative teams towards learner support.
Towards further research:

- The proposed new model ought to be empirically evaluated in learner support centres throughout the whole South Africa, in order to establish the reliability of the model.
- Tertiary institutions ought to research the necessity for the instalment of training courses in educational psychological learner support, for accreditation and registration purposes at the HPCSA.

4. CONCLUDING REMARKS

The history of learner support in this country indicates that the educational psychologist formerly played an important role in the support of learners, their teachers and parents. The results of the research indicate that educational psychologists can and ought to continue to deliver professional learner support in education support centres.

The educational psychologist is *par excellence* equipped to render support that will alleviate special educational needs and prevent the developing of further barriers to learning, thereby to ensure the success of the inclusive education policy. This leaves the researcher to come to the conclusion that without the educational psychologist, inclusive education in South Africa is doomed to failure, and LSEN will increase, leading up to another "lost generation" in the South African education system. The role of the educational psychologist is therefore of vital importance in learner support and in educational policy decision-making.
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Subject # 1

Ek wil vir u ‘n paar vrae vra oor die hulpsentrums. Weet u iets van die ontstaan en die redes van die ontstaan van die hulpsentrums?

“Ek het daar begin werk toe die sentrums reeds bestaan het. Die hulpsentrums was daargestel om vir die skole hulp te verleen en ondersteuningsdienste te verleen, in terme van spraakterapeutiese dienste, psigoterapeutiese intervensie, leerprobleme en so meer.”

Watter jaar het u begin by die Onderwyshulpsentrum?

“In 1994 by die hulpsentrum in Morningside maar al in 1990 by die hulpsentrum in Roodepoort.”

Watter tipe poste was daar?

“Daar was poste waar ‘n persoon spesifiek met leerprobleme gewerk het by skole en ook iemand wat gewerk het met emosionele probleme en ook plasings in kliniekskole gedoen het. Hierdie persoon het ook tuisbesoeke gedoen en plasings by kliniekskole is gegaan met ouerbegeleiding. Dan was daar iemand wat beroepsvoorligting gedoen het en dan was daar ook spraakterapeute en later ook ‘n arbeidsterapeut.”

Wat was u take by hierdie sentrum?

“In Roodepoort het ek leerprobleme hanteer en by Morningside emosionele probleme.”

Is u dus vanaf 1994 tot tans by Onderwys hulpsentrums betrokke?

“Ja ek was ‘n OA:OA (Onderwys Adviseur: Onderrig Aangeleenthede) en ‘n OA:OP(Onderwys Adviseur: Opvoedkundige Aangeleenthede)”

Wat was die prosedures wat julle gevolg het as daar verwysings was?

“Ons het op ‘n Vrydagmiddag vergader, dan is al die verwysings wat vanaf die skole ingekom het, bespreek en aan persone toegeken. In Roodepoort moes jy dan aan die vergadering terugrapporteer oor wat jy aan die sake aan jou toegewys gedoen het. In
Morningside moes jy dit in ‘n boek aanteken; daar is baie akkurate rekordhouding gedoen. In Roodepoort was dit vreeslike lang vergaderings; jy moes aan die komitee verslag doen oor wat jy gedoen het, watter intervensie jy gedoen het, en wat jy aanbeveel het. Dit is dan in die multiprofessionele groep bespreek. Daar is ook by altwee sentrums kruisverwysings gedoen.”

Toe het daar veranderinge plaasgevind. Wat was hierdie veranderinge wat plaasgevind het?

“Daar was baie onsekerheid. Met die koms van die nuwe bedeling het standaarde baie agteruit gegaan en verswak, omdat dit lyk of die nuwe bedeling se mense nie weet waaroor dit gaan nie. Mense is geabsorbeer. Soms ver vanwaar hulle gebly het. My indruk was half dat probleme vir hulle veroorsaak is, dat hulle sal bedank en dit is tans vir my ook die modus operandi. Hier is mense geabsorbeer wat van Pretoria af kom in poste wat totaal ongeskik was vir hulle. So dit was eers hierdie absorpsieproses. Ons sekretaresse is byvoorbeeld in Alberton geabsorbeer, terwyl sy drie minute se ry van die Hulpsentrum af gebly het. Mense wat in Krugersdorp bly is in Alberton geabsorbeer. Dit was vir my ‘n poging om chaos te skep en dit so ongemaklik gemaak het dat mense bedank het. Dit was my indruk.

Waar die sentrums apart gefunksioneer het is hulle nou in die distrikte geabsorbeer. Die sentrums het gewoonlik opvoedkundige sielkundiges as hoofde gehad, nou nie meer nie. Jou hoof kan en is gewoonlik ‘n leek. Dit is asof die nuwe mense wat oorgeneem het nie verstaan wat die doel van die hulpsentrum was nie en dat dit mannekrag is wat net beskikbaar is vir enige ander werk waarin hulle, hulle kan inplaas.”

In die verlede was die werkswyse dat die skole na julle toe verwys het en alles het deur die strukture van die Hulpsentrum gekom.

“Ja, jy het dan self die ouers gekontak of die ouer het jou by die skool kom sien of jy het hom by die sentrum gesien. Daar was baie interaksie en hulpverlening.”
En ook onderwysers?

“Onderwysers ook gesien by die skole; jy het uitgegaan en ‘n motor gehad wat aan jou geallokeer was. Jy het uitgegaan na die skole. Jy het in die skole gaan toets en gaan hulp verleen.”

So, u het ouerbegeleiding en onderwysersbegeleiding gedoen.

“Ja en kinders gaan evalueer en terugvoering gegee en hulp verskaf, ook ouerbegeleiding, terapie, plasings ensovoorts gedoen, ja.”

En wats werk doen julle nou?

“Eenhonderd persent van my tyd die laaste kwartaal is totaal en al in beslag geneem met die hantering van die matriekeksamen, waar ons vraestelle uitgee en vraestelle terugkry. Die vraestelle in orde sit. Eksamenboeke uitdeel en terug kry, en ons monitor die eksamenproses en kyk dat daar nie verneuk word nie. Vyf-en-twintig persent van my tyd word in beslag geneem met administratiewe werk rondom die eksamen. Van die oorhavige tyd word veertig persent in beslag geneem met die voedingskema vir die laerskole. Ek word dus geen tyd gegun om as ‘n opvoedkundige sielkundige my opvoedkundige sielkundige taak te vervul nie.”

Hoe voel u oor u werk as ‘n sielkundige binne die strukture asuy dit vergelyk met hoe dit was?

“Ek kan nie toereikend diens lewer nie. Dit is nie ‘n sisteem wat sielkundige dienslewing ondersteun nie.”

Watter tipe van spesiale behoeftes kry u nog na u verwys?

“Ten spyte van die feit dat daar nog pogings is om vir die skole te sê kry ‘n vorm en verwys, sal iemand net bel en jy sal gesê word om aan die persoon en daai telefoonnommer aandag te gee. So daar word nie rekordhouding gedoen nie. Daar is nie rekords nie, soos jy self gesien het. Léers wat aan die ander distrik behoort het, het ek
na hulle deurgestuur en die lêers wat ek aan werk hier gelos. Ek kom vandag hier en die lêers is weg. Die filing system is weg en die kantoor is nou vir iemand in die admin. Ek is nie gevra of hiervan gesê nie. So dit is asof die sielkundige dienste amper nie eers ‘n bestaansreg het nie. Jy kan nie funksioneer nie, jy word dood gedruk. Hulle het nie ‘n begrip van wat ons professie behels nie. Maandag bel ‘n ma my. Sy sukkel om haar kind in ‘n spesiale skool te kry. Ek noem toe die spesiale skole op. Sy sê dat hulle nie haar kind wil aanvaar nie. Ek sê toe dat ek nie ‘n skool kan dwing om haar kind toe te laat nie. My hoof dink egter dat ek admissions kan doen. Hulle het nie ‘n begrip vir ons professie nie. Ek meen dit is al jare so. Dit is ‘n muur van stilswye en agteraf ondermyning, as jy probeer om tot ‘n mate diens te lever soos jy weet jy moet lever. Jy loop jou vas. Jy kan nie…jy kan nie…jy is basies ‘n arbeider en jy sal dit en dit doen en jy sal admin. werk doen en ander goeters doen en wanneer daar ‘n krisis is, word dit op jou geskuif al is dit nie jou werk nie.”

Met ander woorde u hanteer dus nie net kinders, ouers en onderwysers en hulle probleme nie.

“Dit is nou vyf persent van my werk om leerders, ouers en onderwysers te sien, waar dit eers die fokuspunt was. Ons as sielkundiges is nie gekonsulteer toe die veranderinge gemaak is nie.”

Die diens wat aan skole gelewer word, gaan dit nog om LSEN of is daar nou ander sake wat aangespreek word?

