

**THE IMPLEMENTATION OF TEACHER
SUPPORT TEAMS AT SCHOOLS:
ISSUES AND EXPERIENCES**

By

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DECLARATION

I, **Garth Norval Duncan**, declare that this dissertation is my own work, submitted in partial fulfilment of the degree of Master of Education, Educational Psychology at the University of KwaZulu Natal. I further declare that this dissertation has never been submitted at any other university or institution for any purpose, academic or otherwise.

Garth Norval Duncan

As the candidate's supervisor, I have approved this thesis/dissertation for submission.

Signed: 

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ABSTRACT

Teacher Support Teams have recently been established at all schools within the Republic of South Africa. Their success, however, has been mixed and some have ceased to function at all. It has therefore been the purpose of this research project to evaluate the current status of implementation at a sample of schools within one circuit of the Ilembe district within the KwaZulu Natal Department of Education.

This study therefore reports on the degree of success experienced by schools in the operation of Teacher Support Teams as they have grappled with the harsh realities of the communities that they serve. Many problems and obstacles serve to impede their progress and it is the intention of this study to learn from these experiences. In so doing, one is in a position to provide added and valued support to such schools. Lastly, the research aims to assess whether there are significant differences between the experiences and the nature of interventions between primary and secondary schools.

A survey methodology was conducted that utilised a standardised questionnaire and thereafter, a semi-structured interview. Both quantitative and qualitative data provided an insight into the issues confronting Teacher Support Teams, and thereby allowed for recommendations to follow that could assist in future advocacy programmes. A critique of current theoretical frameworks is provided, followed by a more pragmatic approach that is suggested as an alternative to better suit the context of South African schools.

CHAPTER ONE – INTRODUCTION

In line with policy formulation promulgated by the National Department of Education, state schools have recently been mandated to establish Teacher Support Teams (TST's) and implement policy with the purpose of assisting teachers to manage problems experienced within their classrooms. This policy is pre-determined by a more over-riding ideology, namely, Inclusive Education. It is the ideal behind Inclusive Education that is significant, it is what we aspire to, that is an 'inclusive society' (Donald, Lazarus, and Lolwana, 2000). The use of Teacher Support Teams is one of various strategies that can be useful in the implementation of this inclusive ideal. The implementation of policy to establish Teacher Support Teams at schools has been achieved with mixed results. The reasons for this disparity in implementation are numerous. A degree of resistance might be one factor, lack of capacity might be another. Furthermore, many school principals and their staff might not have sufficient knowledge concerning this new innovation.

According to a circular issued by the Superintendent-General of the KwaZulu Natal Department of Education (February 2001), all schools are mandated to establish Teacher Support Teams and set their functions in motion. Unfortunately, this has been implemented with varying degrees of success. Departmental officials and their management personnel have spent many months visiting schools in order to advocate the use of such teams in the workplace.

1.1 The Nature of the Problem:

The training of personnel for the implementation of Teacher Support Teams at schools has been both erratic and inconsistent. A new geographical and structural district came into existence in April 2003. Prior to this re-structuring of service areas, schools had been serviced by other support staff. Consequently, a situation exists where a lack of continuity occurs and school staff had received varying levels of support in their attempts to implement policies on Teacher Support Teams. The re-structuring of the Department of Education in KwaZulu Natal has created a new district that previously did not exist. This is the Ilembe district, the focus of this research study. Some schools in this new district were assisted in the establishment of Teacher Support Teams whilst others were not. This research study has focused on those schools in one circuit, Lower Tugela, where a degree of assistance has been offered and later withdrawn. It is now considered vital to restore that support in order to address the problems that have arisen in certain schools.

1.2 Focus of the Research:

It is the purpose of this research study to firstly gather data regarding the extent of implementation, as well as possible resistance to implementation. The purpose is also to ascertain whether personnel have the knowledge of how and why such Teacher Support Teams may be useful in dealing with problems encountered that relate to the learners. This research proposes to acquire data relevant to the above issues, and particularly to focus on possible differences that may exist between primary and secondary schools. These issues form the essence of four critical questions pertinent to this study. These critical questions are as follows:

- To what extent have Teacher Support Teams been implemented at schools?
- What obstacles have prevented implementation and functioning of Teacher Support Teams at schools?
- What support structures have been used to facilitate the establishment and functioning of Teacher Support Teams at schools?
- Are there differences between primary and secondary schools with regard to the implementation and functioning of Teacher Support Teams?

The researcher considers that an insight into both the successes and failures of implementation, and the use of Teacher Support Teams as a strategic means to deal with school-based problems, could be both relevant and pertinent to the development of future advocacy programmes. Once schools have established such teams, they need to be nurtured and sustained. The Department of Education needs to provide support for this endeavour.

1.3 Motivation for this Research – Rationale:

Under the overall ambit of an Inclusive Education paradigm, the advocacy of Teacher Support Teams has been mooted as a means to assist schools to cope with the many and varied demands placed on teachers in the classroom. Previously, an approach whereby problems were referred to outside agencies has been the dominant mind-set. Service providers functioning largely from within the Department of Education structures were drawn upon to solve or remove these problems. Thus a dependency on outside intervention had developed. New policies require that schools themselves develop the resources and the capacity to solve many of their own problems within the mainstream of education.

The nature of problems encountered by teachers may be varied. Such problems could include problems of conduct, learning difficulties, or problems of a more social nature. These problems cannot simply be removed so that they cease to exist. Thus, the establishment of Teacher Support Teams has been suggested as a means to assist classroom practitioners and school managers in dealing with these demands. It is suggested that less serious problems could be resolved through an in-house body of appointed staff members established to assist and support teachers dealing with such issues. Teacher Support Teams are designed to be an in-house facility whereby teachers can share their concerns about learners or classes and discuss with their colleagues how best to resolve their challenges. Teachers are encouraged to draw upon other professional agencies when and where necessary.

This is the background within which this research will be undertaken. The utilization of Teacher Support Teams has been adopted and employed in many other parts of the world. However, such innovations are new to the South African context. There is therefore a distinct gap in the literature pertaining to the successes, failures, problems and practices of Teacher Support Teams in this country. The intention of this study is to narrow this gap and to provide impetus for further debate. Although policy has been devised and promulgated, little is known about the operations on the ground within the very schools for which such policies are intended. This research intends to provide vital information in order to create a picture of the current status of Teacher Support Teams within one circuit, the Ilembe district of the KwaZulu Natal Department of Education. The data gathered will be of significance in pursuing further the aims of an Inclusive Education system.

1.4 The Theoretical Framework:

The theoretical approach underlying the implementation of Teacher Support Teams rests within the ideals of Inclusive Education. Such ideals are well entrenched within a Human Rights culture. Teacher Support Teams have been proposed by the National Department of Education as one strategy to assist schools in this function as well as to cope with the challenges and problems they face in attending to the needs of learners. The approaches suggested in this study are directed at both the individual and the group. The model of implementation proposed by Maher and Zins, (1987) suggests strategies that are focused on any one of six domains; namely, cognitive, emotional, social functioning, academic achievement, physical health and lastly, vocational preparedness.

The ideals of an Inclusive Education system also fit within the paradigm of Social Justice. Such a paradigm attends to the need for Teacher Support Teams at both primary and secondary schools. In fact, the term Institutional Support Teams (IST) has been suggested by the National Department of Education, such that the concept could be extended to the Higher Education sector. For the purposes of this study, however, the focus will remain within the school. The nature of intervention will possibly be different at the primary and secondary phases.

The policy determining the functioning of Teacher Support Teams can be utilized at both a micro and a macro level. The micro level addresses the need for change in the existing school system. Previous models of psychological intervention at schools had an emphasis on disability, the so-called 'deficit model'. This implied that something was lacking within the individual child. This research suggests that a more holistic approach is required, one that attends to the bio-psycho-social aspects of learners.

In contrast, the macro level focuses at policy development. The emphasis is also on providing indirect support, and attempts to change the thinking of practitioners through educational programmes. It is the contention of the researcher, however, that the implemented policy has failed to address the change of mind-set that needs to accompany inclusive policies. It is considered necessary to intervene at multiple levels so that personnel are available to attend to psychological, physiological and social issues, and that support for educators is readily available. Networks of intervention are required as Teacher Support Teams will not be sufficiently prepared to tackle the real problems at the individual, group and community levels. There will still be a need for interventions that attend to the psycho-educational needs of individuals and the consequent placement within a system that has the necessary facilities and resources to cater for these needs.

1.5 Methodology:

The methodology employed for this research study is a survey, utilizing both a questionnaire and a semi-structured interview. Data collected has therefore been analysed both quantitatively and qualitatively. The questionnaire has gathered data related to the four critical questions relevant to this research. A pilot study was initially used covering a sample of the intended population. This was purposely selected using a third of the 20 schools making up the sample. The research was conducted within one circuit, namely the Lower Tugela circuit. This circuit is divided into five wards, but this research is focused on three wards known as Umhlali, KwaDukuza North and KwaDukuza South. Furthermore, the principals of schools in these wards should all have attended workshops on the formation and establishment of Teacher Support Teams.

The quantitative data gathered through the use of the questionnaire was analysed through the use of Descriptive Statistics. Thus, the frequencies and percentages of responses were assessed to determine whether significant differences might exist between primary and secondary schools with regard to the implementation and functioning of Teacher Support Teams. Once the quantitative data had been assessed, the research honed in on a sample of four schools. Two were primary schools and two were secondary schools. A more in-depth qualitative study using a semi-structured interview was also conducted. This provided greater clarity regarding the issues raised and also personalized the process. Greater depth was achieved in terms of the four critical questions pertinent to this study.

1.5 Organization and Structure of the Dissertation:

The structure of this research is as follows. Chapter One has provided a contextual background by clarifying the focus of research and by providing a motivation for this important study. In Chapter Two, theoretical models will be discussed and contrasted from both a Medical 'deficit' and from the inclusive holistic perspective. An alternative model, which includes a bio-psycho-social viewpoint, will also be discussed. Policy documents that inform the processes of implementation and functioning of Teacher Support Teams will also be analysed. Chapter Three examines and reviews the literature pertaining to the establishment and operation of Teacher Support Teams, both locally and abroad. Chapter Four describes the methodology employed in this research study and motivates for the use of both quantitative and qualitative tools being valid in acquiring data that has depth and relevance to this study. The data gathering instruments will be explained and motivated. Chapter Five will present the findings, both as descriptive percentages and proportions, and as a narrative of the experiences of a sample of those who have been actively involved in the operations of Teacher Support Teams. Chapter Six will present an analysis and interpretation

of the research data, and will provide a commentary on those findings. Lastly, Chapter Seven will offer recommendations gleaned from the research that will assist in managing Teacher Support Teams. It will also provide guidelines for future advocacy programmes designed for improved implementation and functioning of Teacher Support Teams within the South African context. A critique of current policies and their viability will follow.

