School social workers' perceptions of their role within the framework of inclusive education

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Dissertation (article format) submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree *Magister* in Social Work in Play Therapy at the Potchefstroom Campus of the North-West University

Supervisor: Dr L Wilson

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PERMISSION TO SUBMIT

Letter of permission

Permission to submit this article for examination purposes

I, the supervisor, hereby declare that the input and effort of Mrs. H van Sittert in writing this manuscript reflects research done by her on this topic. I hereby grant permission that she may submit this article for examination in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree Magister in Social Work in Play Therapy.

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DECLARATION OF LANGUAGE EDITING

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School social workers' perceptions of their role within the framework of inclusive education

for Hester van Sittert for the purpose of submission as a research study examination. Changes were suggested and implementation was left to the discretion of the author.

Regards,

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DECLARATION BY STUDENT

I, Hester Wilhelmina van Sittert, declare herewith that the dissertation titled *School social workers' perceptions of their role within the framework of inclusive education,* which I herewith submit to North-West University: Potchefstroom Campus is my own work and that all references used or quoted were indicated and acknowledged.

Signature: .... Date: 14/11/2016

PREFACE

The dissertation is presented in article format in accordance with the guidelines set out in the Manual for Postgraduate Studies of the North-West University.

The article included in this dissertation titled *School social workers' perceptions of their role within the framework of inclusive education* is intended for submission to the journal *Social Work / Maatskaplike Werk.* The guidelines for submission to the journal are attached in Annexure G: Guidelines for authors: SOCIAL WORK / MAATSKAPLIKE WERK Journal.

The referencing style used for the dissertation is in accordance with the NWU Harvard reference style as referred to in the North-West University Referencing Guide. The referencing in Section B corresponds with the Harvard referencing style as stipulated in the journal guidelines (see Annexure G).

SUMMARY

School social workers have played an important role in schools for many years. In the South African context, school social workers render a service within the framework of inclusive education. This implies that all learners have the right to mainstream education, no matter what their circumstance are or what barrier to learning they may have. What is more, learners often find the process of learning difficult because they are affected by their circumstances at home, in their community or by certain experiences in the classroom. In South African schools, school social workers have various roles to play and fulfil their duties as part of a multi-disciplinary team. The duties of school social workers may include grief counselling, crisis intervention and case management. The Department of Basic Education promotes the ecological systems theory of Bronfenbrenner as a framework to understand the interactions, influences and interrelationships between the learner and other systems as the different systems influence each other. This study aimed to explore the perceptions school social workers have of their role within the context of inclusive education and to provide a basis for further studies on this important issue.

This study used a qualitative descriptive design to explore and describe school social workers' perceptions of their role within inclusive education. A literature review was undertaken to explore the definition of social work and more specifically school social work, of a multi-disciplinary team, the term inclusive education and how school social workers form part of it. It also probed the ecological theory of Bronfenbrenner and how school social workers utilize this model. During data collection, ten participants were selected through purposive sampling based on certain inclusion criteria. Data were collected through semi-structured telephone interviews using an interview schedule until data saturation was reached. Thematic analysis was used to analyse the data and findings were compared with the information garnered from the literature review.

The findings revealed that the participants feel that they have different roles and responsibilities in schools, including providing support to learners through individual therapy and group work, emotional support to learners, empowerment of educators and the development of proactive programmes. Participants mentioned that part of their duties is to collaborate with other professionals in their efforts to best assist the child. They confirmed that they form part of a multi-disciplinary team with specific roles, depending on whether they are based at the provincial, district or school level. The

participants at school level usually form part of a team that may include the principal/deputy, clinical psychologists, a professional nurse, the curriculum teacher, parents, occupational psychologists and the child's teachers.

The participants had a good understanding of inclusive education and how they can assist the child within this framework. They mentioned the challenges that they face within the education system, including a lack of support for programme development. A minority of the participants indicated that there is no universal job description and that their roles differ from that of their colleagues at other schools. Supervision is also a problem in some provinces, where participants indicated that they receive no support or guidance. Lastly, participants mentioned that they want school social work to be recognized as a specialized field in social work.