“Ek is nou in die kurrikulum geplaas. Van my kollegas hanteer nog die LSEN, veral in die fondasiefase is daar nog ‘n sensiwiteit. Maar nie in die ander fases nie. Daar is ‘n gebrek aan begrip, belangstelling en aan erkenning aan wat eintlik nodig is. SEN word in teorie en in terme van beleid baie beklemtoon, maar word nie in die praktyk geïdentifiseer deur mense wat dit kan identifiseer nie.”

Hoe voel u oor die veranderinge wat plaasgevind het?

“Meeste van die tyd baie moedeloos. Daar is kere dat ek voel dat ek nog hulp kan verleen, maar meeste van die tyd het die nuwe struktuur ‘n onbuigsaamheid wat baie
eis… jy’s uit jou werk…jou hulpverlening is uit die sisteem geskryf en meeste van die tyd
hoop en bid jy dat iets sal regkoms of dat jy ‘n ander werk gaan kry of dat iets gaan
gebeur dat jy die kans sal kry dat jy in jou eie praktyk sal gaan."

**Skakel julle nog met die skole en die onderwysers en weet hulle wat julle doen?**

“Nee, die onderwysers het ‘n geweldige werkslas. Hulle is vasgeval in al hulle
verantwoordelikhede en moet dan boonop al die flack (sic) vat op die bodem. Daar word
ongelooflik baie van hulle verwag in terme van admin, om onder andere die veiligheid
van die skool daar te stel. Hulle moet al die policies in plek sit. Hulle moet dit alles
administreer en dit is asof the running of the school meer belangrik as die onderrig is.
Die onderwysers gee bitter min inligting deur. Hulle is of te besig of te moeg of hulle is
bang vir die distriksmense want hulle voel hier kom net nog ‘n hou.

Die ryker skole stel hulle eie sielkundiges aan. Sommiges stel sielkundiges aan deur die
skool se beheerraad. Ons is nou besig met die LSEN-oudit volgens die Witskrif. Ons
gaan slegs saam om te monitor. Die persoon wat saam met my gaan is nie eers ‘n
sielkundige nie. Dis ‘n kwessie van dat jou vaardigheid word afgedruk.”

**Hoeveel terapeute het julle in Morningside gehad en hoeveel terapeute is julle
nou.**

“Ons was min of meer twaalf terapeute. Een terapeut vir tien skole en dit was ‘n swaar
werkslading. Ons is nou slegs drie terapeute – twee sielkundiges en een intern vir
tweehonderd-en-tagtig skole en die meeste van die tyd is ons besig met admin. werk.”

**Baie dankie.**
Subject # 2

Weet u hoekom Opvoedkundige Hulpsentrums ontstaan het?

“Ek weet nie spesifiek die redes waarom nie. Die redes is seker om kinders te help wat probleme het.”

Wanneer het u tot die diens toegetree?

“1995.”

Wat was u take en hoe het dit verander?

“Ons was opgedeel in pedoterapie, ortopedagogiek, ortodidaktiek en party in beroepsleidingspedagogiek, dan was daar ook spraakterapeute. Ek het ortodidaktiek gedoen. Ons het na die skole gegaan en kinders geassesseer en teruggekom na die sentrum en verslae geskryf en teruggegaan na die onderwysers en met hulle die kinders bespreek. Dan gesê dit is die probleem wat die kind het en bespreek hoe ons dit gaan oplos en as dit ‘n esemionele probleem is het ek dit dan verwys na die kollega wat daarmee werk. Dan het die kollega die emocionele probleem ondersoek. Almal het saamgewerk en ons het die ouers ingekry en soos die kind gekyk en so hulp verleen. Dus multi-proffesioneel. Ons het al die onderwysers en die kind met die onderwysers bespreek om te bepaal hoe ons as ‘n span die kind gaan help en soos ek gesê het, ons het die ouers ingekry, want jy kan mos nie sonder die ouers en die onderwysers die kind help nie; ouerbegeleiding en onderwyserbegeleiding is gedoen.”

Hoeveel skole het u gehad?

“So tien laerskole en twee hoërskole. Ons was waggies funksioneel aan die gang. Op Vrydae is die lêers uitgedeel.”
Hoe het u by die skole gekom?

“Elkeen het sy eie staatsmotor gehad en jy het gesorg dat hy skoon is en in ‘n goeie toestand gehou word. Hulle is opgepas. Daai karre het nuut gebly. Met jou staatsmotor het jy na die skole gery en daar was nooit ‘n probleem dat as daar ‘n traumatisie gebeurtenis by ‘n skool plaasvind dat jy nie daar kon kom nie. Jy het ingeklim en gery.

Wat nou gebeur – dit het al ‘n paar keer gebeur – ek sal een spesifieke geval noem van ‘n kind wat selfmoord wou pleeg en die skool bel en sê dat ek gou moet kom. Dit het my twee ure gevat om daar te kom, want ek moes eers aansoek doen vir ‘n staatsmotor en toe kon ek eers gaan. Toe is daai hele skool al ‘n wrak en die kind sit doer onder in die skool se erf en almal is ontwrig, omdat ek nie betyds ‘n staatsmotor kon kry nie. Nou kan jy vra hoekom gebruik ek nie my eie motor nie. Wel ek gaan nie elke keer as daar ‘n probleem is my eie motor gebruik nie, dit is ‘n bietjie baie gevra as ek ‘n ongeluk kry, wie betaal dan daarvoor?

Soos die toestand nou is, is dit regtig ‘n probleem om my werk te kan doen en die skole voel dit ook, hoor. Hulle voel dit, want die skool het ‘n nood aan sielkundiges. Jy kan by elke skool gaan klop en hulle sal vir jou sê: “Ons het ‘n nood aan sielkundiges.”

Baie van die gegoede skole het die hulle eie sielkundiges, arbeisterapeute en spraakterapeute aangestel, maar wat van die wat dit nie kan bekostig nie? Daar is ‘n groot klomp leerlinge wat hierdie dienste nodig het, maar dit nie kan bekostig nie. Hulle het so ‘n groot nood aan hulp, dat jy so sleg voel dat jy nie kan help nie. Jy kan nie help nie want jy mag nie. Jy mag nie kinders individueel sien nie. Jy mag slegs die onderwyser verwys na die SOS. Ons stig mos nou hierdie school based support teams (SOS) by skole en die taak van die sielkundiges is om hierdie SOS op te lei sodat die onderwyisers met kinders met probleme dit by hierdie SOS aanmeld en dan vir die onderwyser dan raad gee, hoe om dit te hanteer. Dit werk goed vir die sagte gevalle, maar op die oomblik kan veral die minder gegoede skole dit glad nie hanteer nie. Dit is vir hulle vreemd. Hulle word te gou gekonfronteer met ‘n ding wat hulle nie kan doen nie.

Jy gee vir hulle opleiding, hulle gaan na workshops toe, maar daai mense weet nie hoe om dit te hanteer nie. Die onderwyisers word so oorlaai en vir my is dit ‘n ding as ‘n kind
in die skool is en hy het byvoorbeeld ‘n gedragsprobleem. ‘n Onderwyser het nie daai opleiding om uit te vind wat is die kind se probleem nie. Hulle sal sê sit hom in ‘n hoekie of stuur hom na die sportgronde of iets, maar hulle het nie die opleiding om die kind te help nie, en daar is honderde van hulle.

Nou hoe moet ons help, want daar is baie van hulle en ons is maar net drie sielkundiges en ons het omtrent 200 skole om te bedien? Nou jy kan na my lys skole kyk, dit is so 65 skole wat ek moet hanteer. Jy mag nie meer toets nie. Jy moet in die kind se oë kyk en sê, juffrou, dit is sy probleem.

Ek kan nie raad gee as ek nie ‘n kind geassesseer het nie – ek kan nie. Dit gaan nie om IK-toetse of enige ander toetse nie, maar hoe gaan dit by die huis, hoe gaan dit by die skool – is dit daal ‘n kind onderwyserprobleem? Daar is duisende belangrike relevante inligting wat nodig is. Die kind het gedragsproeleme. In die teekamer word vertel hoe stout is Thabo. Almal het dus ‘n negatiewe gevoel teenoor hom, as hulle hom moet help is die gevoel negatief. Daarom sê ek dat die Teacher Support Team oor die algemeen nie kan werk nie. Op ‘n beperkte skaal kan hy werk. As die kind nie kan lees nie, weet jy nog steeds nie hoekom hy nie kan lees nie. Miskien is dit ‘n emosionele probleem, hy word dalk gemolesteer.

Hoe kan jy nou vir die onderwysers leer wat jy in 7 jaar geleer het en met jou verdere ervaring. Hulle het nie die agtergrond nie, hulle het nie sielkundiges geword nie, omdat hulle onderwysers wou wees. Mens se benadering is mos totaal en al verskillend en soos ek weer sê die mense smag na hulp van ons.

Dan sal ek nou beplan om uit te gaan en so ‘n span te gaan bystaan, dan word daar net vir my gesê daar is ‘n vergadering in Johannesburg jy moet 9-uur daar wees en alles is van die tafel af. Jy hol oor Johannesburg toe en luister wat daar gesê word en jy kom terug en jy het niks, niks, niks konstruktief gedoen nie. Ja, mens voel verskriklik depressief.”
Werk julle dus nou meer voorkomend as destyds?