CHAPTER TWO - THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The purpose of this chapter is to firstly provide a theoretical framework, in order to establish clarity regarding the various models that have informed our current understanding of disability. The nature of disability and learning difficulty is discussed. Two different theoretical positions are outlined; namely, the Medical Model and a model of Social Justice. The latter is translated into a concept of Inclusion. This is discussed in detail, particularly as it relates to proposed legislation and policy in the South African situation. In line with the findings of this research study, an alternative position is suggested as a pragmatic alternative to the above two juxtapositions. Lastly, the place of Teacher Support Teams in the broader scope of current thinking is also addressed.

2.1 The Theoretical Position:

Various models or paradigms of thinking have influenced the current theoretical situation. Sandow, (1994) refers to various models of Special Needs in education. She traces a history of Western theorizing that originates in a magical model, where causes of dysfunction or disability were attributed to super-natural forces and to the link between physical and psychological behaviour and the concept of sin. This same author further identifies a moral position adopted by many educators in the nineteenth century whereby learning difficulties were ascribed to idleness. People were viewed as responsible for their own weaknesses, whether those weaknesses were manifested in physical or psychological terms. The next progression step led to the development of the medical model of causation. In such a model, disabilities were never prescribed to social factors; rather they were always seen as of hereditary causation. Any malfunction from what was considered 'normal' was located within the individual who was perceived as lacking some quality or character. This is more recently referred to as the 'deficit' model of causation.

Other models cited by Sandow, (1994) are the intellectual model which mirrors the attempts to ascribe deviations in terms of intellectual capacity, or rather the lack of it. The psychometric movement, which is still prevalent today, placed large store on the measurement of attributes to account for behaviours that deviated from the average. An alternative is the social competence model whereby individuals are evaluated in terms of the degree to which they conform behaviourally to the norms of the time. A more cynical model attempts to explain this discourse within the realm of a social conspiracy. Here, the very existence of norms for behaviour or performance presupposes the need for some individuals to be outside of those norms. This serves to place increasing numbers of people in need of special care and subsequently the employment of increasing numbers of professional persons.

This brief outline of various models of thinking serves to provide a broad ambit to the understanding of the present position of Special Education and Disability. However, for the purpose of this study, a further focus on just two dominant theoretical positions will suffice. These two theoretical positions may be perceived as juxtaposed to each other. However, it is the intention of this discourse to suggest that they may in fact be complementary. These two models are the Medical model and the more recent developments leading to a theory of Social Justice.

2.2 The Nature of Disability:

Disability is a complex and contentious topic. Our understanding of the concept is largely influenced by our own experiences of disabled people. Like any other concept, it is a social construction, and this fact should be understood before an attempt is made to achieve a definition. Definitions have recently been largely individualistic. According to Barton, (1994), this is due to a reductionist tendency that has viewed disability as a personal rather

than a public issue. Such restrictive types of definitions have failed to include complex issues such as class, race and gender. These factors have been seen to be unhelpful and unnecessary. There are vested interests in the care of disabled people, and patronising and overprotective practices have led to the use of labels that are highly disabling (Barton, 1994). The Medical model, according to Hahn (1985, cited in Barton, 1994, p12), 'imposes a presumption of biological or physiological inferiority upon disabled persons'. Such definitions emphasise individual loss or inabilities, and thus contribute to the dependency model of disability. Such definitions also promote the use of negative labelling. The medical view has given priority to impairments that are physical and/or intellectual. These are seen as the causes of disability.

There is an alternative model of disability termed the Social model. This model provides a very different understanding of disability and entails a different set of assumptions, priorities and explanations. The emphasis is on the differences that exist between disabled people. Such persons differ according to race, class, gender and even age criteria. Labels, on the other hand, tend to emphasize 'sameness'. A Social model of disability attempts to allow the disabled to define themselves in terms of their experiences of an alienating and restrictive environment. Such a model stresses the inability of the disabled to adapt to the harsh standards of society. This model sees disability as a form of oppression by those who attempt to wield power. This power is inflicted by physical, social and political restrictions which impede full participation in society. The efforts of the disabled are to overcome the many barriers that exist and that prevent persons from making a meaningful contribution to the communities they are a part of.

2.3 The Inclusive Model of Education:

The Social model of disability can otherwise be referred to as an Inclusive model. It is significant to note that a previous Draft White Paper 5 (Department of Education, 2000) emphasised the need for a paradigm shift. This shift was from a Medical to a Social Rights model. The Paper stressed the need to move away from 'individual change' to a view of 'system change'. In its definition of inclusion, it is clearly noted that this is a never ending process rather than a simple change of state. This notion is supported by Booth (2000) who describes inclusion in education as an un-ending process. He goes on to recommend that change should focus on a full range of education and training services, and should adopt an effective and appropriate inter-sectoral approach. It is about creating inclusive cultures, policies and practices at all levels of the system. There would also be a need to align with other programmes currently underway. The White Paper 5 (Department of Education, 2000) also acknowledged that change should utilise a systemic and developmental approach.

However, change in the South African context has historical significance. It should be considered that extreme neglect and lack of provision for a large majority of learners had been the case. Previous legislation and policy pertaining to persons with disabilities had entrenched racial segregation and inequality. It should also be borne in mind that inequalities of provision had resulted in a situation whereby highly specialised and costly provision of Special Needs Education and support services had existed for a limited number of learners, mainly whites. Learners with disabilities and those experiencing learning difficulties had been relegated to a 'second' system of education, separated and marginalised from mainstream educational provision. In addition, learners with disabilities or difficulties were relegated to the periphery of educational concern. Under such a state, the support services had reflected a strong focus on the Medical model of diagnosis and the treatment intervention of

learner deficits. There had also been a history of negative stereotyping associated with such policies.

With the above policies in mind, and as applied to education, the aims addressed by the Education White Paper 6 (Department of Education, 2001) are clear. This document is built on various important assumptions. These acknowledge that all children and youth can learn, but yet require support in this process. The Paper accepts that all learners are different and therefore have different learning needs. Differences may be as a result of age, gender, ethnicity, language, class, disability or HIV status. The stress is thus upon creating an enabling environment such that structures, systems, and learning environments meet the needs of learners. Based on these assumptions, the aims of an inclusive ideal are firstly, to maximise the participation of all learners in the culture and curriculum of schools, and secondly, to minimise the barriers to learning that exist.

It is however acknowledged in the White Paper 6 (Department of Education, 2002), that some learners may require more intensive and specialised forms of support in order to achieve their full potential. The aim is to provide different levels and kinds of support. Different levels of support would consist firstly of Special Schools which would serve as resource centres, and would be integrated into District Support Services. The support would be more than to existing learners, but would provide specialised help in curriculum, assessment and instruction. It is envisaged that a second level of support will be provided by Full Service schools. The intention would be to incorporate one such school within each district. Such schools would be equipped with the necessary physical and material resources, and the staff with the required professional development to accommodate the full range of learners. Such schools would be in a position to provide access to disabled learners within neighbourhood

schools. The third level would consist of mainstream schools, which could be strengthened by District-based Support Services and school-based Teacher Support Teams, which is the particular focus of this research study. The creation of designated posts at each school in order to co-ordinate support would be an envisaged ideal.

Different kinds of support could be in the form of community based resources and personnel, all under the co-ordination and control of District Support structures. The nature of support could include curricula, assessment and instructional assistance. Specialised services at District level could be drawn upon when and where deemed necessary. However, it is envisaged that the first line of intervention would be at the institutional level and supported at District level once all previous interventions had failed.

The Draft White Paper 5 (Department of Education, 2000) makes a further point. The realisation exists that in order to achieve such a just and equitable system, resources are required. Such resources are presently inadequate and unevenly distributed. Existing capacities and resources need to be strengthened and new capacities and resources need to be provided where they are lacking. This is viewed as a real challenge.

2.4 A Mediating Model - a Pragmatic Alternative:

Although there is much criticism levelled against the Medical model, adherents of inclusive ideals do concede the value and sense of seeking professional medical support where necessary (Barton, 1994). There need not be an either/or dichotomy to this debate. Perhaps both ideologies have their contributions to offer and can and should work together in mediating an ideal. A bio-psycho-social model that incorporates a broad range of interventions might be such an alternative.

There have indeed been criticisms of the inclusive model and these will be considered. Florian, (1998), has examined some of the practical problems associated with the implementation of inclusive education policies. She writes from a British perspective, but the same criticism applies, and more so, within the South African context. One such criticism relates to the specialisation involved in the field of Special Education. One surely cannot suggest that a vast wealth of experience and expertise can so easily be adopted by those who have not been trained. Florian (1998) argues strongly that any dissolution of Special Education will result in a loss of resources and accountability. This same author also criticises proponents of inclusive education policies as arguing theoretically whilst their arguments are not supported by empirical evidence.

With these criticisms in mind, it would be considered a pragmatic approach to shift along the lines of social justice and equity, but continuing with the highly individualised approach for children with complex needs. Ultimately, the goals of any new policy development should be a better quality education for all.

2.5 Conclusion:

This chapter has outlined various models of disability or Special Needs Education. Two dominant approaches have been discussed, namely; the Medical model and the Social model, encapsulated by the ideals of inclusion. An understanding of disability and of learning difficulties has also been highlighted. Finally, although both approaches have their value, both stand up to severe criticism too. A mediating model that encompasses the best of both contributions should be espoused as a pragmatic alternative. The two need not operate side-by-side independently. Rather, creative ways need to be sought in order that they marry the best, in order that all may ultimately benefit.

CHAPTER THREE - THE LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter reviews the literature available in the field of Special Education, but particularly those writings that focus on the implementation of policies regarding Teacher Support Teams. Little research exists within the South African context. This is largely due to it being a relatively recent innovation. Teacher Support Teams have only recently been suggested as one such approach that could assist and empower schools in handling difference and diversity. Most informative research comes from countries such as the USA and the United Kingdom. Two studies that focus on a similar aspect of research as this are discussed in depth. Their focus is similar, but their methodologies are different. However, the findings can be usefully compared to those of this study. Lastly, this chapter will outline the nature of Teacher Support Teams as envisaged in South Africa, and will relate policy developments with regard to their implementation and field of operation.