The participants indicated that they make use of various theoretical models in schools and that they do not necessarily utilize the ecological systems theory. Services are rendered by first assessing the child's problem and needs before deciding on which model to use. The models used by participants include the strengths perspective, where the focus is on positive factors in the child's environment, and the problem-solving model. They did not abandon the use of the ecological systems model, but indicated that it is not the only model they use.

The participants also highlighted the fact that they feel they can make a valuable contribution in schools because of the mere fact that school social workers have specific skills and knowledge that can be applied in schools. They specifically mentioned that school social workers know the legislation regarding children and have the skills to help to empower children. Lastly, they felt that the school social worker is the first person available to which the child can reach out, in other words the first person to assess the situation and to refer the case to the right person.

Keywords: School social work, inclusive education, ecological approach

OPSOMMING

Die skool maatskaplike werker speel vir jare reeds 'n baie belangrike rol in skole. In die Suid-Afrikaanse konteks lewer skool maatskaplike werkers hulle dienste binne die raamwerk van inklusiewe onderwys. Dit impliseer dat alle leerders die reg het tot hoofstroomopleiding, ongeag hulle omstandighede of moontlike struikelblokke tot leer. Wat meer is, leerders vind leer dikwels moeilik vanweë hulle omstandighede tuis, in hulle gemeenskappe of binne die klaskamer. In Suid-Afrikaanse skole het skool maatskaplike werkers verskeie rolle en hulle vervul hierdie rolle gewoonlik as deel van 'n multidissiplinêre span. Die take van skool maatskaplike werkers kan berading rondom verlies, krisisintervensie en gevallewerk insluit. Die Departement van Basiese Onderwys staan die ekologiese sisteemteorie van Bronfenbrenner voor as 'n raamwerk vir die verstaan van die interaksie, invloed en onderlinge verhoudinge tussen die leerder en ander sisteme soos wat die verskillende sisteme mekaar beïnvloed. Hierdie studie was gemik daarop om die persepsies van skool maatskaplike werkers van hulle rol binne die opset van inklusiewe onderwys te ondersoek en om sodoende 'n basis vir verdere studie in die verband te bied.

Die studie het gebruik gemaak van 'n kwalitatiewe beskrywende navorsingsontwerp om skool maatskaplike werkers se persepsies van hulle rol binne inklusiewe onderwys te ondersoek en te beskryf. 'n Literatuurstudie is onderneem om definisies van maatskaplike werk, en veral skool maatskaplike werk, 'n multidissiplinêre span en inklusiewe onderwys te ontgin en om te ondersoek hoe skool maatskaplike werk deel vorm hiervan. Die literatuurstudie het verder die ekologiese sisteemteorie van Bronfenbrenner nagespeur en gekyk na hoe skool maatskaplike werkers hierdie model aanwend. Tydens die data-insameling is tien deelnemers geïdentifiseer deur middel van doelgerigte steekproefneming aan die hand van insluitingskriteria. Data is ingesamel deur middel van semi-gestruktureerde telefoniese onderhoude met die gebruik van 'n onderhoudskedule tot by die punt van dataversadiging. Tematiese analise is gebruik om die data te analiseer en om kodes toe te ken. Daarna is die data met die resultate van die literatuurstudie vergelyk.

Die resultate het getoon dat skool maatskaplike werkers voel dat hulle verskillende rolle en verantwoordelikhede by skole het, onder andere ondersteuning aan leerders met individuele terapie of groepwerk, emosionele ondersteuning aan leerders, die bemagtiging van onderwysers en die ontwikkeling van proaktiewe programme.

Deelnemers het genoem dat een van hulle take is om met ander professionele persone saam te werk as deel van die taak om die kind tot die beste van hulle vermoë by te staan. Hulle het bevestig dat hulle binne multidissiplinêre spanne werk en spesifieke rolle vervul, afhangende van of hulle op die provinsiale-, distrik- of skoolvlak werk. Die deelnemers wat in skole werk vorm gewoonlik deel van 'n span wat uit die volgende persone kan bestaan naamlik: die hoof/onderhoof, kliniese sielkundige, 'n professionele verpleegkundige, die kurrikulum-onderwyser, ouers, arbeidsterapeute en die kind se onderwysers, of na gelang van die behoeftes van die spesifieke skool.

