

Educator's Challenges and Experience in Implementing Screening in Grade R Classrooms in Dr. Kenneth Kaunda

Mokwena Morelle

Doctor in Psychology of Education (PhD) Inclusive Education, University of the Free State, Free State Province, Senior Education Specialist (Inclusive education) in Teemane Building Dr Kenneth Kaunda District, North-West Province, ORCID: <http://0003-0673-2686.org/0000>

Abstract:- This study intends to explore the educator's challenge and experience in screening learners with learning barriers in Grade R classrooms. The proposed title intends to close the disparity experienced in the past regime where learners with learning barriers were ignored or not supported at all so that they maximally achieve similar to those who are said to be normal. The study will reveal the challenges that teachers teaching grade R learners in implementing (Screening, identification, assessment, support) SIAS policy. This study also intends to allude the challenges and educators experience thus will lead to successful implementation of support to learner with learning barriers in Grade R classroom.

This study adopted phenomenological system where qualitative approach was employed. Semi-structured interviews were administered for data collection to two farm schools where two (one from each school) SBST coordinators were selected, three educators were selected (three from each school, two departmental heads were also selected). The results will be collected and presented against the central themes that will emerge inter alia educators negativity towards learner with learning disabilities, lack of parental involvement, lack of resources and support to learners with learning disabilities and negative perception towards curriculum adaptation to learners with learning disabilities.

Keywords:- Screening, Identification, Assessment, and Support. (SIAS), ECD (Early Childhood development), White paper 5 on early childhood Education (2001), white paper 6 on inclusive education and SBST (School Based Support t Team).

I. INTRODUCTION

➤ Background and Motivation

Education in South Africa has undergone major transitions. Prior 1994 democratic election which gave birth to new South Africa, education was organised on the basis of race and disability. The education policies that were developed promoted the interest of the apartheid government. Schools that accommodate white disable learners had enough resource, while schools for black

disabled learners had nothing and some had very few resources with no support at all.

Despite the above stipulated challenges that were experienced immediately after democratisation of our country the introduction of inclusive education was a rescue to our National education system. Inclusive education has progressively been implemented in conjunction with several policies, inter alia, White Paper 5, White paper 6 and SIAS policy.

Further research states that even though there are established SBST in schools, they do not execute their given duties as expected because they do not know exactly what they have to do. The process of including learner with learning barrier in mainstream farm school has been a challenge for many years which is aggravated by number of contextual factors. Teachers in the mainstream are not trained and supported on the SIAS policy and not all stakeholders participate sufficiently to give learners with learning barriers necessary support to enhance successful inclusion, Maguvhe, (2015).

➤ Aim and Purpose of the Study:

The aim and the purpose of the study is to explore the challenges experienced by educators in implementing screening in grade R classroom in two farms schools. To bring about strategies and procedures to screen and identify learners with learning barriers to enhance successful inclusion.

Lastly, to initiate and implement supportive structures that will lead and results to learner successful inclusion.

➤ Research questions:

- What are the challenges experienced by teachers in implementing screening in learners with barriers in two primary schools in Matlosana District?
- How learners with learning barriers can be screened and identified?
- What form of support will be provided by district based support team in enhancing the implementation of SIAS policy?

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

Literature has in few years alluded that teachers are experiencing challenges in dealing and accepting learners with learning barriers in mainstream schools, Maphumulo (2019). Challenges and frustrations experienced by teachers in giving support to learners with learning barriers were aggravated by the fact that SBST is available but not functional, most teacher are not aware of the existence of SIAS policy and it implementation. From the research it was also found that teachers are not adequately trained and supported in the implementation differentiated teaching strategies to cater the needs of learners with learning barriers, Adare, Li, & Gebresilase, (2023).

The study intends to bring awareness pertaining the role played by SBST in incorporating learners with learning barriers in mainstream schools and making sure that support provision is not compromised. The provided teachers with platform to express their frustrations and challenges that may be dealt with and thus results in successful inclusion of learners with learning barriers, Liu, Chen & Pugh (2021). Most importantly the study will bring awareness to the National Education Department that series of Professional Support Forums (PSFs) are essential in engaging teachers who are in the SBST on their roles and responsibilities, (Skae, Brown, & Wilmot, 2020).

➤ Methodological Approach

The study will adopt qualitative research method to understand the meaning given by the participants that is how they show their interpretation in making sense of their life experience. Qualitative method was found to be more relevant in the study because the purpose of the study is to explore the roles or SBST in enhancing successful inclusion of learners with learning barriers.

Phenomenological style being embedded in the study. Data in this research study will be collected through semi-structured interviews. The researcher will collect data in form of spoken and written language and be identified and analysed in categorising themes.

➤ Selection of Participants

The study was conducted in two schools that were experiencing challenges in implementing SIAS policy in selection learners with learning barriers to enhance successful inclusion. The researcher selected participants i.e. educators in SBST, two teachers from school management team, a principal from each school as the co-ordinator in the team, two teachers from each phase. Teachers were selected because they work and are responsible for screening and identify learners with learning barriers daily.