3.1 The State of Research:

Much research has been conducted in the broader field of Special Educational Needs. The focus of such papers has been on curriculum development, adjustments and accommodations. Nevertheless, very little has been offered in the literature on the provision of support and guidance for teachers involved in the field. Many classroom teachers feel that they do not have sufficient training and support to meet the challenges presented by children with Special Education Needs, (cited in Norwich and Daniels, 1997). These same authors continue to suggest that Teacher Support Teams provide a forum for teachers to share knowledge and skills and to express and receive collegial support. In such a way, Teacher Support Teams can also enable teachers to learn specific methods and have access to different teaching approaches.

Research has been done in certain states of the USA, but these studies still do not approach the specific area of this research study. It appears therefore, that there is a significant lag in international studies, and particularly as applied within the South African context. Only two British studies have been identified that closely approximate the nature and purpose of this research. These two studies will be outlined below, and their findings briefly identified. These studies will serve as a benchmark for comparing the findings of this study.

3.2 Two Seminal Works:

The first of these studies reports on part of an evaluation of Teacher Support Teams as a Special Education Needs (SEN) support strategy in primary schools. This research was conducted in 1997 by Brahm Norwich and Harry Daniels in the United Kingdom. These researchers used a combination of quantitative and qualitative evaluation methods, similar to this research study. Both questionnaires and interviews were employed. These researchers were directly involved in the establishment of Teacher Support Teams at a sample of schools. They focused on eight schools, but limited their study to only six Teacher Support Teams that were successfully implemented and studied over a period of two school terms. This study adopted a longitudinal research design. The objective of this particular research study was twofold. Firstly, to evaluate the processes of setting up and maintaining Teacher Support Teams, and secondly, to evaluate the short-term effects and perceived usefulness of Teacher Support Teams.

The findings related to the first objective are as follows. These researchers concluded that both the means and manner of introducing the ideas of Teacher Support Teams to schools should be considered carefully. This was done through an initial meeting with school managers and with specialised staff members. Three days of training were conducted. The

schools were then left to implement these policies, and later monitored in order to ascertain their degree of success. Of the six schools that did establish Teacher Support Teams, only four were successfully functioning at the end of the study period. The other two had not received any referrals and had fizzled out. In some cases, personnel were sceptical or even openly hostile to the implementation of Teacher Support Teams. In such schools, no referrals were made, or the educators were absent from meetings. It was discovered that the time of day for meetings (break-time or after school) was significant. Teachers need to be committed to the process of implementation otherwise lack of time could be cited as a reason for failure. It was also discovered that the operation of Teacher Support Teams has management implications as the findings made it evident that once such teams are established, they need to be carefully monitored and maintained.

The paper cited above also reports on the nature of referrals made to the Teacher Support Teams. In all the schools assessed in this study, the majority of the referrals concerned children's behaviour problems, and to a lesser extent learning difficulties. Similar findings are supported by this particular research study. It was also observed that most referrals concerned individual problems and in a few cases only, about whole class or whole school concerns.

The findings relating to the second research objective are as follows. This objective pertains to the short-term effects and perceived effectiveness of Teacher Support Teams. Norwich and Daniels (1997) concluded that there were both positive and negative responses, with the positive outweighing the negative. Positive responses included increased teacher confidence and happiness. Some degree of child improvement was noted. Some teachers commented that they were able to distance themselves from the problem and re-examine their activities. They

appreciated that problems could be aired. Negative responses however, indicated that some teachers had referred cases but felt they had not been assisted, or that they did not need to refer as they had years of experience and could cope alone.

The second seminal work that pertains to this research study was conducted in 2000, also in the United Kingdom, but focusing on secondary schools. The authors of this paper are Angela Creese, Brahm Norwich and Harry Daniels. These authors followed a case study evaluation strategy in four schools over a full year. Their report focuses on just two schools, one that was successful and the other viewed as unsuccessful in the establishment and operation of a Teacher Support Team. Their sample of schools was selected purposively, as is the case with this particular research study. The authors selected inner city schools and rural schools for their sample. They discovered that differences in the capacity of schools and their management structures influenced the degree of successful implementation and operation. This factor is pertinent to this study and will be expounded further in the discussion of results. Creese, Norwich and Daniels (2000) have illuminated some general principles in their findings. These are outlined as follows.

- Support from the Senior Management Team is imperative to success.
- Clarity regarding the aims of a Teacher Support Team is vital, along with a belief in the process being voluntary and confidential.
- Teachers need to be consulted about the membership of the Teachers Support Team.
- There should be trust and non-interference by senior teachers and management.
- Specialists should be perceived as problem sharers and not problem solvers.
- A collaborative rather than a competitive approach is preferred.
- The work of the Teacher Support Team needs to be made known.

- A collaborative ethos of a school ensures success, especially where there is trust and support.
- The functioning of a Teacher Support Team assists in planning Individualised Education Programmes (IEP's) that are more relevant and applicable.

These findings are supported by this research paper and will be addressed more specifically in relation to the report on the findings.

3.3 The Structure and Operation of Teacher Support Teams in South Africa:

The Education White Paper 6 (Department of Education, 2001) gives clear guidelines for the establishment and functioning of both District Support Teams and Teacher Support Teams. The differences between these bodies ought to be made clear. District Support Teams will be established at District level throughout the country. They will comprise full-time staff from provincial District, Regional and Head Offices, and from existing Special Schools. Their primary function will be to evaluate, and through supportive teaching, build the capacity of schools, early childhood and Adult Basic Education and Training (ABET) centres, colleges and Further and Higher Education institutions. Furthermore, they will be instrumental in auditing, and then improving the quality of Special Schools. In the process, such schools will be converted into Resource Centres. This will necessitate the upgrading and the training of staff for their new roles as part of District Support Teams. The role of the proposed Resource Centres will be twofold, firstly to provide an improved service to their targeted learner population, and secondly, to provide specialised professional support in curriculum, assessment, and instruction to designated full-service and other neighbourhood schools.

According to the White Paper 6 (Department of Education, 2001), each educational institution should develop an institutional-level Support Team. For the purposes of this study, these will be termed Teacher Support Teams. The primary function of these teams will be to put in place properly co-ordinated learner and educator support services. Such services are envisaged in order to support the learning and teaching process, and in identifying and addressing learner, educator and institutional needs. Where possible, schools could strengthen these teams with expertise from the local community, District Support Teams and Higher Education institutions. Expertise will be drawn from existing structures within the Department of Education and where lacking, from without.

The Teacher Support Team will provide a forum where educators may share their concerns, focus their attention and develop a variety of strategies for dealing with barriers to learning. The composition of such teams will be flexible and dependant on the matter under discussion. Two full-time members should however be appointed. The first is the co-ordinator. This is a vital function in order to drive and sustain the process. Such a member may be a member of school management or someone with a qualification or experience or interest in the remedial/special education/guidance field. The role of the co-ordinator is to liaise with staff members and to arrange and chair meetings. The second important portfolio is that of a secretary or scribe. It is essential for consistency that thorough records are kept. Other members of the Teacher Support Team would be those teachers who are involved in particular cases and might only participate whilst one specific case is under discussion.

The nature of the issues brought to the Teacher Support Team may include cognitive, social, emotional, physical and behavioural barriers to learning. For example, this might include a learning disability, poverty, depression, blindness or a conduct disorder. Furthermore, group

issues such as absenteeism or teenage pregnancy might be tabled. Of note to this particular research study is the fourth critical question that relates to whether the nature of issues would differ between primary and secondary schools.

This chapter has outlined the lack of research conducted on this very specific aspect of Teacher Support Teams. Nevertheless, significant research results from two seminal works conducted in the United Kingdom have been outlined. These findings bear directly on the findings of this research project. Lastly, an outline of the current and envisaged state of implementation in South Africa has been discussed.

CHAPTER FOUR - RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This research study examines the extent to which policy with regard to the establishment of Teacher Support Teams at schools has been implemented. This chapter describes and justifies the research design utilised in this study. The methodology is explained, as well as the methods of data collection and analysis. The selection of the sample, both for quantitative and qualitative analysis is discussed, as well as an in-depth explanation of the instruments used in this study. A break-down of each question provides information regarding their purpose in line with the four critical questions that underlie this research.

4.1 Research Design and Methodology:

This research has employed a survey method in order to gather data pertaining to the four critical questions. The survey can be used to obtain purely descriptive data about the population, as was the case with the famous Kinsey et al. (1953) research on American sexual behaviour (cited in Cooligan, 1996). This research follows a similar design. This research study has used both a quantitative and a qualitative design utilising both a questionnaire and a semi-structured interview. Data collected was therefore analysed both quantitatively and qualitatively. The questionnaire had gathered quantitative data related to the four critical questions. This provided base-line information that facilitated the extraction of further data collected through the semi-structured interview.

The choice of either a quantitative or a qualitative research design will influence the data-processing procedures. Yet more than this, the choice reflects different theoretical underpinnings and/or different views as to what is considered valid data (Allan and Skinner 1991). These same authors contend that 'the best research in social science contains elements

of both' (Allan and Skinner, 1991. p177). According to Sherman and Webb, (1998), qualitative research considers the context or natural setting from which data is collected. It does not aim to verify a predetermined idea, but rather to a discovery that leads to the generation of new insights. In contrast, quantitative methodologies treat all experiences as similar.

With reference to such critical differences between these two methods, this research study has avoided the use of purely quantitative data collection, although numerical data has been gathered in order to provide initial base-line information. This researcher agrees with the sentiments cited by Cooligan (1996, p98), that traditional 'positivist' research isolates people and has 'lead to a great deal of shallow, irrelevant data and theory'. In order to avoid such an approach, the combined use of quantitative and qualitative methodologies has been employed in order to attend to the meaning of social interaction within a social context. The semi-structured interview attempts to engage closely with participants, yet the researcher was well aware of his own involvement within the interview situation and was conscious of the impact such a limitation could impose on the research.

4.2 The Process of Design:

Firstly, once the questionnaire had been designed, it was assessed for face validity. This was achieved by distributing the questionnaire to three specialists, each a specialist in a different field related to the research. One was a school principal, purposely selected due to the research focus being on information provided by a sample of school managers. The purpose of this was to evaluate the instrument for any possible ambiguities or misunderstanding pertaining to the questions themselves. The second specialist was an Educational Psychologist, who has worked extensively with Teacher Support Teams. This specialist was

in a position to assess the questionnaire in terms of construct validity. The third person was a Remedial Specialist and an official in the Department of Education. This person has been involved in advocacy programmes for Teacher Support Teams in the past and has worked extensively with school management staff. Each of the above persons made certain recommendations that were reviewed and incorporated into the amended research instrument.