“Wel ek kan nie sê ons werk eers voorkomend nie. As jy by ‘n skool kom is daar alreeds hierdie tien, twintig probleme. Ek was gister by Mamelodi en daar het ses van die span om my gesit en daar is 20 swaar gevalle, nie sagte gevalle, wat ek daar met hulle moes bespreek het en probeer raad gee, sonder dat ek enige ondersoekte gedoen het.”

Wat is u pligte deesdae?

“Weet jy deesdae is my pligte…dis baie. Ek het nou reeds genoem van die opleiding van die spanne. Die ander is: Ek dien op die voedingskema, woon vergaderings en workshops by, en kyk of die kinders gevoed word en dan moet ek dit gaan monitor by die skole om te sien of dit reg gebeur by die skole. Dan doen ek special concessions. Dit is hierdie ekstra tyd wat die matrikulante kry, maar dit het ons nog altyd gedoen. Doen ook die vrystelling van skoolplig. Jy mag nie die kind toets nie. Die kind moet met verslae reeds na jou kom, dan voel jy as sielkundige soms dat dit vir die kind beter sal wees om ‘n jaar te wag, maar die wet sê die kind moet skool toe gaan. Die ouer het geen sê nie. Jy moet dus as sielkundige teen jou eie grein ingaan en die kind skool toe stuur. Soos jy dus kan sien doen ek deesdae bitter min opvoedkundige sielkundige werk, dit terwyl die skole smag na ons dienste.

Daar word aangeneem dat die kind dan deur die OBE-stelsel sal hulp kry en ook vanaf die distrik se kant af. Maar hoe kan hy hulp kry? Daar is te veel skole en te min sielkundiges.

Ek doen ook teenage pregnancy workshops en HIV workshops. Dit is basies sulke dinge wat ons doen. En dit terwyl die skole skreeu na sielkundige hulp. Dit is wat hulle wil hê, hulle wil nie al hierdie ander dinge hê nie.

LSEN word nie aangespreek nie; wat basies nou gebeur is dat die skool sal sê dat die kind nie die mas opkom nie, en ons versoek om hom na ‘n spesiale skool toe te stuur. Dan stuur ons hom en dan weet ons nie of hy regtig ‘n kandidaat vir die skool is nie. Hy word nie getoets nie, want ons mag nie, ons moet die onderwyser se woord aanvaar. Dit is verskriklik.
Ons mag nie toets nie, of kinders individueel sien nie, maar ons mag nou interns vat, en
ek weet nie hoe rym dit nou nie. Ek kry toe 'n intern verlede jaar. Wel op die ou end kon
sy nie haar interskap kry nie want ons funksioneer nie meer so dat sy die opleiding kon
kry wat sy moes nie. Ek het toe vir die Health Council laat weet dat ons nie meer interns
can oplei nie want ons sien nie meer kliente nie, al is ons opgeleide sielkundiges.
Daardie intern het haar tyd hier gemors en is mislei, want ek het vir haar gesê sy kan nie
dit by ons doen nie maar ons hoof het gesê sy kan.

Ons sielkundiges word frustreer. In die ou bedeling was ek gelukkig en het ek gevoel ek
lever 'n diens. Nou elke keer as jy wil diens lever word daar 'n stok in die speek
gesteek, want jy mag nie en jy sit mageloos en toekyk. Baie sielkundiges is oorgeplas
na ander poste soos kurrikulim, terwyl hier baie van ons personeel is wat nie opgeleide
sielkundiges is nie, maar in die poste sit. Wat ons ook doen is die matriekeksamens en
dan gaan die hele distrik uit of jy nou probleme by die skool hanteer of nie.”

**Hoe het die veranderings u geraak?**

“Daar is in 1996 vir ons gesê dat ons moet onthou dat hulle ‘very flexible’ is. En met
groot entoesiaisme het ek begin en gedink dat ek kreatief sal kan wees en nie ingeperk
sal wees nie. Dit is nie so nie, ons word baie rigied vertel wat om te doen. Dit breek ‘n
ou se motivering en dit is eintlik elke dag op mens se lippe. I am feeling demotivated. I
am feeling I want to run away. I am feeling helpless. Dit is ‘n stryd en dit is die gevoel
wat dwarsdeur loop. Baie sielkundiges het geloop en privaatpraktyke begin.

Hierdie mense het nie ‘n waardering vir die vaardighede van sielkundiges nie. Ek weet
nie waarom gaan hulle nie na die skole toe nie en vra wat het julle van ons nodig nie.

Die skole sé ons soek sielkundiges. Ons soek hulle op die perseel. Ons het hulle nodig
elke dag. Maar dit word misken.

Dit is nou maar die gevoel en dit is waarom ek ook maar gaan bedank. Ek kan dit eintlik
nie meer hier uithou nie, om die waarheid te sê. Ek kan nie meer ‘n diens lever nie. Ek
lever nie ‘n diens deur ‘n workshop te hou en byvoorbeeld te praat oor Aids nie.”
Beskryf julle bedrywighede in verband met die nuwe Witskrif?

“Ons is nou daarmee gemoeid. Ons is besig met die oudits. Elkeen het drie dae gekry waarin hy saam met ‘n persoon, wat die departement aangestel het, waarvan party geen kwalifikasies het nie. Die persoon wat saam met my gegaan het, het geen kwalifikasies gehad nie. Sy is uit die kombuis vanaf haar drie kindertjies weggevat – sy het vir my gesê. Sy het geen kwalifikasies nie, maar sy is die navorser. Ek as die sielkundige is net daar om vir haar die deure oop te maak en om aan die skole te sê “Ek is die distrik.” Sy mag hier inkom en die vrae vra, maar tog agter die deur gebruik hulle ons ook om hulle te help, want hulle kan nie die werk doen nie. Dit is te veel ook, maar tog word hulle betaal en ‘n goeie bedrag ook en hulle is die sogenaamde navorser. Hulle skryf die verslae oor skole, wat nie vir my reg is nie, want hoe kan ‘n persoon wat nie ‘n onderwyskwalifikasie het nie, by ‘n skool instap en observeer en ‘n verslag oor die skool skryf. Dit is mos nie professioneel nie. Daarmee was ons nou vir drie dae besig. Was ‘n groot tyd mors, want die distrik moes daar wees en ook iemand van hoofkantoor. Die persoon van die hoofkantoor het nie een van die drie dae opgedaag nie. Dit was die navorser en ek, en ek het ander belangrike werk gehad om te doen, maar geweet dat ek dit sou moes doen.

Hulle is dus nou besig om te kyk watter skole gaan hulle die beste verleen as ‘n resource centre. Wat hulle dan beplan is dat die resource sentrums dan die distrik sal help en dan die gemeenskap van diens te wees. Sommige van hierdie spesiale skole het nie sielkundiges nie.”

Hoe sal u die sentrums verander dat hulle weer funksioneel is?

“Weet jy, as ek kyk na wat my skole soek en wil hê sal ek sê daar moet meer sielkundige dienste gelewer word. Daar moet sulke areas wees waarin sê vier skole saamgهجreepeer word en dan bedien word deur sielkundiges, arbeidsterapeute en spraakterapeute. Met ander woorde ‘n span per area. Dus baie meer sielkundiges en hulpsentrums, en die sentrum kan ook moontlik by ‘n skool in die area gestasioneer wees.
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Subject # 3

Wanneer het u begin by die Onderwyshulpsentrum?

“In 1993.”

Tot wanneer was u in diens van die sentrum?

“Tot 1995.”

U was dus nog daar voor dinge vreeslik verander het?

“Ja.”

Wat was julle werkswyse?

“Die skoolhoofde het gewoonlik die aanmeldingsvorm ingevul of ‘n verslag geskryf en dit dan na die sentrum gestuur. Ons was ingedeel – ons het elkeen ‘n aantal skole gehad saam met jou ortodidaktikus en spraaktherapeut, as jy byvoorbeeld die ortopedagoog was. Dan het ons op ‘n Vrydag ‘n multidissiplinêre vergadering gehou en dan is die lêers uitgedeel vir die spesifieke skole en die personeel wat die skole bedien. Dus het jy dan jou aanmeldings gekry, en dan het jy gekyk na die probleem wat aangemeld is, en dan het jy na die skool toe gegaan en ‘n onderhoud met die onderwyser gehad. Dan het jy die kind gesien en hom dan getoets as dit nodig was. Dan het jy ‘n onderhoud met die ouers gehad en begin met die terapie en die ouer- en onderwysersbegeleiding.

As skole krisisse gehad het, het hulle gebel. So byvoorbeeld ‘n situasie wat ek moes hanteer: Die dogtjtjie se pa en ma was geskei en hy het die ma se vriend by die skool doodgeskiet en homself doodgeskiet terwyl al die kleintjies besig was om uit hulle klasse te kom en hulle het dit gesien en was baie ontsteld en ek moes gaan hulp verleen en hulle stabiliseer. Die hulpsentrums het dus ‘n baie noodsaaklike diens gelewer.