Die deelnemers het 'n goeie begrip getoon van inklusiewe onderwys en hoe hulle die kind kan bystaan binne hierdie raamwerk. Hulle het struikelblokke genoem wat hulle binne die onderwysstelsel ervaar, waaronder 'n gebrek aan ondersteuning vir programontwikkeling. Enkele van die deelnemers het aangedui dat daar nie 'n universele taakbeskrywing beskikbaar is nie en dat hulle rolle baie verskil van dié van hulle kollegas by ander skole. Supervisie is 'n probleem in sommige provinsies, waar deelnemers aangedui het dat hulle geen leiding of ondersteuning kry nie. Laastens het deelnemers genoem dat hulle graag sal wil sien dat skool maatskaplike werk erken word as 'n gespesialiseerde veld binne maatskaplike werk.

Die deelnemers het aangedui dat hulle van verskeie teoretiese modelle gebruik maak en dat hulle nie slegs die ekologiese sisteemteorie gebruik nie. Dienste behels dat hulle eers die kind se probleem/behoeftes assesseer voordat hulle besluit watter teorie om te gebruik. Die modelle wat die deelnemers gebruik sluit die sterktebenadering in, waar daar gefokus word op positiewe faktore in die kind se omgewing, en die probleemoplossingsmodel. Hulle verwerp nie die ekologiese sisteemteorie nie, maar het aangedui dat dit nie die enigste model is wat hulle gebruik nie.

Die deelnemers het ook beklemtoon dat hulle 'n waardevolle bydrae in skole kan maak vanweë die feit dat skool maatskaplike werkers sekere vaardighede en kennis het wat in skole toegepas kan word. Hulle het veral genoem dat hulle die wetgewing rondom kinders ken en die vaardighede het om kinders te bemagtig. Laastens het hulle gevoel dat die skool maatskaplike werker die eerste persoon is waartoe die kind toegang het in die skool en daarom die eerste persoon is wat die situasie kan assesseer en kan verwys na die regte persoon.

Sleutelwoorde: Skool maatskaplike werker, inklusiewe onderwys, ekologiese benadering

SECTION A

PART I: ORIENTATION ON THE RESEARCH

1.   Introduction

School social work started in New York in 1906 (Kemp, 2013). Allen-Meares (1977:196) surmises that it is clear that school social workers have a vital role to play in the USA to support the educational system in its aim to educate learners. In South Africa the necessity of school social work as a part of the education system was recognized by government as early as 1973, but it was only identified as a possible specialized field by the South African Council for Social Service Professions (SACSSP) in 2009 (Kemp, 2013). The first school social worker was appointed in KZN in 1983 and thereafter the other provinces followed (Kemp, 2013). According to Kemp, Kemp, Pretorius and Avenant (2015) in their correspondence to the SACSSP to apply for school social work services to be acknowledged as a field of specialization, the current situation for social workers employed by the Department of Basic Education is as follows: Eastern Cape (0 school social workers, Free State (31 school social workers, based at district offices and special schools), Gauteng (four school social workers, based at special schools and the district office), KZN (25 school social workers, based at provincial and the district office), Limpopo (0 school social workers), Mpumalanga (4 school social workers at district office), Northern Cape (three school social workers, based at special schools), Northwest (one school social worker, based at the district office), Western Cape (57 school social workers, based at provincial and district office).