The second stage of designing an appropriate instrument for data collection was the administration of a pilot study. Six schools were purposely selected with the assistance of the Senior Education Manager (SEM) for those schools. The sample consisted of three primary and three secondary schools, and all were typical of the intended sample. This implied that these schools have all previously been exposed to the notion and concepts of Teacher Support Teams. Based on an analysis of these responses, it was evident that principals had experienced no difficulty in completing the questionnaire. Each question served its purpose in distinguishing between the different responses. Once each question had been scrutinised for construct validity, it was declared a suitable instrument for collection of data. Following such scrutinizing and review, the final research instrument was considered complete.

4.3 Data Collection Methods:

The required research data was firstly collected through the use of a questionnaire. Twenty schools were purposively selected for the study. Ten of the chosen schools were primary and the remaining ten were secondary schools. This was considered relevant in the light of the critical question pertinent to this study; namely, to consider whether there were any differences in the implementation of Teacher Support Teams at these respective schools. All schools were positioned within one circuit of the Ilembe district, the Lower Tugela circuit.

The Ilembe district falls within the management ambit of the Ethekewini region of the KwaZulu Natal Department of Education.

In terms of purposive sampling, the researcher can select the cases on the basis of their typicality (Cohen and Manion, 1980). In this research, schools were selected from townships, urban areas and peri-urban locations. With regard to the sample size, the twenty schools selected were in accordance with the views of the above cited authors who contend that sample size should depend on both the size of the population and the heterogeneity of that population (Cohen, and Manion, 1980).

The Lower Tugela circuit consists of five smaller wards, and the sample was selected from three of these five wards. These three wards chosen were KwaDukuza North, KwaDukuza South and Umhlali. These three wards are similar in that the schools within them are all urban or peri-urban. In all cases the principals, Management Teams and some teaching staff have attended workshops with regard to the establishment and implementation of Teacher Support Teams. Owing to the nature of school composition, there are far less secondary schools than primary schools in any geographic ward. Therefore, in order to reach the sample of ten secondary schools for this research study, it was necessary to extend the size of area covered to three wards. Thus, the collected data is valid for these wards, but not necessarily generalisable to wards, circuits or districts outside of the ambit of this identifiable space. Eighteen primary schools were available of which only ten were selected through random sampling.

4.4 Data Analysis:

Once the data had been collected, the process of analysis ensued. This is reported on in detail later. The quantitative data was assessed in terms of 'yes' or 'no' responses. This type of data is what Cooligan, (1996), refers to as 'fixed choice' items. For each question, the frequency or percentage of responses was numerically collated and then clustered according to the primary/secondary school deviation. Once the individual questions had been assessed, questions were clustered into categories.

These categories of questions were clustered in accordance with the critical questions utilised in this research study. The first category pertained to the degree of knowledge/information in the possession of principals in order for Teacher Support Teams to be established and their functions to be managed effectively. The second category focussed on possible obstacles or problems that impacted on successful implementation and operation of these Teacher Support Teams. The third category of questions related to the knowledge of support structures that exist or the use of such support structures in facilitating the effective use of Teacher Support Teams. Finally, the analysis of data focussed on the nature of the problems that Teacher Support Teams could successfully attend to. Throughout, attention as to whether there were any differences between primary and secondary schools was viewed as paramount.

The questionnaire also provided opportunity for an expansion of views. There was space provided for principals to elaborate on their responses. These views are reported in the text where they provide meaningful information that could serve to clarify our understanding of these issues. Likewise, the semi-structured interview provided further clarity about these issues and served a vital and valuable purpose in offering recommendations for better advocacy programmes and service delivery to provide support to schools.

4.5 The Research Questionnaire:

The research questionnaire (see Appendix) consists of three sections; Sections A, B and C. Section A provides important biographical information relevant to the schools participating in the research study. Information pertaining to the name of the school, name of the principal, and the names of staff members who presently form part of Teacher Support Teams was deemed necessary in order to make follow-up procedures in ensuring that all questionnaires were completed and submitted. It should be noted that although confidentiality was guaranteed, there was always the possibility that respondents could be inclined to report positively in terms of what they perceived to be correct. This is always a limitation of such a research instrument. It is for this reason that the semi-structured interview was used, in order to verify responses.

Section B served to gather information relevant to the first three critical questions of the research focus. Principals were encouraged to complete the questionnaire in consultation with their appointed Teacher Support Team, if such a team had in fact been established. Seventeen questions in all formed the basis of this section. All questions in this section were provided with either 'yes' or 'no' responses. This was purely quantitative. However, some responses provided an opportunity for further comment, and where this was offered, such qualitative information is most valuable. Section B served to collect information regarding the level of knowledge or information that existed in order for schools to establish and implement the Departmental policy. The degree of implementation was also elicited. This information was in line with the first critical question.

Further questions related to the successes and/or any obstacles or problems encountered by the respondents in the establishment of a Teacher Support Team at their school as well as in

managing its functioning. These questions served to provide information in line with the second research question. Lastly, Section B provided an opportunity for principals to comment on the degree of support they had utilised or could utilise so as to effectively manage the Teacher Support Team at their school. Such questions provided information in line with the third critical question.

Section C consisted of three questions, all focusing on the fourth critical question of this research study. These three questions allowed the respondents to provide information concerning the nature of problems encountered at their schools, and the degree to which a Teacher Support Team could address such problems. Of interest to this research is firstly the nature of these problems, and secondly, whether these problems vary between primary and secondary schools.

4.6 The Semi-Structured Interview:

As previously cited in this report, it is the contention of this researcher that the questionnaire provides base-line quantitative data, but there is a need for further in-depth pursuit of knowledge that provides certain qualitative explanations. Thus the semi-structured interview seeks to achieve this goal. According to Willig, (2001), the semi-structured interview is a useful method of data-collection because it is compatible with several methods of data analysis. This instrument allows for the experiences of four principals to be heard. The semi-structured interview allowed for greater clarity of the issues raised and also succeeded in personalising the responses. The researcher believes that people are often lost in large bureaucracies and become powerless as a result. Much information can be gathered by listening to the individual experiences of people. The social sciences, education and psychology in particular, are concerned with people and their relations with their

environment. Social science research is founded on the study of experience, a good starting point for inquiry (Denzin and Lincoln, 1998). The study of experience is viewed as the study of life. Seidman (1991, cited in Locke and Spirduso, 2000, p257) asserts that the researcher's goal is to understand the meaning people make of their experiences. He contends that 'interviewing people provides a necessary, if not completely sufficient, avenue of inquiry.

In pursuit of this avenue of enquiry, four principals were selected based on their previous responses to the questionnaire. Two of the principals were chosen from primary schools and the remaining two from secondary schools in line with the research questions. The four critical questions formed the basis for the interview, namely to extract data relevant to the implementation of Teacher Support Teams and the possible problems or support structures that had been encountered in pursuing the policy goals of Inclusive Education. Extracts of the interviews were transcribed and are discussed later in this research report. This qualitative information provides support and explanation to the quantitative research findings.

This chapter has served to explain the research design and methodology employed as well as the rationale for the use of the survey instruments used, namely the questionnaire and the semi-structured interview. The rationale for gathering quantitative and qualitative data has been discussed. The development of the questionnaire was expounded and an explanation of the analysis of the data followed in order to meaningfully report on this research data. This will be achieved in the following chapter.

CHAPTER FIVE - THE RESEARCH FINDINGS

In this chapter, the findings of the research questionnaire will firstly be outlined. These findings will be presented both in tabular form and as a written evaluation and interpretation. The findings will constantly reflect on the four critical questions pertinent to this research study. These questions relate to the extent to which Teacher Support Teams have or have not been implemented, the successes or problems related to their operation, and lastly whether there are any experiential differences between primary and secondary schools. Four schools were selected for a semi-structured interview, and the findings of these interviews will also be presented.

5.1 Findings of the Questionnaire:

The first critical question pertains to the extent to which Teacher Support Teams have or have not been implemented at selected schools. Question seven of the research questionnaire requires respondents to answer either 'yes' or 'no' to this question. Questions one to six are related questions as they enquire about the degree of knowledge and information respondents have regarding the implementation and functioning of Teacher Support Teams. All schools have been provided with information pertaining to Teacher Support Teams, and personnel are presumed to have attended workshops in this field. The responses indicate consistency between those who have implemented departmental policy and those who claim to have sufficient information. The responses are indicated in the table below:

Table 5.1 – Level of knowledge concerning Departmental policy (Questions 1 - 6)

	PRIMARY SCHOOLS	SECONDARY SCHOOLS
SUFFICIENT KNOWLEDGE	7 (70%)	4 (40%)
INSUFFICIENT KNOWLEDGE	3 (30%)	6 (60%)

The above findings indicate that there are differences between primary and secondary schools in relation to their expression of having available sufficient knowledge concerning the nature and functioning of Teacher Support Teams. Of note is the consistency of responses. Those who possessed sufficient knowledge had received this knowledge through Departmental workshops and through printed policy documents. The knowledge was not limited to the principal, but members of staff were also equally well informed.

The responses to question seven relates to the level of implementation, and therefore whether Teacher Support Teams had been established at the selected schools within the sample. These findings are presented in the following table:

Table 5.2 – Level of implementation (Question 7)

	PRIMARY SCHOOLS	SECONDARY SCHOOLS
TEACHER SUPPORT TEAM - IMPLEMENTED	7 (70%)	4 (40%)
TEACHER SUPPORT TEAM - NOT IMPLEMENTED	3 (30%)	6 (60%)

As indicated in the above table, the responses reflect findings that indicate consistency between the level of knowledge and the level of implementation. Differences between primary and secondary schools are again evident. It should be noted that one of the primary schools that did not have a Teacher Support Team functioning at present, indicated that they did establish a Teacher Support Team, but that it had not been sustained.