Daar is baie kinders wat met probleemouers sit en ook ouers wat geskei is en geweldige emosionele probleme het, wat deurwerk na die skoolwerk toe. Soms verbeter die
skoolwerk as die emosionele probleme opgelos is. 'n Uiterse belangrike diens, veral nou.

Daar is ook kruisverwysings gedoen."

**Hoe het julle by die skole gekom?**

"Ons het staatsmotors gehad en daarmee het jy by jou skole gekom."

**Hoe sal u sê behoort die hulpsentrums te funksioneer?**

"Daar is baie groot nood, die hulpsentrums moet voortbestaan. Mense het baie probleme. So sukkel ander om by te bly as gevolg van die groot druk wat daar op hulle is. Klasse is te groot. Die onderwysers kan nie meer aan die kinders die aandag gee wat hulle sou wou nie, hulle kan nie, dit is net onmoontlik en die kinders raak verlore. Die ideaal sou wees as daar meer onderwyshulpsentrums sou wees met genoeg sielkundiges en ander personeel om aan die nood vir hulle dienste te voorsien.

As privaatpraktisyn kan ek sien dat die hulpsentrums 'n noodsaaklike diens lever. Die mediese fondse raak al hoe meer swakker en baie van hulle skakel sielkundige dienste en hulp, arbeidsterapie en spraakterapie heeltemal uit. Dit terwyl ouers al hoe meer druk ervaar om finansieel vir hulle kinders te sorg by skole, sal nie meer private dienste vir hulle kinders kan bekostig nie, want die mediese fondse betaal nie meer toereikend daarvoor nie, of het 'n baie klein limiet vir hierdie dienste.

Die staat sal iets moet doen, mense kan nie meer sielkundige dienste bekostig nie omdat die mediese fondse nie meer daarvoor betaal soos in die verlede nie. Die verwagting tussen die medici is dat daar oor so drie of vyf jaar glad nie meer mediese fondse gaan bestaan nie."
Subject # 4 (Sentrumhoof)

Weet u wat die geskiedenis van die Onderwyshulpsentrums is?

“Die baie vroëer geskiedenis weet ek nie presies van nie, maar daar het ’n behoefte ontstaan – hoe kan die mense gehelp word? Toe het hulle klinieke of sentrums, dis daai jare klinieke genoem, begin. Johannesburg het een gehad, Pretoria en toe later ook Pietersburg. Toe is dit uitgebrei na Potchefstroom en later was daar tien in Transvaal. En daar het hulle toe nou ouens aangestel. ‘Skuus ek moet ’n bietjie vroëer teruggaan.

Heel in die begin onder andere Dr. Wolmarans, Dr. Bekker en nog so drie van hulle. Hulle het Transvaal gehad. Hulle het destyds na skole gegaan en groep IK-toetse gedoen en as daar ’n ernstige geval was dan werk hulle met hom daar. Dan gaan hulle weer na die volgende skool toe. Hulle het programme gehad wat so oor die hele Transvaal gestrek het. Dan is hulle nou in Oos-Transvaal, dan is hulle in Johannesburg-Sentraal en dan in Pretoria en so aan. Wat hulle doen is groep IK-toetse, nog die ou een, en dan gewoonlik so die st 4’s en 5’s getoets. Dit het nou alles so in die jare 40 gebeur. Om te bepaal watter tipe rigting en skool die kinders moes bywoon en volg. IK-toetse is ook gedoen om probleme vroeegtydig raak te sien en op te volg.

Dit was net hierdie drie-vier ouens wat so rondgegaan het. Toe het hulle later gekom om die sentrums of klinieke te stig. Ek weet Johannesburg, Pretoria, Pietersburg, Potchefstroom en aan die Oos-Rand en die Rand is daar klinieke gestig. Daar was uiteindelik 10 gestig.

Rondom 1968, ‘69, ek kan nie die datum presies onthou nie, het hulle toe besluit om die behoefte te bepaal. Ons, die kommitie waarop ook Prof Joubert, Hein Steyn en Dr. Blueburg (hy was in die sentrum daar onder in Sentraal. Hy en ek was nog onderwysers op daai tyd, maar deel van die komitee.) gedien het. Ons het so eenmaal in ’n maand vergader. Ons het toe probeer vasstel wat doen die klinieke en wat is die behoeftes van die skole.

Die besluit is toe later geneem dat hulle by elke hoërskool ’n gekwalifiseerde persoon sal aanstel en dat die voedingslaerskole ook deur hom bedien sal word. Hulle het toe op
daai stadium remediërende onderwysers gehad in die Departement. Daar was egter slegs so een of twee, 'n druppel water in die emmer. Hulle het probeer maar kon nie veel uitrig nie. Party was ook nie opgelei nie en was Grade-onderwysers. Toe besluit hulle, nee, hierdie ding werk nie. Toe besluit hulle elke hoërskool sal soort van 'n sentrum wees. Elke hoërskool sal 'n voorligter kry, maar hy moet gekwalifiseerd wees met ten minste 'n gespesialiseerde BEd. Dan sou 'n orthodidaktikus aangestel word wat ook gekwalifiseerd is. Hierdie persoon sal die ondersoek en IK's doen.

Toe gaan die aanbevelings deur Departement toe. Die volgende idee wat ontstaan het, was dat daar in elke gebied 'n sentrum sal ontstaan. Toe begin ons in Norwood. Op die ou end het elke twee eenhede 'n sentrum gehad. Daar was toe 24 sulke sentrums gestig. Hierdie 24 sentrums het toe goed gewerk en toe het hulle hulle beywer om vir elke eenheid so 'n sentrum te stig. Toe het die Morningside-sentrum ontstaan (ons sentrum). Gevolglik was daar nou 48 sentrums.

Toe kom hulle met die gedagte dat elke sentrum 'n sentrumhoof moet kry. Daar was nie hoofde van sentrums nie. Ons was voorsitters gewees. Ek was 'n voorsitter en het toe hoof geword na die besluit. Met die besluit is die eenhede toe weer twee-twee bymekaar gevoeg. Toe besluit hulle dat die hoofde tenminste 'n MEd-graad moet hê.

Toe kon ons nou net lekker begin werk. Ons het spraakterapeute gekry en 'n sosiopedagoog. 'n Pos wat nie lekker gepas het nie. Daardie persoon moet 'n gekwalifiseerde maatskaplike werker gewees het. Ons het in daai rigting gewerk. Die vereiste het toe ook deurgekom dat alle personeel 'n MEd-graad moet hê en geregistreer wees by die Mediese Raad asook skoolondervinding sal hê, alvorens hulle by 'n sentrum aangestel sal word. Mense wat nie 'n toepaslike MEd-kwalifikasie gehad het nie, is toe tyd gegun om dit te bekom, asook registrasie.

Jy weet mos die skole het aangemeld en dan het ons na hulle gegaan. Kyk ons kon dubbel ons personeel gehad het om in die behoefte te voorsien. 'n Ander gedagte waaraan gewerk was, was dat elke hoërskool sielkundiges en sentrumpersoneel sou gehad het, wat die voedingslaerskole sou bedien het, met die regte salaris daaraan verbonde natuurlik. Dit sou definitief uiteindelik so ontwikkel het. Jy sien, dan het hy baie
meer mense gehad om die diens suksesvol te bedryf. Dit sou ook by die Swart, Indiër- en Kleurlingskole gebeur het. Maar dit gaan weer eens om geld.

Ek dink ons werkwyse was goed. Ons het altyd multidissiplinêr gewerk. Die skool het hulle aanmeldings sentrum toe gestuur. Die sekretaresse het vir elke aanmelding 'n lêer oopgemaak. Dan het ons by ons vergadering die lêers bespreek en gekyk wat is nou die dringendste behoefte, is dit RO of beroeps of emosioneel of spraak of arbeidsterapeuties. Dan is dit so aan die persoonneellid gegee en as hy klaar is, is dit vir die volgende een vir aandag gegee.

Transvaal het begin met die Klinieke en dit redelik ver gegaan, met groot sukses. Die Kaap en ander provinsies het ook klinieke gehad, maar op 'n kleiner skaal as die Transvaal.

Dis jammer dat alles toe later verval het. Die nuwe bedeling se mense het geen begrip gehad wat ons probeer doen het nie. Hulle het dit glad nie verstaan nie en kon ook nie verstaan hoe ons gefunksioneer het nie.”
Subject # 5

Kan u vir my sê hoe die hulpsentrums ontstaan het?

"Die ontstaan van die hulpsentrums is nie honderd persent bekend nie. Dit was ook redelik voor my tyd, maar ek weet dat daar binne die Kaapse Onderwyssisteem, binne die hoofkantoor 'n paar persone was wat in beheer van die diens was, met persone met spesifieke afdelings ten opsigtte van spesiale onderwys en dan ook remediërende onderwys en voorligting, en van hieraf was dit dan gedesentraliseer, na die verskillende sentrums, wat strategies geplaas was, oor die destydse Kaap-Provinsie. Waarheen dan binne die plattelandse opset die groter plekke, dan ook sentrums gehad het. Andersins was daar 'n persoon, wat op rondreisende vlak die dienste gelewer het.