The SACSSP and the Association of South African Education Institutions (ASASWEI) excepted the international definition of social work in which social justice, collective responsibility and respect for diversity is highlighted (IFSW, 2014). Kemp (2013) states that school social work, as a field within social work, aims to provide a social service to learners, parents and schools where there are psychosocial barriers within the "context of the learning site". It also assists learners to use "social opportunities" to develop to their full potential. The Encyclopaedia of Social Work (NASW, 1995) defines school social work as an application of social work principles and methods to the advantage of the goals of the school. Johnson-Reid, Kontak *et al.* (2004:6) add that social workers can provide a wide range of services in schools, including crisis intervention, case management and counselling, grief support and violence prevention. Poppy (2012:9)

describes the following areas where social workers can make a contribution to the academic goals of the child: the improvement of system dynamics; the coordination of information; helping learners gain insight into their functioning in their social environment; and assessment of the individual's strengths and the development of strengths-based interventions for the family, school, individual and community. Furthermore, Johnson-Reid, Davies *et al.* (2005:7) contend that school social work interventions can play a vital role in supporting the learner academically.

It is furthermore of great importance that school principals are informed about how the school social worker can contribute to academic achievement, seeing that they are usually involved in the recommendation to appoint a professional at their schools (Poppy, 2012:9). In an international survey done by Poppy (2012:38), some of the comments by the principals' were: "The school social worker is an advocate for students, provides tremendous support and counselling for students individually and in groups, and provides a key link between school and home for students"; "They are a link with families and often connect them with community services and advice"; "They liaise with families and community organizations and connect resources to our schools and our families". However, no such study has considered the South African situation.

It is therefore imperative that research should be done to demonstrate the fact that the school social worker has a vital role to play within the school setting, especially within the framework of inclusive education in South Africa.

2. Problem Statement

Jonson-Reid, Kontak *et al.* (2004:6) state that school social workers in America render services in various schools and attend to a wide range of problems, including child abuse, neglect, aggressive behaviour, disciplinary problems, divorce and separation. Other social problems that school social workers in the USA have to address are drug abuse, delinquency, poverty, and emotional and physical illnesses (Allen-Meares, 1977:196).These problems are addressed by means of contact between parents and the social worker, counselling for barriers to learning, collaboration with outside resources and the compilation of policies with regard to specific issues. Kemp (2013) comments on the South African situation by indicating that the current functions of school social workers in schools in South Africa include crisis intervention, counselling and support services to learners and their families, which may include home visits and referrals to outside service

providers, identifying and establishing support groups and providing training on social concerns.

Kemp (2013) states that the school social worker is seen as part of a multi-disciplinary support team with the role of rendering psychosocial support services within the framework of inclusive education, but maintains a specialist role as social worker in terms of the Social Service Professions Act, Act 110 of 1978. A multi-disciplinary team is defined as a group composed of members with varied, but complimentary experiences, qualifications and skills that contribute to the achievement of the organization's specific objectives (Business Dictionary, 2010). The multi-disciplinary team within the Department of Basic Education can consist of a social worker, teacher and/or an educational psychologist (Department of Basic Education, 2001:8). Each school or province decides who the role players will be.

Kemp (2013) points out that since 2006, school social work services in South Africa have been based on inclusive education principles. These principles aim to create an atmosphere of care and guidance, aims to develop the learner's full potential and expectations and to support and guide teachers on how to deal with learners who experience social problems. Inclusive education can be described as a school system where the diverse needs of all the learners, regardless of age, ability, socio-economic background, talent, gender, language, HIV status and cultural origin, are met in the classroom and the school (Swart, 2004:231). According to Rheeders (2010:23) is inclusive education the process where learners who experience barriers to learning get access to mainstream education. Barriers to learning can be defined as difficulties that arise within the education system as a whole, the learning site, or within the learner him/herself which prevent learners from having access to learning and development (Department of Basic Education, 2010:6).

In the process of making education available for all, the Department of Basic Education introduced the National Curriculum Statement (NCS), which aims to promote the principles of social justice, human rights, a healthy environment and inclusivity (Department of Basic Education, 2010:8). This principle of inclusivity supports the guidance of children with barriers to learning to experience success in mainstream schools.