Question twelve required respondents to indicate the level of functioning of their Teacher Support Teams, and also to elaborate on their success. Even schools that did not have established Teacher Support Teams were able to indicate that alternative structures were in place and also gave detail of their successes. This question relates to the second critical question of this study, namely; the extent of success in managing problems at their schools. Thus, the incidence of success is tabulated below:

Table 5.3 – Level of functioning - (Question 12)

	PRIMARY SCHOOLS	SECONDARY SCHOOLS
SUCCESSFUL FUNCTIONING	9 (90%)	5 (50%)
UNSUCCESSFUL FUNCTIONING	1 (10%)	5 (50%)

It should be noted that although nine primary schools stated that they were successful in dealing with problem areas at their schools, two of these schools indicated that they did not have Teacher Support Teams functioning, but used existing management structures to attend to learner problems. They indicated examples of their successes. The secondary schools

differed from primary schools in terms of their responses. They tended to be less confident of their successes and thus less optimistic of the role Teacher Support Teams could play in their schools. This again reflected support for the case that fewer secondary schools felt they had sufficient knowledge of the role and function of a Teacher Support Team. One of the five secondary schools did not have a Teacher Support Team in place, yet the principal was confident that his school had sufficient means to address learner problems. This school was selected for a semi-structured interview (School D) in order to probe deeper into this issue and thus gain a more thorough insight into the nature of operations at this school. Relevant data was gathered and these findings will be reported later in this chapter.

One of the primary schools indicated no success in dealing with learner problems and this school (School C) was purposively selected for a semi-structured interview. These findings will also be reported later in this chapter.

Of the nine primary schools that reported success in handling learner problems, the following types of successes were indicated; success was particularly expressed in areas of discipline and in learner progress. These principals stated that the Teacher Support Team promoted greater camaraderie amongst the staff. They also reported better classroom management, better time management, and better use of resources as spin-offs of the Teacher Support Team. Other schools suggested that the Teacher Support Team had provided support to inexperienced and unqualified teachers. Two schools mentioned that greater parental involvement had occurred, as the Teacher Support Team worked closely with parents when there were learner problems.

The secondary schools that reported success tended to agree that teachers find sharing their problem cases assists in improved learner control. This also becomes less stressful for staff in handling problems.

Questions eight, ten and thirteen relate to the level of support and need for Teacher Support Teams at schools. There was absolute and unanimous agreement with these statements. In other words, 100% of the sample agreed with the statements contained in the questionnaire. However, this was contradicted by their experiences as indicated by responses to questions nine, eleven and fifteen. This contradiction reflects a difference between what is believed to be valid and what might actually be the case. Questions nine, eleven and fifteen relate to experiences of obstacles and difficulties of implementation, and thus they indicate responses to the third critical question of this research study. A summary of responses is indicated in the following table:

Table 5.4 – Obstacles to implementation - (Questions 9, 11 and 15)

	PRIMARY SCHOOLS	SECONDARY SCHOOLS
NO OBSTACLES	9 (90%)	5 (50%)
EXPERIENCES OF OBSTACLES	1 (10%)	5 (50%)

The one primary school that indicated that it experienced obstacles in successful implementation of a Teacher Support Team responded as such. The principal of this school felt that the team members did not have the expertise required in order to offer guidance and support to learners with difficulties. However, no resistance to the implementation of Teacher

Support Teams was indicated (Question 11) and this school still believed that a Teacher Support Team could be effective.

Of the five secondary schools that had experienced obstacles to implementation, four of them had not as yet implemented a Teacher Support Team at their school. They cited lack of knowledge as the reason. One school responded by indicating that they had received nothing yet from the Department of Education, and had no knowledge of Teacher Support Teams at all. Another response was that they had not yet heard about the Teacher Support Team. A third school responded that they had no knowledge or skills necessary for a Teacher Support Team to function at their school. This same school seemed to have confused the roles of the Teacher Support Team with that of the School Management Team (SMT) and the staff felt that the management were reneging on their duties leading to resistance from staff members. These schools also indicated scepticism regarding the role a Teacher Support Team could play in certain matters, such as poor discipline, substance abuse and apathy amongst both parents and learners.

A further school did have an established Teacher Support Team that was functioning with a measure of success. The respondents however felt that a Teacher Support Team would be unable to manage certain problems. They cited examples of such problems; namely, teenage pregnancy and domestic abuse.

Question fourteen sought information relevant to the degree of knowledge schools possessed about outside support available to assist them with learner problems. The findings of this question are tabled below:

Table 5.5 – Knowledge of available support - (Question 14)

	PRIMARY SCHOOLS	SECONDARY SCHOOLS
ADEQUATE KNOWLEDGE	7 (70%)	6 (60%)
INADEQUATE KNOWLEDGE	3 (30%)	4 (40%)

It is relevant to note that three primary schools did not have knowledge relating to outside support systems. These were the same schools that had not established Teacher Support Teams at all. Although seven out of ten primary schools responded that they had adequate knowledge about support systems to assist them, they varied in the extent of knowledge they reported. Similar findings relate to the secondary schools sampled. Of interest is the indication that even schools that had not as yet established Teacher Support Teams did have knowledge of external agencies they could call upon to assist with learner problems. Two schools fell into this category. Collectively, these schools listed the following sources of help available to them:

- The Department of Health, State hospitals, which could provide Speech and Language Therapists, Occupational Therapists and Psychologists.
- The Department of Education, their circuit offices and Senior Education Managers (SEM's), Psychological, Guidance and Special Education Services (PGSES).
- The South African Police Services.
- Primary Health Centres and clinics.
- The Sappi KwaDukuza Resource Centre.
- Child and Family Welfare.
- Learner Area Committees.
- Professional Associations and Unions.

Question sixteen of the questionnaire relates to the need to find out more information about Teacher Support Teams. No differences were found to exist between the responses of primary and secondary schools. The findings are tabled as follows:

Table 5.6 – The need to know more - (Question 16)

	PRIMARY SCHOOLS	SECONDARY SCHOOLS
YES	9 (90%)	9 (90%)
NO	1 (10%)	1 (10%)

The one primary school that indicated that there was no need to learn more about the topic was the same school that had previously established a Teacher Support Team, but this was no longer in operation. The secondary school did have a Teacher Support Team and this was possibly perceived to be functioning adequately.

Questions eighteen to twenty of the research questionnaires sought to establish those areas of need that were indicated by the respondents. This relates to the last critical question of this research study; whether there are different areas of need at primary and secondary schools.

Question eighteen appeared not to be very useful as six primary schools and nine secondary schools merely ticked all the listed problems. However, this limitation was overcome by question nineteen which required respondents to prioritise the three most pressing needs. Nevertheless, the findings indicate that four primary schools did not consider drug and substance abuse to be problem areas at their schools. Likewise, they did not rate career guidance and subject selection as pertinent to their schools. Violence amongst learners was

also not cited as a problem area. One school added some further areas of need that a Teacher Support Team could address; namely, school safety and security and parental problems.

The one secondary school that did respond selectively to question eighteen ticked the following areas of need for a Teacher Support Team. These areas of need were individual Learning Difficulties, drug and substance abuse, poverty, socio-emotional problems and career guidance.

Question nineteen served to be useful in prioritising areas of need. These are tabled separately according to primary and secondary schools and in order of most concern:

Table 5.7 – Areas of Need – Primary schools - (Question 19)

AREA OF NEED	PRIMARY SCHOOLS
Behavioural Problems	7
Learning Difficulties	4
Poverty	4
HIV-AIDS and other related problems	2
Child Abuse	1

Table 5.8 – Areas of Need – Secondary schools - (Question 19)

AREA OF NEED	SECONDARY SCHOOLS
Behavioural problems	7
Drug/Substance abuse	6
Teenage pregnancy	4
Academic problems	3
Learner motivation	1
Violence	1
Poverty	1

The last question (Question 20) pertains to areas of need that are considered by the respondents to be beyond the scope of a Teacher Support Team to manage. All respondents felt that there were limitations to the effectiveness of Teacher Support Teams. Various problems were raised, most notably those that lie at the level of social and community issues. Amongst these were sexual abuse, health problems (particularly the effects of HIV-Aids), and the harassment of learners by unruly elements in the community. Other factors were mentioned that hinder the effectiveness of Teacher Support Teams, such as low teacher morale and the lack of human and physical resources. Parental apathy and non-involvement was considered a significant factor too.

5.2 The findings of the Semi-Structured Interviews:

Four schools from this sample were purposely selected in order to gain a greater insight into the nature of both problems and successes associated with the functioning of Teacher Support Teams at schools. This served to provide more qualitative data. Two primary and two secondary schools were selected. These schools were chosen based on their responses to the research questionnaire, particularly with regard to whether Teacher Support Teams had been established or not. One primary school (School A) and one secondary school (School B) were selected on the basis that their Teacher Support Teams were operational. However, it was later discovered that School B did not have a Teacher Support Team as envisaged by Departmental policy and as promoted in this study. One primary school (School C) and one secondary school (School D) were likewise selected on the basis that Teacher Support Teams had not been established and furthermore that there were problems with establishing such a body.

It was the intention of the researcher to record the interviews with a tape-recorder. Absolute confidentiality was ensured. However, only School A agreed to be taped, and a transcription produced. This was possible because this principal was confident that his Teacher Support Team was functioning effectively and he was indeed proud of it. The other schools were wary of such a procedure and in one case proved hostile. In these cases, written records were instead kept. A summary of these four semi-structured interviews serve to inform this discussion. The focus of the discussion centred on the second and third critical questions relevant to this research. The purpose was to gain greater depth of understanding regarding the successful functioning or the problems encountered in the operation of Teacher Support Teams.

SCHOOL A

This school had a Teacher Support Team in existence. The principal produced a school policy document that contained the names of the Team members and the purpose of this committee. It was clear that the team was representative of all staff in that both members of the School Management Team (SMT) and teachers were included. The principal himself did not form part of the Team, but was involved in it and consulted where necessary. Teachers brought cases to the attention of the Teacher Support Team, usually about twice per term. Records of meetings were kept, strategies developed, monitored and amended when necessary. The nature of the problems encountered were usually behavioural, but were also linked to social and community issues. Typical of the cases were problems of late-coming, aggressive behaviour and rudeness to teachers. The principal added that the community consisted of families with single parents and the learners were generally from poor backgrounds.

The principal stated that he viewed it as of prime importance to involve the parents in dealing with such problem issues, but often they did not attend appointments. When parents were consulted, they often denied the problem and much time was spent 'winning them over'.

Other stakeholders were also involved in this process. A local doctor provided a free service when consulted. Otherwise, the Teacher Support Team had used the services of the Department of Social Welfare, PGSES, and the South African Police. On the day of the school visit, the principal was dealing with a case where a child had brought a knife to school. It was revealed that the young child was keeping it for another learner at the local secondary school.