Die personeel verbonde aan 'n sentrum was eers tweeërlei. Eerstens die kliniek-personeel wat voltyds in die kliniek was en dan ook byvoorbeeld remediërende onderwys en remediërende leerkrante, wat onder die beheer van die kliniek was. Dan het jy ook die sielkundige personeel gehad, wat rondreisend was en binne skoolverband evaluerings gedoen het. Ongelukkig het baie skole hulle begin sien as ouens wat net ge-evalueer het vir spesiale onderwys. Hierdie persone het dan die evaluerings binne skoolverband gedoen en die kinders wat hulle dan geag het as kandidate vir byvoorbeeld remediërende onderwys, is dan verwys na die skoolkliniek toe. Dié wat gekwalifiseer het vir spesiale onderwys is dan so verwys. Meeste skole het spesiale klasse gehad."

Was daar hulpklasse by skole?

"Spesiale klasse is soms hulpklasse genoem, maar was in wese 'n spesiale klas vir die sub-normale kind."

Dit was dus nie soos in die Transvaal 'n klas vir remediërende leerlinge nie en wat dan weer na 'n tyd noodwendig teruggeplaas is hoofstroom toe nie?

"Nee, die sillabus was 'n verskraalde sillabus van wat in die hoofstroom gebruik is, met ook op die laerskool 'n praktiese komponent."

Leerlinge wat op remediëring aangewese was, was individuele leerlinge, wat deur die remediërende personeel besoek was by die skole. Daar was enkele skole wat geïdentificeer was en waar daar voltydse remediërende leerkrags aangestel was, maar dit was vir ’n paar van die groter skole en hulle was min.

Dit was so totdat die sisteem ’n bietjie verander het en dat ook die kliniek se personeel veldwerk gedoen het en uitgegaan het na die skole en nie slegs meer kantoorgebonde was nie. Later is remediërende ondewys dan ook in groepverband gedoen, soos die behoefte ontstaan en die getalle toegeneem het.”

**Dit was toe die bedeling tot en met watter jaar?**

“Met die oorname en die nuwe bedeling wat gekom het, het die dinge verander. Die Oos-Kaap was altyd deel van die KOD (Kaprovinsie se Onderwysdepartement) en nou het ons van hulle afgestig. Daar was vergaderings in 1994, ’95 en ’96, het dit oorgekom dat verschillende hulpdienste soos hy bestaan het in die verschillende eks-onderwysdepartemente in die Oos-Kaap, het elkeen sy verschillende tipe dienste gehad so ook die ou Ciskei en Transkei Departemente. Daar was redelik baie vergaderings. ’n Direktoraat is toe gestig by hoofkantoor met personeel om die proses te bedryf. Die proses van samesmelting. In 1996 het daar toe die brief uitgekom, wat bepaal het dat jou spraak- en gehoor-mense toe deel word van die Hulpsentrums waar hulle eers nie deel was van die diens nie, en toe word ons een diens binne die Oos-Kaap.

Die werkswyse was dus dat die kliniek personeel op kantoor gebly het en mense op kantoor gesien het en dat die veld personeel uitgegaan het skole toe. Later het almal veldpersone geword en uitgegaan na die skole. Die naam is toe ook verander vanaf Kliniek na Hulpsentrum.

Jy is toe ’n reistoelaag betaal om by die skole te kom. Jy het nie ’n staatsmotor gehad nie. Nou met die KOD-sisteem was daar ongeveer 40 laerskole en so stuk of 12 hoërskole. Die personeel was dus net verantwoordelik vir hierdie aantal skole. Met die nuwe bedeling is die ander skole bygevoeg en het die vraag na dienste aansienlik uitgebrei. So veel so dat hierdie sentrum byvoorbeeld nog Humansdorp ensovoorts
bygekry het. Daar was nou meer as 100 000 leerlinge wat gebruik kon maak van die diens. Gevolglik het die diens baie verskraal. Saam hiermee, omdat die diens toe nog nie binne 'n organogram 'n postoeKenning gehad het nie, is enige persoon wat bedank of afgetree het, se pos nie gevul nie. Dus was daar 12 remediërende werkkragte en daar is nou slegs vyf oor. Daar was ook 10 tot 12 spraak- en gehoorpersoneel. Hulle is ook nou vyf. Soos die personeel afgeneem het, het die vraag na die diens vergroot en meer bekend geraak, wat noodwendig die gevolg gehad het dat sisteem aangepas moes word.

Dus het die remediërende personeel baie meer moes konsentreer op die toerusting van die leerkrags om die leerprobleme in hulle skole self te hanteer. By skole is toe die Learner Support Teams gestig om dan as eerste ingrypingslinie te dien.

Daar is tans 23 distrikte wat selfvoorsienend moet raak wat betref die oorhoofse diens, volgens die Witskrif. Veral in die afgelope jare is daar nog nie 'n sisteem wat eenvormig werk nie.

Ons het gedurende '94, '95 en '96 'n roadshow gehad waar ons die diens aan skole verduidelik het. Al drie die bene van die diens naamlik die Sielkundige dienste, Remedial, and Speech and Hearing. Die aanmeldings het dus dramaties toegeneem en terselfdertyd het die personeel aansienlik verminder. Daar was Hulpsentrums op Uitenhage, Oos-Londen, Port Elizabeth en Grahamstad. Die persoon wat die Oos-Londen Sentrum beman het, het bedank en daardie pos is nooit gevul nie, gevolglik het daardie sentrum ophou bestaan. Uitenhage Sentrum wat vier personeellede gehad het, het nou slegs een persoon oor as gevolg van aftrede, ensovoorts. PE was in die posisie dat persone van die vorige departemente hierna toe oorgeplaas is. Ons is gelukkig genoeg om ook 'n enkele Xhosaspreker persoonneellid te hê, wat hiernatoe oorgeplaas is. Die organogram is nog nie uitgewerk nie en van die personeel kan nog nie geplaas word nie as gevolg van laasgenoemde.

Met die aantal skole wat met die nuwe bedeling bygekom het, het ons die omgaan na skole-werkswyse gestaak en slegs op verwysings gewerk. Met die vertraging en latere staaak van die uitbetaling van reisgelde vir die terapeute kon hulle net nie meer die skole besoek nie. Daar was slegs van tyd tot tyd staatsvervoer beskikbaar, wat dan ook
gebruik is. Die sisteem moes dus verander want dit was onmoontlik vir die personeel om al die skole te besoek wat in die bedieningsgebied van die sentrum bestaan. Hulle besoek nog sekere skole op ‘n gereelde grondslag en dan is daar skole wat gereeld met raad en leiding bedien word. Op hierdie stadium werk ons nog aan die verwysings van 2001. Jy kry goed ‘n paar honderd verwysings per jaar.

Daar was ook multiprofessionele vergaderings waarbinne gevalle bespreek is en kruisverwysings plaasgevind het. Daar was egter nooit ‘n arbeidsterapeut verbonde aan die diens nie. Daar was ook noue samewerking tussen die Sentrum en die Departement van Gesondheid.

Aangesien daar geen leiding van Pretoria gekom het nie, het die sentrum maar ‘n werkswyse geïmplementeer wat vir hom onder die omstandighede gewerk het. Die idee om meer voorkomend te werk het nie gerealiseer soos dit beplan was nie as gevolg van die personeeltiekort en ander onderbrekings. Die verwysingsisteem het verder druk op personeel veroorsaak, dat ‘n mens baie daarmee besig was. Daar kom nie genoegsame inligting vanaf die Departement oor ons funksionering nie. Daar is ook projekte soos die matriekeksamen ensovoorts wat deurkom, maar die feit is jy is vasgevang, want daar kom nie ‘n idee deur nie.

Van ons funksioneer nog soos ouds, omdat daar nie duidelike riglyne vir ons gegee is nie. Jy moet ook onthou dat soos die werkswyse by skole verander – soos OBE het hulle nood ook vergroot en dat hulle meer ondersteuning verg. Die enigste manier om dit te verander is as ons ‘n departementele beleid het wat sê dat vanaf hierdie datum funksioneer die volgende stelsel, maar die bestaande sisteem kan hoegenaamd nie voorsien in die behoefte wat daar is nie. Die terapeute word soms beskuldig deur skole dat hulle nie wil help nie.

Daar is ook al tuisprogramme uitgewerk vir sekere probleme sodat ook die ouers betrokke kan wees om die nood te help verlig. Ons het ook al van die oogkundiges wat gratis toetse doen vir ons. So ons poog op allerlei wyses om te help, maar die feit bly dat die dienste ongemaklik raak.”
Was daar beroepsvoorligters by die Sentrums?

