



Linking Life Orientation teacher training to the inclusive education project in South Africa

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SA's inclusive project in trouble?



August 18, 2015

"Complicit in Exclusion"

South Africa's Failure to Guarantee an Inclusive Education for Children with Disabilities

Key findings

- **Discrimination accessing education**
- **Discrimination due to lack of reasonable accommodation in school**
- **Discriminatory fees and expenses**
- **Violence, abuse and neglect in schools**
- **Lack of quality education**
- **Lack of preparation for life after basic education**

Lack of quality education

- *Children with disabilities in many public schools receive low quality education in poor learning environments. They continue to be significantly affected by a lack of teacher training and awareness about inclusive education methodologies and the diversity of disabilities, a dearth of understanding and practical training about children's needs according to their disabilities, and an absence of incentives for teachers to instruct children with disabilities (p3).*

Segregation and lack of inclusion permeates all levels of SA's education system and reflect fundamental breaches of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.....

Several factors underpin these problems, including undercounting children with disabilities in governmental data, inadequate funding for inclusive education, and lack of adequate information and support services for parents, families, and children with disabilities (p3)



basic education

Department:
Basic Education
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

Report on the Implementation of Education White Paper 6 on Inclusive Education

An Overview for the Period: 2013 - 2015

May 2015

Problem Statement

- Persistent challenges:
 - Limited access to specialist support services particularly in public ordinary schools resulting in too many learners referred out to special schools or remaining in mainstream schools without any appropriate support
 - Disparities across provinces in resourcing Inclusive Education.....
 - Incoherent conception and understanding of the strategic intent and approach towards developing an Inclusive Education and Training System.....

Points of departure

- At the back of my mind – Alan Dyson's view that we should look beyond inclusion – to equity in society AND inclusion (Dyson, 2008)
- South Africa's inclusive education project hinges on the quality of support (adapted from Engelbrecht, Green, Naicker & Engelbrecht, 1999)
- Much has been done – and more still needs to be done to educate the front line personnel into inclusive education and support – namely the class teacher (e.g. new BEd curriculum at NWU)

- SA is massively understaffed (as a country) its certain forms of psychosocial and educational support (examples to follow)
- Fortunately the DBE is seriously concerned about some aspects of support, e.g. psychosocial support: meeting of 26 August at DBE with dr Granville Whittle and ms Faith Mmola and HEIs

- Since my days at multi-disciplinary Child Guidance Clinics in the Free State, I am a strong believer in a dedicated staff member at school taking responsibility for support. In those days a dedicated (and excellent) remedial teacher in primary schools and counsellor/guidance teacher at high schools were the hub of support activity who held all support together

Motivation for this paper

- Paper is really from an ESS practitioner-manager perspective who realises that SA's inclusive education project is in some jeopardy because of inadequate support
- *What would I have recommended and done to teacher training for effective support if I had the opportunity to manage the inclusive section in a provincial department?*

What are the support structures recommended by SIAS and Inclusive Education documents?

- SIAS (December 2014):
 - Classroom support
 - SBST
 - DBST
- In line with White Paper 6, Guidelines for DBSTs etc.

- Classroom teacher – HEIs are moving to improve the curricula into general teacher training for inclusive education; in-service can improve
- SBSTs – I believe support services are struggling to support SA's learners, because SBSTs are by far not functional enough. Wevers (2012) studied seven schools in an Eastern Cape district and found that "most of the SBSTs were dysfunctional"
- DBSTs – provincial departments are overwhelmingly struggling to support learners through disjointed and under-resourced teams at most districts

DBSTs

- Massive discrepancies in support in provinces and districts:
- FREE STATE
 - One psychologist, one social worker, one audiologist serving 183 594 learners in Thabo Mofutsanyana district in the Free State
 - No psychologist, one speech therapist in Lewjeleputswa district in the Free State – 145 986 learners

- WESTERN CAPE

In contrast, 136 psychology posts in the Western Cape, of which 126 are filled - by psychologists, counsellors and psychometrists (Phillips, 2015)

- NORTH-WEST

Kenneth Kaunda district: two psychologists in DBST; Bojanala district: one in DBST and one in learning support

Apparently only these four registered psychologists in the NW Department of Education in the four districts

Table 41: Functional District-based Support Teams

Province	Name of District	Year Established	Discipline/Directorates Making Up DBST	Total DBST Members
EC	23 districts	2012	Inclusive Education, HIV/Aids, Curriculum, IDS&G, ECD, FET, AYET, SNP, Infrastructure, IQMS, DoH, DSD, Dept of Agriculture, SAPS, REHAB, DPSA, Dept of Transport	460
FS	5 districts	2012	IE, Curriculum, SMGD, SYRAC, Examination & Assessment, EMIS, HR	50
GT	15 districts	Strengthened in 2013	All directorates from the districts, NGO, FBO, other government departments, FSS and Resource centres	225
KN	12 districts	2013	Circuit management, curriculum GET&FET, District planning, SNES, ECD, Governance & Management, Co-curricular, NSNP, Curriculum support, Exams and Teacher Development.	156
LP	5 districts	2012	Health professionals, Curriculum advisors, Finance and Human resource managers, Deputy managers governance, Local NGO's, SAPS	75
MP	4 districts	2009 - 2014	ECD, Dept of Health, Disability Desk, Inclusive Education, Social Development, Curriculum, FET, ABET, HR, Pastor, Municipality & Infrastructure, Inclusive (Social Worker), Teacher Development and Governance, ICT, Inclusive (Nutrition), HR, Communication, FET, GET, Inclusive (Life Skills), PGSS	176
NC	5 districts	2013	Education [Cur/Inclus/CM/Admin/IMGD/Transport] Health/ Social Deve/	76
NW	4 districts	2006 - 2007	Division IE, AET section, ECD, Curriculum support, physical resource planning, HR management and development, budget planning and development, Area office institutional support co-ordinator, EMD, APO Sub-division EMG, APO institutional curriculum support, special schools as resource centers and FSS's.	80
WC	8	2009	Per circuit-based support team : Circuit team manager,	392