Several categories of barriers to learning and development are identified in South African schools, such as systemic barriers (which can include over-populated classrooms and

policy/curriculum issues); societal barriers (which can include poverty, negative and harmful/aggressive behaviour; the HIV/AIDS pandemic; child protection issues; substance use; bullying and absenteeism); pedagogic barriers (which can include inadequate support for educators); and intrinsic barriers (which can include neurological, physical, sensory, cognitive, psychological and emotional barriers) (Kemp, 2013). According to the Department of Basic Education (2010:6) barriers to learning can be defined as difficulties that arise within the education system as a whole, the learning site and/or within the learner him/herself which prevent access to learning and development for learners. Rheeders (2010:27) also mentions that barriers to learning include circumstances at home that affect the learner's performance at school, which may include family, culture and socio-economic circumstances. Donald, Lazarus and Lowana (cited in Rheeders, 2010:27) speculate that the numbers of learners that experience barriers to learning in South Africa are higher than in other countries. The reason for this could possibly be the high poverty rate and social difficulties experienced in South Africa (Rheeders, 2010:27).

Bronfenbrenner (1979) devised an ecological system of human development. Systems in which the child is directly involved, such as home or school, constitute the micro-systems and the meso-system is the interaction between the different elements, for example the contact between home and school. The exo-system is the system in which the child is not personally involved, but which indirectly have an influence on them, for example the parents' social network. The macro-system is the wider context (Bronfenbrenner, 1979; Jack & Jack, 2000:92). Bronfenbrenner's approach looks at how the client interacts with the environment and the positive and negative factors that affect a family, like poverty or discrimination and their support systems. According to Rheeders (2010:390), the ecological approach can be seen as one of the most important models for intervention within inclusive education. It also plays an important part in child development. The theory furthermore helps one to understand the situation in the classroom, schools and families as systems. It also aids in the understanding of the barriers to learning that surface in the South African school environment. O'Conner and Braverman (2009:382) add that the main aim of this approach is to get the child's needs met in such a way that it does not affect others' needs. Lynn *et al.* (2003:204) suggest the following ecological tasks for school social workers in collaboration with the teacher: school targets (school climate, policy changes, resources); classroom targets (classroom climate, behaviour management, day-to-day concerns); child and family targets (identification of mental

health needs, parent involvement, educational placement); and teacher targets (coping strategies, mentoring, support groups, in-service training).

Clark (2007:47) also recognizes that both inclusive education and social work should be viewed from an ecological perspective, especially since school social work services in South Africa also make use of the ecological approach (Kemp:2014:18). In social work the ecological approach is applied in service-rendering to the client. This approach is based on the idea that people and environments interact and change each other in the process (Jack & Jack, 2000:96). This is echoed by Spray and Jowett (2012:68), who states that according to the ecological approach, the client may influence his/her environment and the other way around. According to McKay and Johnson (2010:21), school social work interventions that aim to address social and emotional learning, work towards micro-level practice, but also work with the macro-level, which is the wider context, in mind. In conclusion, Frey and George-Nichols (2003:99) are of the opinion that school social workers' knowledge of the ecological approach gives them the advantage to make a valued contribution to the intervention process with children. The ecological approach looks at how individuals interact with the environment and encourages recognition of negative factors affecting the family, including poverty or discrimination. It also enables positive support networks to be explored.

The Education White Paper 6 (2001:4) emphasizes that the aim is to move towards a system that meets the needs of the learner who experiences barriers to learning and to develop a system where all the barriers, including poverty, language, communication, gender and HIV/AIDS are understood.

It is evident from the above review of the literature that the school social worker has a specific role to play within inclusive education when it comes to addressing the different aspects in the child's environment that can impact negatively on their performance. Intervention is needed in order to improve the child's academic performance within the school environment. The school social worker therefore has a specific role to play within the multi-disciplinary team regarding academic support for the child, but within the boundaries of their profession. Studies on school social work (Kemp, 2014) and social work and inclusive education (Clark, 2007) have been conducted, but none of these studies focus on the role of the school social worker within the framework of inclusive education and the value added through these services. This study aims to explore the role the school social worker plays in inclusive education and with learners that

experience barriers to learning. The study also aims to accentuate the contribution that the social work profession can make in the field of inclusive education as part of the multi-disciplinary team. The role of the school social worker within the framework of inclusive education is of vital importance, seeing that there is supposedly an increase in psychosocial problems in schools and a need for these challenges to be addressed. School social workers can possibly contribute to addressing these problems in schools and more social workers should be employed at schools to this end. The research question for this specific study was formulated as follows: How do school social workers perceive their role within the framework of inclusive education?