“Nee, maar elke hoërskool het ’n voorligter gehad wat hierdie werk gedoen het. Hierdie persoon het vir ’n kwart van sy tyd gewone onderwys gegee en die res van die tyd voorligting. Toe leerkrags gesny word is van hierdie mense anders aangewend en later is die poste heeltemal afgeskaf. Die personeel van die Sentrum het toe as ’n eintlike vakadviseur vir die voorligter gedien.”

Wie lewer nou die diens?

“Enkele skole het nog voorligters. Van die leerareas in OBE val binne hierdie verband, maar daar is nog nie duidelikheid hieroor nie. Soos ek dit sien sal hierdie diens moet herleef.”

Is julle terapeute dus nog besig met hulle professionele werk of doen hulle nou ook dinge soos die voedingskemas?

“Tot ’n sekere mate. Daar is gesê dat daar groter betrokkenheid by projekte moet plaasvind en dat minder individuele werk moet plaasvind. Ons is verlede week in kennis gestel dat ons betrokke sal raak by die opleiding van onderwysers oor VIGS. Dit sal ’n mannekragtekort weer eens oplewer, wat sal beteken dat die aanmeldings weer eens nog langer sal moet wag.

Sommige skole het al hulle eie sielkundiges en remediërende praktisyns aangestel. Sommiges het selfs arbeidsterapeute. Dit is egter slegs die skole, wat binne sy struktuur kan bekostig wat hierdie weg kan volg. Daar is ’n groot gros skole wat dit nie kan bekostig nie.

Dan is daar nog ’n groot klomp skole wat nog nie bereik is nie en wat nog nie van die diens gebruik maak nie en nog nie daarvan weet nie. ’n Mens moet nou terwyl daar nie ’n vaste beleid is nie, steeds probeer om die diens te lewer, maar die aanmeldings soos dit nou is, is alreeds te veel. Jy lewer ’n diens in so verre jy kan.
Daar is dus twee groepe wat nog nie gediens word nie en dit is die groep skole wat nie weet van die diens nie, of daarvan weet, maar nie die selfvertroue het om aan te meld nie, want hulle weet miskien nie hoe nie. Dan is daar die leerlinge wat alreeds geïdentificeer is vir sekere hulp en terapie, maar dit nêrens kan bekostig nie. Selfs eenvoudige aanbevelings wat mediese implikasies het, maar omdat dit nêrens aangebied word – ek wil veral hier wys op probleme met visie. Daar is nêrens in die Baai waar ’n persoon wat ’n oogprobleem het ’n volledige diens kan kry nie as hy dit nie kan bekostig nie. Ons het met privaat praktisyns al gereel vir screenings, maar om ’n bril te kry bly ’n groot krisis vir onder andere die laerskoolkind. Daar is van die skole wat ’n kliniekdag het en op kliniekdag kan jy gaan en dan kry jy die bril vir ’n derde van die prys. Jy moet egter nog steeds betaal.

In die ou sisteem het jy die skoolsusters gehad wat die skole besoek het en waarmee ons kon saamwerk. Gestel ’n oogprobleem. Jy het dit na die skoolsuster verwys en sy het dan ’n verwysing gemaak na ’n privaat praktisyn en die staat het dan die koste gedra. Jy kon dus diens lewer aan mense wat dit nie kon bekostig het nie. Tot en met selfs nog verlede jaar was daar ’n dame waarheen ons kon verwys het. Sy het egter afgetree en is nie vervang nie.

Met die samesmelting van die Departemente he t daar struwelinge ontstaan oor waar hierdie mense gehuisves moes word en die gevoel was dat hulle nie by die skooldienste gehuisves moes word nie, maar by gesondheidsdienste, wat toe ook gebeur het. Gevolglik het die mense meer by klinieke betrokke geraak en waar hulle voorheen ’n diens aan die skole gelewer het, het dit nie meer bestaan nie, want hulle het nie meer by die skole uitgekom nie.

Hierdie is ’n groot probleem vir die remediërende personeel want ons het grootliks op die susters gesteun vir hulp en raad en ook intervensies. Hulle het ook soms kinders se huise besoek om hulp te verleen met die gesondheid van die kind. Nou het dit heetemal verval.

Hulle het gesê dat ’n plaasvervanging vir die diens ’n besoek aan die kliniek sal wees, maar ons hoor dat dit glad nie ’n uitkoms is nie. Ouers gaan klinieke toe en kry geen aandag daar nie, daar is ook geen medikasie beskikbaar nie, selfs nie eers vir iets so
eenvoudig as velkwale nie. Gevolglik neem die kinders se leerprobleme toe in die klas as gevolg van die ontbreking van mediese dienste. Verlede jaar het die hospitaal nie iemand gehad wat gehoor-evaluerings kon doen nie en ons het die diens vir hulle gelewer; hulle het mense per ambulans hierheen gebring."

**Watter ander probleme het julle beleef?**

"Ons het met rukke 'n staatsmotor gehad om na skole te gaan, of andersins is reis-toelae betaal. Reis-eise is nie meer uitbetaal nie. Dit is nou praktyk dat dit glad nie meer uitbetaal word nie. Ons was vir 'n lang tyd sonder telefone. Ons was vir lank sonder elektriese krag. Ons apparaat word nie onderhou nie. Ons sit met rekenaars wat die een na die ander oppak; hierdie een is my private eiendom. Apparate gaan agteruit en word nie meer vervang nie. Ons het vir 'n lang tyd gesukkel selfs om papier te kry. Ons het nou papier gekry maar dit gaan nie lank hou nie – papier en die fotostaatmasjien is die lewensbron van die Sentrum. Die tik van 'n brief kan 'n groot probleem wees want daar is of nie papier om dit op te druk nie, oft daar is nie 'n apparaat om dit op te tik nie. Die instandhouding van die gebou is 'n verdere krisis. Vandat dit oorgeskakel is vanaf die Kaapse Onderwysdepartement na die nuwe Oos-Kaapse Departement, is alle instandhouding 'n probleem. Ons bring maar van ons eie private apparate werk toe, net om met ons werk te kan voortgaan. 'n Mens voel jy moet dit nie doen nie, maar dan raak jy so desperaat dat jy dit wel doen en ook vir jou eie geestesgesondheid en werksatsfaksie. Alhoewel ons in 'n jammersisteem is, het 'n mens planne gemaak om steeds te funksioneer en daardeur gegroei. Ek het byvoorbeeld my eie programmatuur ontwikkeld in so 'n mate dat mense dit wil koop.

Boeke en ander bronne was altyd beskikbaar deur die Onderwysbiblioteek van die Kaapse Provinsie. Dit is na die afstigting nie meer vir ons beskikbaar nie.

Die privaat praktisyns kan net tot 'n sekere mate ons nood help verlig aangesien hulle ter wille van hulle eie oorlewing moet tariewe vir hulle dienste kry. Daar is dus 'n groot gaping tussen dienste benodig en wat die ouers kan bekostig vir dienste, veral ten opsigte van remediëring, arbeidsterapie en spraaktherapie.
Wat sal help is as ons sponsorships kan kry vir gesamentlike projekte met julle. Voorheen was RO-dienste gratis deur ons aangebied. Dit het nou in ’n groot mate verval, gesien in die lig van vyf RO’s vir 260 skole.”

Subjects # 6 – 12: Group interview

_Hoe het die sentrum voor 1994 en na 1994 na die afstigting van die Wes-Kaap gefunksioneer, en wat is die hindernisse?_

**No. 6:** “We regularly visit the local schools. We identified all the problems at a school. We also did the audiometric hearing test at schools. We also referred children to medical doctors. We also identified children with speech problems especially in the lower phases of the school like in Grade 1, and then give them lessons to correct their speech problems. We also did group work at schools to help children with their audio-perceptual problems.

Then the change came and no longer can we only do speech correction, only in a few exceptional cases. Anything in connection with health, psychology, remedial and other related fields are also now directed to us. We have a wide choice now, any of the projects we can become involved in. Basically we try to do a little bit everywhere.

The problem is that we sit with a shortage of staff and we still try to be loyal to the rendering of the past services, because there is still a need for us at the schools and in the community. At the same time our audiometers are letting us down. We only have two audiometers, and our transport is a problem as well. There are still a lot of children out there who need our care and intervention. We have been part of health services and the clinics up to 1997 and then we become part of the Centrums. We also then became part of remedial services, which lead to a loss of identity and complete confusion of what we were supposed to be doing.

You also have to be careful in answering the telephone. If you answer the telephone as “Remedial services”, people think that you are a remedial therapist. I think we should be called the remedial and speech staff.”
No.7. “Op hierdie stadium besoek ons nog skole soos die tyd ons toelaat en ons werk dus nie op ’n verwysingsisteem nie. Ons doen so twintig skole elk. Met die projekte en workshops wat ons aanbied bereik ons van die ander skole. Met die vervals van die hospitaaldiens vir gehooroetse, is al die gehooroetse na ons verwys en het ons dit gedoen. Pasiënte is per ambulans na ons toe gebring vir toetsing. Dit het aangehou totdat selfs ons oudiometer probleme begin gee het.