When asked about the Teacher Support Teams' role in handling cases of scholastic difficulties, the principal realised that this was an area they had not focused on. Generally, they referred such cases to outside providers. This was an area he felt could be handled by the Teacher Support Team in future.

SCHOOL B

This school had indicated that they had a Teacher Support Team in place and that it was operating successfully. It was soon realised that this was not the case. However, one of the Deputy Principals had been mandated with the task of attending to the psycho-social and scholastic problems encountered by learners. Likewise, one of the Heads of Department had been appointed as Lay Counsellor and her timetable had been modified to allow greater time for this purpose. Both these personnel attended the interview and were willing and open to discuss successes and problems. They chose not to be taped.

These two persons had been allocated these duties on the basis of their concern for learner problems, rather than on any professional experience. Learners at this school were aware of the counselling role of the Head of Department and frequently made use of her counselling services. Individual cases were handled, but the one area she found difficult was in handling cases where learners or care-givers were diagnosed with HIV AIDS. Scholastic problems were referred by teachers to the Deputy Principal who then made use of State Hospital services or PGSES personnel to attend to these matters. These were rare however. The school was proud that it had done something about social problems by arranging for outside agencies and Non-Governmental Organisations to address the learners on issues of Drug Awareness. The South African Police had also been called to intervene when a learner was found in possession of a weapon.

It was evident that this school was using its existing management functions to handle learner issues, but teachers were not encouraged to become involved or to take responsibility for the resolution of problems. Nevertheless, this school did seem to have the capacity to overcome many of its own problems, as it was fairly self-reliant in dealing with learner issues with some degree of success.

SCHOOL C

The principal of this school had indicated that they did not have a Teacher Support Team in place and did not have much knowledge pertaining to this subject. The principal was quite hostile and complained bitterly about the lack of support services provided by the Department of Education to his school. He related his experiences of the 'good old days' when things were much better and things worked. This principal refused permission to record this interview on tape.

The researcher allowed the interviewee to air his frustrations. The principal also explained the nature of the problems that were encountered. This was an inner-city school, but did not serve an intact community. Very few of the learners lived in the area. Most learners were from rural and impoverished backgrounds and were bussed into the city. Consequently, parents paid for transport but had nothing over in order to pay school fees. Parents showed little interest in the education of their children and very few attended meetings. He complained that although his staff tried their best, they became de-motivated.

In terms of successes, he raised the case of an individual learner who had been assessed by a private psychologist, but could still not read or write. The principal had involved these parents, who were following up on the psychologist's recommendations. The child had

repeated the year. Suddenly, remarkable improvements were made and the child was continuing to make good progress.

The researcher was able to use the opportunity to provide information pertaining to Teacher Support Teams to the principal, and explained the role of Departmental personnel and the support they could provide. It was suggested that further support could be provided if the principal made a formal request. Thus to some extent, bridges had been built. However, such a school requires further enhancement of its capacity.

SCHOOL D

This is a secondary school without a Teacher Support Team in operation. The principal was interviewed and was pleased to discuss his successes. He asked not to be recorded on audio-tape, but was otherwise pleased to participate.

Behavioural problems were considered the priority concern. A system was in place to deal with such offences. This system was based on the school hierarchy, and the Principal only dealt with more extreme matters. He was able to cite many examples of success based on parental involvement. The school had a disciplinary committee to handle cases of suspension or expulsion. But before this measure was implemented, other disciplinary methods were employed such as detention or community service. Counselling was also provided by one of the teachers who served as a Lay Counsellor and had a reduced teaching load.

A de-merit system was also in place, but this was found difficult to monitor. Otherwise, a defaulter's book was kept in the office. This was monitored by a Grade controller on a weekly basis. After three misdemeanours, the learner was sent to detention on a Friday

afternoon where they were given tasks involved in cleaning the school. The parents were informed one week in advance. The principal spoke of an initiative to reward learners who were well-behaved or who were making good academic progress. They were rewarded with outings or school dances.

The principal spoke of problems encountered, particularly with substance abuse. He had made use of several community projects to address this issue. The 'Spoon feeder' project was one such initiative. 'The Naked Truth' had also visited the school. This programme is made up of reformed drug addicts. 'True Love Waits' is another initiative that addresses the problems of teenage pregnancy.

When asked about programmes for learners experiencing academic difficulties, he replied that extra Mathematics and English enrichment programmes were offered during the sport period. He acknowledged that this implied that such learners would be deprived of attending sports. He had also involved retired teachers who came in to help learners with individual learning difficulties, and these teachers either worked voluntarily or were paid by the School Governing Body (SGB). Furthermore, all Grade 12's were provided with a free vocational assessment provided by a Non-Governmental Organisation called 'Human Progress Management.'

When it was suggested that a Teachers Support Team could involve all the educators, this principal replied that they were short staffed, that teachers had large classes and merely did not have the available time. It appears that this school does have the capacity to attend to both group and individual learner problems, and is achieving an element of success from their endeavours. This is a self-reliant school.

In conclusion, this chapter has served to record the findings of the research tools, namely; the research questionnaire and the semi-structured interview. These findings have been recorded both in tables and in written records. The findings focus on answers to the four critical questions that have guided this research study. The interpretation of the findings is outlined in the following chapter.

CHAPTER SIX - ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION OF THE FINDINGS

The findings of this research study will be analysed and interpreted in this chapter. In keeping with the four critical questions, the analysis and interpretation will be broken up into four sections. The first section deals with the current status of implementation of Teacher Support Teams within the sample of schools studied. The second section will focus on the degree of success that has been achieved at some of the schools, whilst the third section will concentrate on problems that schools have experienced in setting up Teacher Support Teams. These problems have emerged from this study. Lastly, the fourth section will outline a comparison between primary and secondary schools to ascertain whether significant differences do exist in terms of implementing Teacher Support Teams and the potential nature of intervention.

6.1 The Current Status of Implementation:

It appears evident from the findings that there is variance between schools with regard to the current implementation of policy concerning the establishment of Teacher Support Teams at schools. It is also evident from the findings that those schools that had adequate knowledge and information appeared to have been more successful in the implementation of policy. It should be borne in mind that all schools were presumed to have been trained by means of workshops on the purpose of and rationale for Teacher Support Teams. This training also provided advice regarding the scope of intervention and the functioning of Teacher Support Teams. However, it appears that some schools may not have received this training. It is possible that certain school principals may have forgotten about these workshops as they occurred in 2001 and 2002. It is possible that principals neglected to attend or send representatives to these training sessions.

It is, however, more likely explained in terms of the following. The advocacy programmes and training of Teacher Support Team members occurred at a time of departmental restructuring. This implies that schools that were previously under the jurisdiction of certain district managers were assigned to different districts or even different regions. Some districts may have neglected to undertake such training, particularly as these schools fell geographically at the periphery. It has proved impossible to trace records of these workshops, as departmental personnel have also been moved to other portfolios and other circuits or wards. Consequently, it appears that the re-structuring process has had a negative impact on service delivery and on the establishment of Teacher Support Teams at schools.

Departmental circulars were also distributed to all schools. The knowledge pertaining to Teacher Support Teams is, however, only likely to be known if attention is drawn to these documents, in the form of a training session. Thus it appears that the disparity in information and knowledge about Teacher Support Teams across schools has influenced the degree of implementation. It does appear significant that the same schools that claim to have sufficient knowledge are those who have established Teacher Support Teams at their schools. It is also of significance to note that one school that did implement a Teacher Support Team initially, failed to sustain it. This has implications for current service providers. Schools cannot merely be provided with training and then left to implement the policy and function in this new mode successfully. There is a need for constant support to be provided in order to assist schools in the functioning and operation of their Teacher Support Teams. This is the role of Departmental service personnel within the PGSES sub-directorate.

The research findings reveal another interesting dimension. Generally, those schools that have sufficient knowledge of outside referral sources also tend to be those who are more confident about their successful functioning. This has implications for the type of training and support offered to schools. It is important for schools to be both developed in their own capacity to manage teacher and learner problems, and also to have knowledge about where to gain assistance and which agencies can provide these services when required. Unfortunately, the level of social support varies geographically. The sample of schools investigated in this study is located within an urban or peri-urban environment where support is close at hand. These schools can draw on the assistance of state departments and non-governmental organisations, provided they have knowledge of their services. Schools within a more rural context may have lesser resources to utilise.

6.2 The Success of Teacher Support Teams:

The second critical issue essential to this research study pertains to the degree of success experienced by Teacher Support Teams within the sample of schools. Fourteen schools reported that their Teacher Support Teams were functioning well, as opposed to six schools that were found to be experiencing problems. There was some degree of consistency between those schools that reported having adequate knowledge of Teacher Support Teams and those that were experiencing successes. There were however, three schools that reported contradictory findings. Two primary schools and one secondary school responded that they did not have established Teacher Support Teams at their schools, but were experiencing successes in dealing with teaching and learning problems. These schools appear to have alternative structures in place in order to manage problems of such a nature. It was largely through the use of qualitative data, gathered through the use of a semi-structured interview that greater insight could be gained on these structures.

Certain common features may be extrapolated from these findings. Schools that are successful in handling classroom problems tend to be using existing management structures to achieve these successes. These schools also tend to be using outside agencies with which they have networked and established lines of support. These schools also appear to be self-reliant and sufficiently capacitated in terms of material and human resources. They also appear to be schools that were previously viewed as more advantaged. These schools however, tend to be operating within a medical model of intervention and are referring their problems to outside agents or removing the problems from the school, prior to their initial intervention strategies being developed, initiated and monitored. Examples of their group interventions appear to be more preventative. This is viewed as commendable.

The question arises as to whether Teacher Support Teams should be mandatory for all schools. Does a single model of intervention fit all contexts? If alternative methods of initial intervention are in place and appear to be working adequately, does this imply that they should be changed?

It has further emerged from the research questionnaire that all schools believed that Teacher Support Teams could be usefully employed as a model of intervention whereby teaching and learning problems could be addressed. This was the case regardless of whether the schools had or had not established a Teacher Support Team at their school, or experienced any success in this field. This is a positive finding as it provides hope for the continued advocacy of Teacher Support Teams as a means to empower schools to be self-sufficient in dealing with their problems. It is also encouraging to note that eighty percent of the sample schools were eager to learn more.