Table 1: Outlining the participants in the two selected schools

Number of schools selected	Teachers	Principals	Learners	School management team (SMT)	Senior Education Specialists (SES)
School 1	2 (From SBST)	1	2	2	1
	2				
School 2	2 (From SBST)	1	2	2	1
	2				
TOTALS	8	2	4	4	2

➤ Data Collection

Semi-structured interviews and classroom observation were used to obtain data. The verification of information received during the interviews, against the information gathered from the classroom observation, was facilitated by using multiple sources. It also enhanced the credibility of the research findings, (Phala, & Hugo 2022). The interview questions comprised open-ended questions that allowed the participants to express their personal opinions and perceptions of what they thought the causes of reading problems in farms schools were, (Vaughn, 2018).

Firstly, a pilot study was performed to validate the questions. Secondly, the researchers observed the participants in their natural classrooms over a period of 3 weeks, with the intention of exploring the challenges in implementing SIAS to select learners with learning barriers in such two schools. According to some researchers the challenges surrounding the implementation of SIAS policy includes support to learners and teachers, teachers training in SIAS policy, knowledge and understanding of SIAS,

attitudes towards SIAS and involvement of other officials in SIAS, Matolo, Manthema Awelani & Rambuda, (2021). Therefore it was pivotal to have the above selected participants in the study.

III. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The theoretical framework underpinning this study encompasses the bio-ecological approach of Urie Bronfenbrenner. It is for this reason that individual human beings and groups of people interact and are dependent on one another in their environments. The SIAS policy requires educators to shift from locating barriers within the learners to locating them in all the systems which form the spheres of existence of learners, and which act as barriers to learning. There are four levels of the Bio-ecological model.

The diagram below illustrates the various layers or levels of development as outlined in Bronfenbrenner’s ecological model.

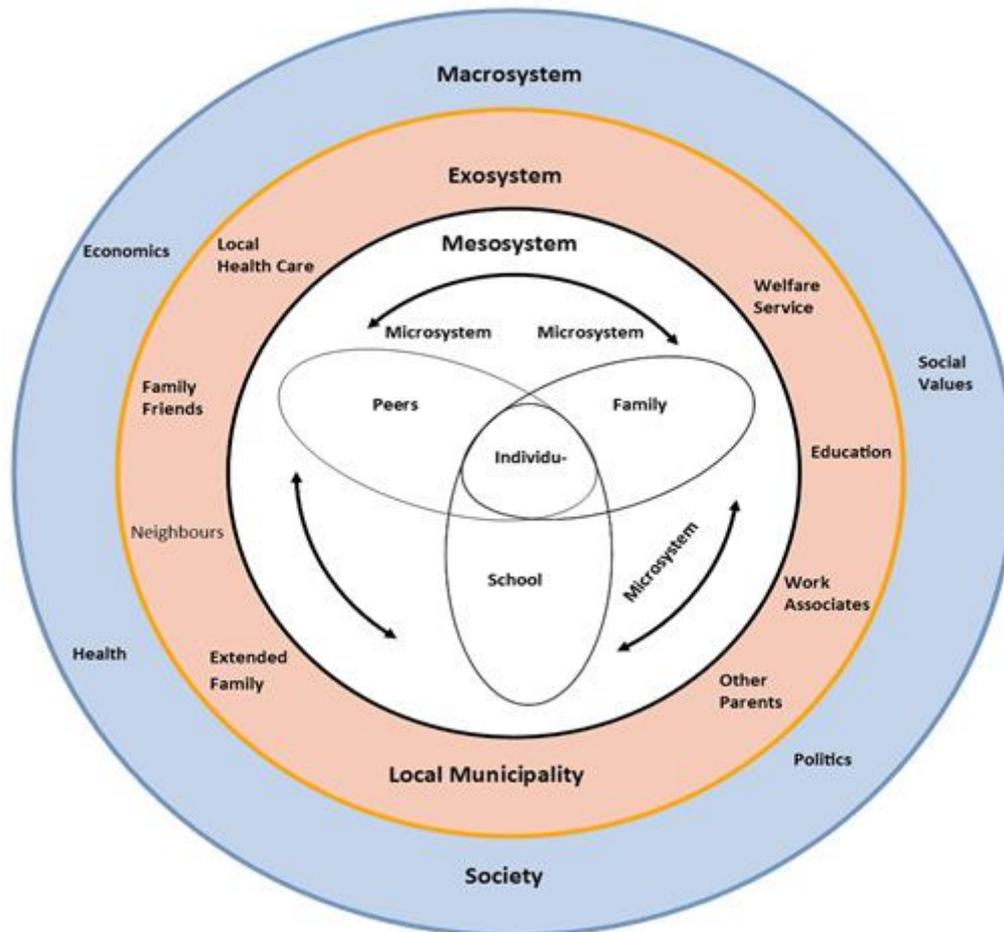


Fig 1: Bronfenbrenner's ecological model (adapted from Santock, 2004:69)

Four levels of environmental system by Bronfenbrenner that influences person's development are the microsystem, mesosystem, exosystem, and macrosystem. These levels of environment systems have implication regarding the implementation of SIAS policy in inclusive schools.