There is no budget for regular maintenance, so our audiometers cannot be serviced or fixed and we have to use them like they are. They need to be calibrated. We must try to calibrate them ourselves, knowing what our audiograph looks like as a basis, which is actually not satisfactory.

Our staff has decreased while the schools that need our service have increased tremendously. Transport to schools is a problem and all of the projects that we are involved in, is also time-consuming, with the result that you spend less and less time on what you feel you are supposed to be doing. We do not have time to do the screening test at schools any more for hearing and speech problems.

Ons kom net nie meer uit by dit wat ons moet doen nie. Ons is met so baie ander dinge besig. Ons kry ook nie meer genoeg kans om kinders te identifiseer en te plaas vir hulp nie, soos die plasing van leerlinge in Greenwood. Ons sal dus individuele toetsing en hulpverlening steeds moet doen, asook die begeleiding van die ouers en die onderwysers. Hierdie begeleidingsproses is besig om skipbreuk te lei omdat daar vanweë werksdruk net nie meer genoeg tyd is om dit alles te doen nie. Dit is amper pligsversuim van die onderwysstelsel se kant om nie aan hierdie leerlinge aandag te gee nie en om hulle nie betyds te identifiseer nie, want hulle probleme kan aanleiding gee tot leerprobleme, of die leerprobleem wat daar tans is kan versterk word om nog groter en moeiliker remedieerbaar te wees. Time will come were a parent will sue the Department for neglect.”

No. 8. “Ons het ’n mobiele eenheid nodig, wat volledig toegerus is met al die media, waarmee ons skole kan besoek en ’n multidissiplinêre diens lever. Ons het ’n motivering ingedien vir so ’n eenheid en sou dit kon kry, maar as gevolg van probleme
op departementele gebied het ons dit gemis en is dit aan ‘n ander streek toegeken. Daar was niemand wat ‘n beslissende besluit wou neem nie.”

No. 9. “I started as a remedial staff member in 1986 in Parow. We were 18 staff members who were responsible for four schools. We did individual remedial teaching and on an average of two years you work with the pupils that had been allocated to you.

Jy het dan as ‘n span saam met die spraak- en gehoorkorreksionis en sielkundige gewerk. Volledige terugrapportering en verslaghouding oor die leerlinge se vordering was aan die orde van die dag.”

No. 10. “I started in 1990 and work still on the same procedures as No. 9, but when the schools became more, we started to work in groups and also individual work.”

No. 11. “Ek het van ‘n skool as RO gekom. Die aanpassing was vir my moeilik. In die begin kon ons baie deeglik werk. Ons het ‘n maksimum van 12 kindertjies gehad waarmee ons gewerk het – dit was nou nog so in 1986, 1987. Daar was baie meer struktuur. Jy kon ‘n kind deurvat en nog langer met hom werk indien nodig. Jy het ook as ‘n multiprofessionele span gefunksioneer. Dit was baie bevredigend. Later het die aanmeldings te veel geword en moes ons in groepe begin werk en dit het vir my toe begin pleisters opplak, word. Dit het baie minder bevredigend begin raak, want jy kon nie meer die volle pad met die kind stap nie.”

No. 12 “Ek het in 1982 hier begin het maar op dieselfde proses as die ander gewerk. Baie individuele werk met hanteerbare ladings tot en met die verandering. Ek neem nog steeds kinders in groepe want ek maak nog steeds daarmee ‘n verskil in mense se lewens.”

No 8: “Ons het destyds ‘n tweede Sentrum gehad wat in PE-Noord geleë was, wat ook deel van ons Sentrum was en die noordelike areas bedien het. Die Sentrum bestaan egter lankal nie meer nie. Net die skole van die ou Kaapse Onderwysdepartement is gediens, die Kleurling- en Swart skole het hulle eie diens gehad wat hulle gediens het. Swart skole het remediërende adviseurs gehad en Kleurlingskole het remediërende personeel verbonde aan sekere skole gehad. Daar was nie rondreisende personeel nie.
Dit het eintlik die probeem veroorsaak met die samesmelting van die drie Departemente. Elkeen van die verskillende Departemente het hulle eie sisteme en prosedures van funksionering gehad. Die Kaapse Onderwysdepartement se sisteem was die beste toegerus met personeel, hulle het dan ook baie meer personeel gehad as die ander departemente.

Toe ek hier begin het in 1992 het ek twee skole gekry wat ek moes diens. I was told that a case load of 12 to15 learners would be adequate to do clinical remedial teaching with. All of these learners had been assessed by a psychologist and then they were allocated to me for a period of 6 to 24 months. Die kind was ingeskryf en daarna was ek verantwoordelik vir die kind se vordering. Verslae is gedurende Junie en September geskryf oor die kinders se vordering. Dit was ‘n hoogs formele proses. Daar was ‘n waglys en soos jy kinders afgehandel het is kinders vanaf jou waglys aan jou toegeken. Ons het altyd as ‘n span gewerk. Ons het ook by skole aan onderwyseresse raad gegee oor leerlinge in hulle klasse en hulle kon hulle probleme met ons bespreek al kon ons nie die kind inskryf as ‘n remediërende geval nie.

Hierdie wyse van werk het binne ‘n jaar verander. Skole het bygekom. Ons was toe 12 personeellede en personeel het verminder; soos mense pakette gevat het, afgetree en bedank het, is hulle nooit vervang nie ten spyte van ‘n groter werkslas.

Ons het ook saam met die personeelvermindering ook begin om die skole van die ou Departemente in te sluit by ons werksaamhede, wat die werkslas nog groter gemaak het. Na die afstigting het nog meer skole bygekom. Ons het toe ook begin om information lectures aan skole te gee. Dit was ‘n kwessie van in en uit wees by ‘n skool. Ons het ook lokale naby aan gebiede gekry waar ons werkswinkels aangebied het. Ons het dit gedoen as gevolg van die veiligheidsaspek omdat dit gevaarlik is om in sekere gebiede in te gaan. Hierdie proses het wel die onderwyser geselp, maar dit is nog nie remedial nie. You cannot train a class teacher to be a remedial therapist in one or two workshops.

It is not enough to only reach the teachers because they are overloaded and overworked and it is now reaching the point where we also will have to get the community involved to help the teacher.”
**Hoe gaan dit werk?**

“’n Ouer of ouers kan opgelei word om die onderwyser in die klaskamer te help en by te staan met kinders wat probleme het. Ook in die middae kan hierdie ouers die kinders help met huiswerk. Hierdie ouers sal opleiding en dan onderwyshulpmiddele moet ontvang.

Ons is besig nog met ander projekte ook wat die werk van kliniese remediëring moeiliker maak vanweë die tydsaspek. Ons vind dat baie van die probleme in die ou Departemente in skole gaan meer om leerlinge wat vanweë ‘n verskeidenheid van faktore nooit sekere dinge geleer is nie; so kry ons kinders in Graad 6 wat nog nie kan lees of spel nie. Ons vind ook dat soveel as 70% van leerlinge in ‘n klaskamer leerprobleme ondervind. Dit is duidelijk dat al hierdie kinders nie noodwendig leergestremd is nie, maar wel intervensie nodig het, wat die druk op die diens nog meer laat toeneem.

Some of the teachers have confessed to us that their teacher training was so disrupted by the political unrest at the time that they did not learn much, although they have their qualifications. So we are actually creating more learning problems. We should therefore help our teachers to help our children. We are now also advisors for these teachers and they are keen to get strategies that work.

The need for our old service also still prevails. Every school that we visit has a need for remedial services. OBE has also confused some teachers; some of them told us that now they do not teach number concepts. This is of course nonsense and I don’t believe that it was ever said like that, but in the early days of OBE there was such a lot of misconcepts of the implementation. Children are the casualties of this. Classroom remedial strategies should now be taught to teachers. We need a lot of manpower to do the identification of problems and then the training of teachers and then to implement programmes and also to do classical remedial work.
We have to get the parents to help and to train them as assistant teachers to help the teachers in classrooms. The teacher support teams are successful to a limited amount because we do not have the manpower to monitor and give the necessary assistance in the process.

Die motivering van die leerkragte kniehalter ook die proses. Die leerkragte is baie depressief in die Oos-Kaapse omgewing. The emotional health of the teachers are bad and when they have to face anything extra it is that last straw that will break the camel’s back. We also invited schools to attend our first meeting. Only three principals turned up, and if we do not have their support we experience problems to implement the process at schools.”

Subject # 13

“Maybe I must tell you were I fit in. We have seven districts in the Western Cape and I am responsible for this Centre. They are new. They started in August last year. They are called Education and Development Centres. They provide support and development to the schools in the district. We have got 270 primary and high schools in this district and other sites of learning. That brings the total to 442 sites of learning. I am responsible for Specialised Learner and Educator Support (SLES).

All the departments of the Department of Education are represented in the Centre. We’ve got Curriculum, Institutional Management, Governance and Administration. So the five of us are the management team of the district.

Before I was appointed in this job I was with a school clinic. Now I am responsible for three school clinics renamed now Educational Support Centres. Supporting the mainstream as well as specialised schools.