The research findings further indicate that there is a significant degree of success perceived by respondents and that positive results have been experienced. These successes include feelings of working together as a team and that staff are experiencing a supportive environment in which to discuss their problems. The support offered to the less experienced teachers is also viewed as a positive development.

6.3 Problems encountered:

The third critical question pertaining to this research study relates to the problems experienced by schools in the operation of their Teacher Support Teams. It is to be expected that the responses pertaining to successes should be a mirror image of those responses to problems encountered. This is in fact what has occurred. Whereas fourteen schools indicated successes, six schools indicated experiencing problems in the operation of Teacher Support Teams. The nature of these problems, yet again, relates to a lack of knowledge about Teacher Support Teams and about the support structures that are available. Schools that report problems appear less confident about their own capacity to deal with certain problems. They believe that such problems are beyond their abilities to resolve. Respondents also report a lack of expertise to manage certain problem situations in their schools.

Thus it appears that the problems reported by schools are less about obstacles experienced and more about perceived problems that are anticipated. This feeling of insecurity is understandable, but should not be used as an excuse to opt out of the management of such difficulties. Any programme of advocacy and training would need to consider these insecurities and provide follow-up support in the form of information dissemination. The role of the District Support Team is vital in this connection.

A significant problem cited by the respondents, amongst others, is the lack of support offered by parents/guardians/care-givers. It is perhaps the case that certain communities are not directly involved in their schools. There may be beliefs that problems are the responsibility of the school. Such a belief is erroneous and needs to be corrected. Whether the problems brought to the Teacher Support Team are of an individual or group nature, or whether the problems are social or not, it is imperative that community members provide their support for the resolution of such problems. The research findings indicated that two of the schools that had previously encountered problems, found that with the support of parents, the Teacher Support Team could achieve its purpose successfully.

6.4 Comparison between Primary and Secondary Schools:

The differences in implementation and functioning of Teacher Support Teams at primary and secondary schools are the focus of the fourth critical question of this research study. Based on the findings of the research questionnaire, there are instances where significant differences do exist, whilst in other cases, the differences appear less apparent. In terms of the implementation of Teacher Support Teams, there does appear to be a difference between primary and secondary schools. Seven primary schools as opposed to only four secondary schools, had actually implemented policy on Teacher Support Teams. There are possible explanations for this finding. Primary schools tend to be more focused on the child in a nurturing and caring environment. Due to the close contact between learner and educator within the primary school, greater alertness to problems is achieved. Learning difficulties are generally identified at this level. Social and emotional problems within the child are also more likely to be observed. Secondary schools tend to be more results-oriented, and less focused on the individual learner. Secondary schools do however need to attend to more group problems related to social and behavioural factors.

A comparison between primary and secondary schools also indicates differences in the reported successes of Teacher Support Teams. This could be interpreted in the light of more primary schools having implemented Teacher Support Teams and having had more experience in their functioning. Knowledge regarding available sources of support did not differ substantially.

The questions pertaining to the nature of learner problems experienced produced some interesting results. There appears to be a difference between the problems generally experienced at primary and secondary schools, but the differences are not distinctive. Both primary and secondary schools rated behavioural problems to be of most concern. Which behavioural problems are encountered is not made clear. Behavioural problems vary in nature and in degree, and this has not been made evident from the findings. Drug and substance abuse and teenage pregnancy are rated highly as problems by secondary schools. These are more specific examples of behavioural problems but they are also of social causation. Such specific problems are not reported by primary schools.

Primary schools rate Learning Difficulties highly. This is to be expected. These are the most likely problems that could be brought to the attention of the Teacher Support Team. Secondary schools rate academic problems fairly high too. Of concern however, is that few of these problems are brought to the attention of Teacher Support Teams. These are often considered individual problems existing within the child and outside referrals are made. Such referrals are frequently premature and there is tremendous scope for the Teacher Support Team to consider such difficulties as an in-house matter for classroom-based intervention.

A further difference between primary and secondary schools is noted. Whereas primary schools consider poverty to be a significant social problem, this factor is provided a low rating by the secondary school respondents. The primary and secondary schools selected for this research are located within the same communities and problems of poverty must impact equally. Primary school respondents also rate problems of disease and child abuse, whereas secondary school respondents rate violence as a significant problem. These are also social problems that affect the entire community and not just the individual child. It appears that Teacher Support Teams need to engage with issues beyond the restrictions of the school gates if their interventions are to bear significant fruit.

[This chapter has sought to assimilate the findings of the research questionnaire with the more qualitative data gathered through the semi-structured interviews. The findings have been reported in terms of the four critical questions. Likewise, the analysis of the findings has followed a similar format. The information gathered through direct interaction with respondents has allowed for possible interpretations to be made. These interpretations provide a basis for recommendations to be made, which will ~~impact on the further training of Teacher Support Teams~~. Furthermore, the recommendations will have implications for continued support offered to schools that will assist in establishing and sustaining their Teacher Support Teams.

CHAPTER SEVEN - RECOMMENDATIONS

This chapter provides recommendations for the further implementation of policy concerning Teacher Support Teams at schools. Suggestions are made concerning the training programmes and the on-going support that needs to be provided to Teacher Support Teams. Based on the findings of this research study, certain recommendations are suggested that could be of use in maximizing the efficiency of the Teacher Support Teams that are already in existence and in sustaining their operations. A model of intervention is offered based on the work of Maher and Zins, (1987). This model serves a useful purpose in providing a framework of thinking about different types and levels of intervention. Lastly, recommendations are suggested regarding a more pragmatic approach to the development and implementation of policies.

7.1 Enhancing Training Programmes:

It is evident from the research findings that a renewed effort needs to be made in the training of personnel who will form Teacher Support Teams. Rather than being imposed as Departmental policy, the ideas should be promoted as school enhancing and developing programmes. Teacher Support Teams need to be understood in the light of Inclusive ideology, and the associated theoretical principles should be part of a greater advocacy campaign. Where there might be resistance, teachers need to see the value of the role that a Teacher Support Team can play in managing both teaching and learning problems. It is also evident from the research findings that Teacher Support Teams need to be equipped with knowledge about support systems that exist within their communities, within State Departments and from the non-governmental sector. The Teacher Support Teams need to be provided with capacity to deal with problems, to anticipate and prevent problems, and

ultimately to refer to outside sources when and if strategies and programmes prove ineffective. The reliance on outside intervention should be replaced with a capacity for dealing with issues that are in-house. The Teacher Support Team needs to be empowered to deal with problems, and develop strategies that suit the unique context in which they function. This capacity development is a process, and thus, the role of Departmental PGSES personnel is that of support. The entire District Support Team should be in place as a resource that can be drawn from as and when the need arises.

7.2 Sustaining Teacher Support Teams:

It is evident from the research findings that once a Teacher Support Team is up and running, its successful functioning needs to be monitored. There is a real danger that the team may experience failure, or become de-motivated. Problems may appear insurmountable, and the Teacher Support Team could easily be disbanded. It is often all too easy to revert to a position of powerlessness or to revert to previous modes of practice. It is for these reasons that it is vitally necessary to provide on-going support to Teacher Support Teams in order to sustain their efforts and interventions.

The responses from certain school principals indicate a reservation about the skills and expertise of staff members in handling the demands placed on the Teacher Support Team. This is a justifiable concern. It needs to be granted that educators are not equipped to deal with certain psycho-educational issues. There should be no attempt to expect educators to replace those professionals whose role and function still exists. However, a dependency on outside referral is to be avoided. It is the intention to provide the members of the Teacher Support Team with requisite skills in order to function in a lay-professional capacity. The very nature of a team is that members are able to combine their existing skills and expertise

in order to seek solutions to their own problems. Further to this, members will require ongoing advice and support in a variety of ways.

For example, Teacher Support Teams can be skilled in the following skills. Where learners are experiencing scholastic difficulties, and a referral is required, the Teacher Support Team can be empowered to undertake a pre-referral intake interview with parents, guardians or child care-givers. This task of gathering information can be time-consuming, but it is generally the classroom based teacher who is at the interface with parents, and who is best equipped to know and understand each child better. Teacher Support Teams also need to be equipped with the skills of undertaking an initial screening assessment, so as to establish the learner's current level of academic functioning. Such an assessment can take the form of graded tests that ascertain levels of innumeracy, literacy, reading, writing, spelling and comprehension. Once this is achieved, the Teacher Support Team should be skilled in the development of Individualised Learning Programmes. These can ultimately be developed and implemented in-house by teams of educators who are in a position to share their resources, and thus attend to the learning needs of the individual child.

7.3 A Framework for Intervention:

A suggested framework for intervention has been developed by Maher and Zins, (1987). This model provides a practical guide to the types of intervention that a Teacher Support Team may implement. It also provides a framework for thinking about interventions, their type and level. These authors suggest that the practitioner should firstly think about the level of intervention, whether it is at the group level or at the individual level. Many of the social problems cited by the research sample in this study could be addressed at the group level. Respondents referred to problems such as drug and substance abuse and that of teenage

pregnancies. Programmes of prevention need to be utilised, as is the case in some schools. At the individual level, scholastic difficulties or under-performance need to be focused at developing Individualised Learning Programmes (IEP's) that attend to the learning needs of the child. The intervention framework suggested by Maher and Zins (cited above), also suggests that the practitioner should think in terms of six different types or dimensions. The authors refer to these as intervention domains. These domains are the following; namely, cognitive development, affective functioning, socialization, academic achievement, physical fitness and vocational preparation. Each of these six domains can be approached at either a group or an individual level.

The first is the domain of cognitive development, and includes thinking, reasoning, problem solving and decision-making. These cognitive skills need to be developed as part of the schools Life Orientation Programme, and should be a continuous process of development. The second domain is that of Affective functioning, and includes a degree of positive self-image, self-control and healthy emotional functioning. This too, could be addressed as a programme within Life-Skills education. The third is that of socialization. This domain focuses on friendships and interactions with peers, teachers, parents and others. The fourth domain is geared towards academic achievement. In such an intervention, topics such as study-skills and motivation could be addressed. The fifth domain attends to the physiological needs of learners, and includes physical fitness and nutrition. Lastly, vocational preparation includes topics of career awareness and vocational opportunities.

The authors stress that these are psycho-educational interventions and should be approached from an ecological perspective, or from a broad bio-psycho-social view. This indicates that consideration should be made of a broad range of possible contributing factors for problems

and their solutions. These are pre-referral interventions, and this is the purpose of the Teacher Support Team. Its principal goal should be directed towards programmes of education and prevention, prior to the need to refer to outside professional agents. Problems should not be seen within the individual, but rather within systems. This supports the theoretical model of inclusion and seeks to break down various barriers that impede fully-functioning individual and group participation.