Table 42: Inclusive Education Officials in Staff Establishment at Provincial and District Levels 2012-2014

Province	Number of Districts	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4	Level 5	Level 6	Total	Vacancies
EC	23	82	51	29	15	0	176	87
FS	5	0	72	0	9	5	0	11
GP	15	No info						
KZN	12	0	19	0	9	0	28	40
LP	10	0	0	0	0	0	0	
MP	4	No info						
NC	5	0	26	0	0	0	26	86
NW	4	4	57	0	3	0	64	7
WC	8	0	49	0	8	10	65	0
NATIONAL TOTAL	86	86	255	29	35	13	360	231

Source: Information received from Provinces in August 2014

Table 42: Unfortunately the data provided by provinces is not comprehensive. Three provinces, namely Gauteng, Limpopo and Mpumalanga have not submitted information. The substantial number of 231 vacancies in the other six provinces needs to be addressed through rigorous budgeting and filling of posts as a critical

SBSTs AND DEDICATED SUPPORT STAFF

No comprehensive data on functional SBSTs apparently available – e.g. nothing in the Report on the Implementation of White Paper 6.....
(May 2015)

Table 43: Number of Remedial, Learning Support and Special Needs Teachers in 2014

Table 43: Number of remedial, learning support and special needs teachers in 2014

Province	Number of Schools	Remedial Teachers	Special Needs Teachers	Learning Support Educators	Learning Support Teachers	Teacher Assistants/Aides
				(School-based)	(Itinerant)	
EC	35	0	0	0	82	54
FS	251	421	268			
GT	325	0	258	372	0	0
KZN	66	106	1255	344	43	367
LP						
MP						
NC	2	0	1	1	13	
NW	0	0	518	62	0	109
WC	1630	0	0	119	480	131
NATIONAL TOTAL:	2309	527	2300	898	254	661

Example: Thabo Mofutsanyana District

465 schools

A maximum of 47 may still have remedial teachers (Sello, 2015)

At least 418 without a dedicated support staff member

- Apart from classroom support, SBSTs are the basis on which SIAS is built
- We need to have well-trained teachers of inclusive education, as well as functional SBSTs for the support function of inclusive education
- Reality: majority of SBSTs are not functional and sustained (you may still remember the old PIDA teams in the previous DET?)

- Challenges of SBSTs:
 - No clear lines of responsibility – e.g who is the leader?
 - Little relief of other extra-mural activities for members of SBST
 - Volunteer work in most instances
 - Dependent on a positive attitude of the principal and deputy
 - Hard to sustain external stakeholder involvement
 - Nearly impossible to get a DBST member on board

LO teachers as possible support resources?

- Most high schools: Between two and nine teachers
 - High school in Witrivier, Mpumalanga: one full-time and two sharing
 - First high school in Potchefstroom: two full-time and seven sharing
 - Second high school in Potchefstroom: one full-time and four sharing

- Primary schools – one example in Potchefstroom: 8 of the 17 teachers are involved in Life Skills in IP and SP
- Why? LO provides a good foundation on which to build the practice of Learning Support, many have Psychology 3, topics of LO strongly related to support – e.g Personal and Social Well-being, Study Skills

An LO teacher as support leader

- We must get the SBSTs functional in all schools – not negotiable to give the inclusive education project a chance to succeed
- My suggestion is to earmark one of the LO posts in a school for a teacher who has been trained in LO as well as Learning Support – where e.g. a learning support/remedial teacher is not available
- 50% of her time could then be allocated to LO teaching – and the other 50% to being the learning support leader

- This LO/LS teacher is part of the post establishment – and not an add-on which provincial departments cannot afford. Fact of the matter is that operational costs are so limited because of bloated salary bills, that "my department cannot even provide toilet paper or print cartridges for us" (DBST research participant in the Free State)
- This teacher takes full responsibility for the SBST functioning at a school – and may furthermore be relieved of other extra-mural activities to support learners after hours

Implications for LO training at HEIs

- Probably not realistic to expect all LO students to do Learning Support modules
- Learning Support may be an elective subject in the place of e.g. the topic Physical Education
- It may even be offered as extra credits over and above the usual LO syllabus – or in the form of a year long short learning programme of 60 - 119 credits
- A joint LO and LS BEd Honours may also be a way to go

- Whichever way – grounding in Inclusive Education will have to be very good
- Leading an SBST will also have to be a critical part of the LS syllabus

Conclusion

I see the transformation of one of the LO posts at a school to also include Learning Support, as ONE of the critical steps to ensure an inclusive education system that can support learners experiencing barriers at an acceptable level