IV. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

➤ *An Inclusive Classroom*

This study intends to explore educator's challenges and experience in implementing screening in grade R classrooms in Dr. Kenneth Kaunda. Inclusive classroom layout is very important in implementing screening to identify learners with learning barriers. An inclusive classroom ensures that all learners participate within an effective learning environment (Rose & Howley 2007). Inclusive education in schools and the classroom is not only about access to education by all learners but also about the 'belonging, nurturing and educating all students, which will results in successful implementation of SIAS policy.

Foundation phase classrooms are particularly important because it is at this phase that the fundamentals and groundwork of learners' education and development are laid down, including intellectual, mental, emotional, physical and social development. Both schools were found to be adhering to the fact that inclusive classroom needs to be laid

in a manner that it meets the needs of learners with learning barriers.

The findings of the study revealed that, although most classrooms were arranged properly in a manner to allow learners with learning disabilities to learn maximally there were shortage of assistive devices. Teachers in School based support team also lamented that there were no enough funds to purchase assistive devices to cater the needs of learners with learning barriers.

➤ *Poor or no Training on the use of Assistant Technology*

The implementation of an inclusion strategy from a teacher's perspective is a challenge because teachers have not received the necessary training to be able to teach in an inclusive school environment, especially visually impaired learners, (Bongabong, J M, Bongabong, G, M, Cagape, W, Cerna, Ricardo & Magno, C. 2022).

• *Teachers indicated that:*

We need more training from the department, like how to deal with so many learners in class who have a reading challenge and how to fill this form, because even if it has been shortened, it is long. Teachers from both schools were mainly concerned with the length of the (school needs analysis) SNA form.

Teachers from the SBST also indicated that they needed training in using multimedia to teach learners with learning barriers. In the implementation of SIAS policy, learning can be integrated with strategies that support the heterogeneity of learner abilities. Multimedia facilitates the bimodal presentation of information through multiple senses, namely the auditory, visual, kinaesthetic and tactile (Karimupfumbi, & Dwarika, 2022).

It was further outlined by subject advisors that they were unable to reach all the schools within the stipulated time as they were not provided with transport. Furthermore, at times they were unable to reach all teachers, should they decide to arrange a common venue for a workshop. A principal concurred with the subject advisors that teachers were not trained in the utilisation of assistive technology at college or university. Consequently, when faced with an implementation activity, they become frustrated and demonstrate a negative attitude towards teaching LVI using technology devices. It was found in this study that it is significant that before teachers decide on the implementation of a certain strategy, they should be fully acquainted with the level of vision challenge of an individual learner. Therefore, each teacher should undergo training on Screening, Identification, Assessment and Support (SIAS document). The inclusive training would enable teachers to screen learners with visual impairment and administer the SIAS document

➤ *Role played by district based support team (DBST) in identifying learners with learning barriers.*

The district based support team (DBST) consist of different department's interalia, health, social service and safety and security, e.g. health specialists (nurse), psychologists, therapists, and from the education department there are itinerant teachers and senior education specialists. All the representatives from each department give support to learners by supporting educators and school management team. The DBST assists education institutions (including early childhood centres, schools, further education colleges, and adult learning centres) to identify and address barriers to learning and promotes effective teaching and learning. As the aim of the study is to explore challenges experienced by educators in implementing screening the team empowers the School based support team with the aim of alleviating and curb challenges that hinderers the screening process. The team also verifies the screening conducted by teachers by assisting teachers with more professional support forums to enhance successful inclusion of learners with learning barriers so that they also acquire needed necessary skills. It is through this team that screened learners are supported i.e. in the utilisation of assistive devices in schools. It is through the use of assistive devices that such screened learners will achieve maximally as those who are said to be without any learning barriers.

V. CONCLUSION

This study intends to explore the challenges experienced in implementing SIAS to identify learners with learning barriers. The role played by SBST followed by professional development was identified as vital to teacher effectiveness. However, teachers lamented that they experiences challenges in dealing with overcrowded classrooms when implementing screening and identification, insufficient training, very limited parental involvement, lack of knowledge in implementing assistive devices and classroom layout.

It is evident that the implementation of AT in teaching LVI in inclusive schools is viewed as nurturing an increased feeling of acceptance and respect among all participants within the inclusive setting. Participants in this study were adamant that there is a need for more and continuous workshops, seminars and colloquiums to equip them with knowledge to alleviate their fears and frustration concerning the inclusion of LVIs.

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