7.4 A Pragmatic Approach:

This research study has focused on an urban and peri-urban area. These localities imply that adequate resources are available and that referral sources are close at hand. Such agents, such as State hospitals, can be easily accessed. However, this researcher has done a significant amount of work in far flung rural areas where such resources do not exist. Furthermore, the evidence of this study indicates that Teacher Support Teams can only function in schools that have the capacity and resources and that indicate a certain measure of self-reliance. This is not the case in all schools. It appears that where Teacher Support Teams are functioning, they are still utilizing structures that are more in line with the Medical model of intervention.

Anecdotal evidence suggests that schools that are remote from the resources of urban life are most unlikely to succeed in establishing and operating successful Teacher Support Teams. It is suggested that neither a fully medical approach nor the ideals of inclusion are independently able to provide answers to schools that are grappling with scholastic, behavioural and social problems. The Medical model fails to consider the full context in which problems arise, whereas the Social Justice model can be criticised for being too idealistic. Schools vary to a large extent, and one model of implementation cannot be

uniformly applied. Utilising any one model as an extreme tends to indicate that the successful implementation of Teacher Support Teams at all schools is not workable.

There is therefore the need for newer thinking at both a micro and a macro level. The micro level attends to issues on the ground, and many of the ideals of recent policy are not easily adopted. At the macro level, where policy formulation occurs, there is a need for policies to be re-evaluated. This research paper has suggested that a pragmatic alternative might be required whereby elements of both a Medical and a Social Justice model be adopted. One such pragmatic alternative is the eco-systemic model that incorporates a broad ambit of biological, psychological and social realities.

With the above in mind, there is also a tremendous need for further research to be conducted in this field in order to fully understand the complexities that exist in the establishment and functioning of a Teacher Support Team. It is trusted that this will indeed ensue.

7.5 Conclusion:

This research study has focused on the degree of policy implementation with regard to the establishment and operations of Teacher Support Teams at schools. Four critical questions have determined the nature of data that was pertinent in understanding the current status of functioning. Some indicators of success appear, yet there is also evidence of problems that are impinging on successful policy implementation and functioning. There lies an enormous challenge in the future for those who firstly develop educational policies, and secondly for those that are tasked to support, guide and assist schools in facing the real issues of daily practice.

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APPENDIX



PROVINCE OF KWAZULU-NATAL
ISIFUNDAZWE SAKWAZULU-NATAL
PROVINSIE KWAZULU-NATAL



DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
UMNYANGO WEMFUNDO
DEPARTEMENT VAN ONDERWYS

HEAD OFFICE

INHLOKO HHOVISI

HOOFKANTOOR

ADDRESS: EX-DURBAN COLLEGE OF EDUCATION
IKHELI: CNR. NICHOLSON ROAD AND QUEEN
ADRES: MARY AVENUE
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ENQUIRIES: P.T. ZUNGU
IMIBUZO:
NAVRAE:

REFERENCE:
INKOMBA: Permission: Research
VERWYSING:

DATE: 12 August 2004
USUKU:
DATUM:

RE: APPROVAL TO CONDUCT RESEARCH

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

This is to serve as a notice that **Garth Duncan** has been granted permission to conduct research with the following terms and conditions:

- That as a researcher, she/he **must** present a copy of the written approval from the Department to the Head of the Institution concerned before any research may be undertaken at a departmental institution.
- Attached is the list of schools she/he has been granted permission to conduct research in. however, it must be noted that the schools are not obligated to participate in the research if it is not a KZNDEC project.
- **Garth Duncan** has been granted special permission to conduct her/his research during official contact times, as it is believed that her/his presence would not interrupt **education programmes**. Should education programmes be interrupted, she/he must, therefore, conduct his/her research during nonofficial contact times.
- No school is expected to participate in the research during the fourth school term, as this is the critical period for schools to focus on their exams.

Comments: _____

Thandiwe Zungu
Deputy Director: Research, Strategy and Policy Development

Comments: _____

S H Mthabela
Director: Research, Strategy Development and ECMIS



RESEARCH OFFICE (FRANCIS STOCK BUILDING)
HOWARD COLLEGE
TELEPHONE NO.: 031 – 2603587

7 MARCH 2005

MR. GN DUNCAN
EDUCATIONAL STUDIES

Dear Mr. Duncan

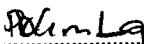
ETHICAL CLEARANCE:

I wish to confirm that ethical clearance has been granted for the following project:

“The implementation of teacher support teams at Schools: Issues and experiences”

Kindly submit your response to the undersigned as soon as possible

Yours faithfully


.....
MS. PHUMELELE XIMBA
(FOR) MANAGER: RESEARCH OFFICE

PS: The following general condition is applicable to all projects that have been granted ethical clearance:

THE RELEVANT AUTHORITIES SHOULD BE CONTACTED IN ORDER TO OBTAIN THE NECESSARY APPROVAL SHOULD THE RESEARCH INVOLVE UTILIZATION OF SPACE AND/OR FACILITIES AT OTHER INSTITUTIONS/ORGANISATIONS. WHERE QUESTIONNAIRES ARE USED IN THE PROJECT, THE RESEARCHER SHOULD ENSURE THAT THE QUESTIONNAIRE INCLUDES A SECTION AT THE END WHICH SHOULD BE COMPLETED BY THE PARTICIPANT (PRIOR TO THE COMPLETION OF THE QUESTIONNAIRE) INDICATING THAT HE/SHE WAS INFORMED OF THE NATURE AND PURPOSE OF THE PROJECT AND THAT THE INFORMATION GIVEN WILL BE KEPT CONFIDENTIAL.

cc. Director of School
cc. Supervisor

.w

RESEARCH QUESTIONNAIRE - PILOT STUDY - TEACHER SUPPORT TEAMS

This research questionnaire is intended to gather information regarding the status of implementation of Teacher Support Teams in certain schools within the Ilembe district. The researcher is interested in evaluating the extent of implementation and/or operation of Teacher Support Teams at schools.

Please assist by completing the following questions. It is advisable to complete this questionnaire in collaboration with some of your staff members, preferably those who are familiar with Teacher Support Teams or have been involved in your school's Teacher Support Team.

Please respond honestly to the questions, so that the information gathered from this research can be translated into an improved service delivery to schools.

PLEASE NOTE THAT THE INFORMATION PROVIDED WILL NOT BE DISCLOSED. IT WILL BE TREATED CONFIDENTIALLY AND USED ENTIRELY FOR THE PURPOSES OF THIS RESEARCH. PLEASE USE THE ENVELOPE PROVIDED.

Kindly return the completed questionnaire to your ward manager as soon as possible.

SECTION A: BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION

NAME OF SCHOOL: _____

SCHOOL TELEPHONE NUMBER: _____

NAME OF PRINCIPAL: _____

NO. OF EDUCATORS: _____

NO. OF LEARNERS: _____

WARD: _____

NAMES OF STAFF MEMBERS INVOLVED IN TEACHER SUPPORT TEAM:

SECTION B:

Please respond by circling either YES or NO alongside each statement.

- 1 The principal has attended a workshop/address regarding the establishment and operation of Teacher Support Teams at schools.

YES NO

- 2 Members of staff have attended a workshop/address regarding the establishment and operation of Teacher Support Teams at schools.

YES NO

- 3 I am familiar with the requirements of Teacher Support Teams and have sufficient knowledge and resources to ensure the smooth operation of a Teacher Support Team at our school.

YES NO

- 4 My school is in possession of policy documents pertaining to the establishment and operation of Teacher Support Teams at schools.

YES NO

- 5 I (principal) have adequate knowledge regarding the establishment and operation of a Teacher Support Team at my school.

YES NO

- 6 Members of staff at my school have adequate knowledge regarding the establishment and operation of Teacher Support Teams at my school.

YES NO

- 7 A Teacher Support Team has been established at my school.

YES NO

8 I believe that a Teacher Support Team is vital at my school and serves an essential purpose in aiding teachers to cope with problem learners and situations in their classrooms.

YES NO

9 I have experienced problems in establishing a Teacher Support Team at my school and require assistance in order to set one up.

YES NO

If YES, please provide details about the nature of such problems.

10 My teachers and I are positive about the function that a Teacher Support Team could play in solving problems experienced by learners at my school.

YES NO

11 Teachers are resistant to the establishment of a Teacher Support Team at my school.

YES NO

If YES, please provide possible reasons for this resistance.

12 We have experienced a measure of success in the operation and functioning of the Teacher Support Team at our school.

YES NO

If YES, please provide details regarding the nature of these successes.

13 I believe that by working as a team, teachers can be more effective in coping with the problems encountered with individual learners or with classroom situations.

YES NO

14 I am aware of support systems that exist outside of the school that can be utilised if the Teacher Support Team encounters difficulties.

YES NO

If YES, what services could you or have you used to assist in problem situations?

15 We have experienced problems at our school and do not believe that a Teacher Support Team will be effective in solving these problems.

YES NO

If YES, please provide further details.

16 We are interested in finding out more about how Teacher Support Teams could be effectively utilised at our school.

YES NO

SECTION C: Please provide a tick in the blocks that apply to the following questions.

18 A Teacher Support Team could be useful in handling the following problems at our school.

INDIVIDUAL LEARNING DIFFICULTIES	
BEHAVIOURAL PROBLEMS	
PROBLEMS OF CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT	
HEALTH/HYGIENE PROBLEMS	
DRUG/SUBSTANCE ABUSE	
SEXUAL ABUSE	
VIOLENCE AMONGST LEARNERS	
PROBLEMS EMANATING FROM POVERTY	
LEARNERS WITH EMOTIONAL PROBLEMS	
SUPPORT OF INEXPERIENCED TEACHERS	
TEACHERS SHARING EXPERIENCE/RESOURCES	
CAREER GUIDANCE FOR LEARNERS	
ADVICE WITH SUBJECT CHOICE - LEARNERS	
BULLYING	
OTHER - PLEASE SPECIFY _____ _____	

19 We believe the three most prevalent problems that a Teacher Support Team could address at our school are: (Please list them below).

- 1 _____
- 2 _____
- 3 _____

20 We believe that certain problems are beyond the ability of a Teacher Support Team to address or attend to: (Please identify such problems below).

Thank you for filling in this questionnaire. Your time and effort is greatly appreciated.