I was also the coordinator of the National Commission for Educational Support Services in 1996 to 1997. My particular interest is to make this new policy works. It is a wonderful opportunity to put all of that theory into practice.
It is in the early stages now. We try to work things out. In this component we have four school psychologists. Not all of them are educational psychologists. There is a big problem though. Not all of them are qualified and some of them are still studying. The demand, however, from schools is for high quality service and sometimes our people cannot cope, so we encourage the staff to study further and at least do their Masters. But this is an individual choice. The basic requirements are an appropriate BEd and then we provide in-service training for the counsellors so that they at least have the basic skills.”

**Are they then more on a counsellor level than on a psychologist level?**

“Yes because they are expected to do jobs that are beyond their training in a way…ehm…mm… because there are so few of them, 13 for 440 sites of learning, we have to be creative in the way we use them. There has been a major shift in the way that a psychologist works as compared to three, four, five years ago. Our basic model of service delivery is through the Teacher Support Team (TST). We try to start one at each and everyone of our schools. We started with this at the beginning of the year and only one third of our schools had these teams, it is now up to 50%. When it is working it is working very well. Because you've got this team at the school and the SLES sits on this team and by that it is a multiprofessional team. The schools refer their cases to the team, and only refer to us the cases that they really cannot cope with. That is when it is working well.

I must tell that it is sometimes difficult to start the process due to the internal dynamics at a school. Some teachers do not want to work as a team. For the school psychologists it is a tiring issue. Some of them were psychologists before and all that they have been doing was to test children for special class or adaptation class placement. Now we ask them to be psycho-educational consultants, sit on TST to give expert opinion on learning, emotional and behavioural problems, in a team concept. Other things that we require from them is to do a lot of in-service training, presenting of workshops which require other skills than work on a one-on-one basis. Some people like it, others are struggling with it.

If a child experiences a problem, the teacher refers the child to the TST. They then work with the child. They can also then invite us to come as a team and to give guidelines,
and if that is still not working, the child is referred to us for assistance and an assessment. We then will do an individual assessment if necessary.

Another thing that I want to mention is our learner support system that is also getting together now. We have phased out special classes and adaptation classes and those teachers will now be called Learning Support Teachers. They will now assist all the learning in the school. Not all schools have these Learner Support Teachers but we are in the process of loosening all of these posts from the establishment of the schools so that we at least have one learner support teacher for a few schools. These teachers would be on the TST.”

**How do teachers respond to this?**

“To be honest, it is a struggle to get them involved. They feel it is extra work. We try to motivate them, and we offer them training to be on the TST. We had a few schools who bought into it. We have used them to talk to the other schools and by that gained more access. It is very difficult to get this started because the teachers will tell you that they have already enough on their plate.”

**Do you have occupational therapists?**

“No, there is one post available, but it is not activated yet.”

**Do psychologists still do psychological work?**

“Yes, and more. They do preventative work, developing of programmes and so on. Also they are used more and more in multifunctioning groups, like for instance if we do OBE training the psychologist might go along to deal with the psychological issues. Limited testing and therapy is, however, done. We refer to professionals in the community.

In areas where parents cannot afford the services of a psychologist we try to help as far as we can. We complained about the fact that we get the same ratio of psychologist per learner as other areas, which we think is not fair. The schools are also complaining greatly. If you talk to the schools in this area they would tell you that they would like to
see more psychologists and other learner support professionals. I have decided to render at least a minum of services to all schools in this area. Some schools did not even know about us.

When we worked out the support that we could render, with our staff and psychologists, it did not look too good. It worked out as four hours of support to each school per term. What helped was that I told schools that this is all the help that we can give, so really think about what you want the psychologist to do.

I just want to point out that I had quite an advocacy battle here, because people had all kinds of perceptions about psychologists. Like for instance that psychologists are not relevant to the system. It was a problem to convince them that psychologists had a lot to contribute to the educational system, because it is amazing to see how little people know of what a psychologist is doing.

Another problem is that teachers are not well equipped for their jobs. They know absolutely nothing about special educational needs and learner support or barriers to learning, and I think this must be included in their training.

We just had a roadshow, where we gave parent guidance to the parents at schools.”

Where are you in the process of the implementation of the White Paper On Inclusive Education?

“We have established the district based teams and so on but we now need advocacy with our colleagues in other components. We are going to have workshops with principals. The audit is also now completed.”
**Subject # 14**

*What are the problems that you are experiencing?*

“A school psychologist is appointed at post level 3. The learning support teachers are on post level one, which makes it extremely difficult to fill these posts, because they have to give advice to other teachers and are not on a higher post level. We find it very difficult to fill our posts, there are just not enough qualified people to fill the posts.”

**Subject # 15**

*Hoe vind leerderondersteuning by julle plaas ?*

“Die wet oor inklusiewe onderwys is nog nie geïmplementeer in ons provinsie nie. Die plan is ’n plan van 15 tot 20 jaar vir die implementering van die wet. Ons het sielkundiges wat op distrik-vlak funksioneer en wat op hoofkantoor-vlak funksioneer. Sielkundiges wat op distrik-vlak funksioneer het skole wat aan hulle toegeken word en wat hulle diens. Dit werk nog steeds so. Ons het nog steeds 18 klinieke wat nog steeds bestaan.

Ons fokus nie meer op groeptoetse nie, maar die individuele evaluerings word nog steeds soos van ouds gedoen. Wat voorkomende werk aanbetref fokus ons hoofsaaklik op die Pre-Primêre fase en die Grondslagfase.

Die ou remediërende onderwysers is nou as leerondersteunings personeel aangestel om ook te help om die nood aan leerondersteuning te verlig. Ons is nou besig om die beleid van die TST te ontwikkela, sodat elke skool ’n TST sal hê. Onderwysers sal na die TST verwys wat, indien hulle nie kan help nie, dan na die skoolsielkundiges sal verwys.

Onderwysers voel dat die TST-pligte ’n ekstra belading kan wees. Of hierdie onderwysers wat op die span dien van ander aktiwiteite losgemaak kan word, hang van die skoolhoof af. Skole in die Wes-Kaap is besig om Learning Organisations te word.”
Hulle word bemagtig om hulle eie probleme te bestuur en te hanteer. Hulle kan dan inkoop wie hulle wil. Daar is ook die probleem van die skole wat dit nie kan bekostig om dienste in te koop nie.

Ons het tans poste vir skoolsielkundiges geadverteer. Daar is te min gekwalifiseerde sielkundiges om aan die nood te voldoen, gevolglik het ons die minimum vereistes as registrasie as psigometris by die Raad as ‘n vereiste gestel, of dan as counsellor. Ons verwag nie meer soos van ouds registrasie as sielkundige by die Raad nie. Ons het 72 sielkundige poste, waarvan driekwart gevul is met geregistreerde sielkundiges en baie van dié ander is besig om verder te studeer. Die meeste van dié klinieke het darem gekwalifiseerde sielkundiges.”

**Is daar arbeidsterapeute betrokke?**

“Arbeidsterapeute is deel van die spesiale skole. Hierdie skole gaan resource sentrums word. Die diens sal dan vrylik beskikbaar wees. Op hierdie stadium maak ons van hulle gebruik om op die professionele spanne te dien.”

**Dit is verblydend om te hoor dat julle nog leerder-, ouer- en onderwyserondersteuning doen soos van ouds en dat skole nog steeds so gediens word.**

“Ja, ons is baie bly oor die Witskrif, want daarvolgens is alle probleme – ‘n barrier to ‘something’ – wat hulpverlening en die werk van die sielkundige onontbeerlik maak. Ons het wel ‘n riglyn van die owerheid gekry dat 70% van ons werk voorkomend moet wees, maar dit het heeternal platgeval. Dit werk glad nie. Die rood is te groot. Bygesê dat die groot nood ons ook gedwing het om op groepwerk te vestig, want jy kan nie anders nie

En dan is daar die kwessie van onderwysersopleiding. Onderwysers is nie opgelei om leerders met spesiale ondewys behoeftes te akkommodeer nie, wat die implementering van Inklusiewe Onderwys moeilik maak.
ADDENDUM B

PROTOCOL FOR THE INDEPENDENT CODER

The researcher implemented the following protocol, as described by Poggenpoel (1998:345), as the instructions to the independent coders, on how to code the data from the transcribed texts:

1. Read through all the transcriptions carefully, while writing down ideas as possible themes as they emerge, through “bracketing” and “intuiting”, to get a sense of the whole. (Bracketing means placing preconceived ideas within brackets, and intuiting means focusing – trying to understand – (on) the experiences of the interviewees).
2. Do the same with the field notes.
3. Identify the major categories or themes in each of the transcriptions as you read through them.
4. Underline units of meaning that are related to the identified major categories or themes.
5. Identify sub-categories within the major categories.
6. Make a comparison of all transcriptions and indicate in each category how many subjects used the same words and themes.
7. Indentify inter-relationships between major categories and sub-categories.