3. Research Aim

The aim of the study was to explore and describe social workers' perceptions of their role within the framework of inclusive education by means of a qualitative descriptive research design.

4. Concept Definitions

For the purpose of clarity, the following concepts are defined:

4.1 School social work

Kemp (2013) states that "school social work, as a field within social work, aims to provide a social service to learners, parents and schools where there are psychosocial barriers within the context of the learning site". School social workers also assist learners to use "social opportunities" to develop to their full potential. School social work is defined by the Encyclopaedia of Social work (NASW, 1995) as an application of social work principles and methods to the advantage of the goals of the school. For the purpose of this study this definition of school social work will be used when referring to school social work.

4.2 Inclusive education

Inclusive education can be described as a practice where the diverse needs of all the learners, regardless of age, ability, socio-economic background, talent, gender, language, HIV status and cultural origin, are met in the classroom and schools (Swart, 2004:231). According to Rheeders (2010:23), inclusive education is the process where learners who experience barriers to learning, get access to mainstream education. For the purpose of this study the definition of Swart (2004) will be used when referring to inclusive education.

4.3 Ecological model

In social work the ecological approach is applied in service rendering to the client. This approach is based on the idea that people and environments interact and change each other in the process (Jack & Jack, 2000:96). This is echoed by Spray and Jowett (2012:68), who states that according to the ecological approach, the client influences his/her environment and the other way around.

5. Research Methodology

5.1 Literature review

The body of literature under initial review included government publications, printed literature in the form of academic journals, dissertations, theses and books. Google Books, Google Scholar, as well as the North-West University Library were utilized to gather information. Search engines included Nexus, Academic search and Pro Quest, with the assistance of a subject specialist at the North-West University.

According to Hesse-Bieber and Leavy (2011:336), the literature review is the researcher's opinion regarding the topic of research and the issues that must be answered. Fox and Bayat (2007:35) add that a literature review elaborates on literature that is of historical value and examines current literature available. The literature review also helps to narrow down a broad topic and explores what is available on the topic. It helps the researcher refine his or her ideas through the exploration of previous studies (Neuman, 2012:73). During the literature review, inclusive education, school social work and the role school social worker within inclusive education were examined. The review also includes a discussion regarding the multi-disciplinary team, theoretical framework and barriers to learning. This was done specifically in relation to the South African context.

5.1.1 Research approach and -design

A qualitative approach was used during this study. This approach was appropriate for this study as qualitative research aims to capture the individual's perspective (Howitt, 2010:7) and it was important within this study to obtain the perspectives of the school social workers. Qualitative studies provide the researcher the opportunity to elicit data in the participants' own words and to probe the participants' beliefs and values regarding the issue (Delport & De Vos, 2011:65). The researcher was interested in understanding the meaning or impressions that the participants constructed to make sense of their worlds

(Merriam, 1998:6). During this study the school social workers' perception of their role within the framework of inclusive education was explored. The researcher attempted to collect rich data on the perceived role school social workers play within schools in relation to inclusive education. Within the field of qualitative research, Creswell (2009:175) emphasizes that the researcher is the key instrument as he or she collects data themselves. Within this study, the researcher collected the data herself by conducting semi-structured interviews.

For the purpose of this study a qualitative descriptive research design (Sandelowski, 2000) was used to explore and describe the perceptions of school social workers of their role within the framework of inclusive education. The qualitative descriptive design allows the researcher to gain knowledge of a specific phenomenon (Magilvy & Thomas, 2009:299), which in this study was the role school social workers play within the framework of inclusive education. This knowledge will add value to school social work and will establish school social work as a specialized field and area of social work. A qualitative descriptive study also requires a low level of interpretation or suggestions from the researcher (Sandelowski, 2000:334,336).

5.1.2 Participants and sampling

The population for this study was social workers who work in schools throughout the provinces in South Africa. The provinces that participated were Free State, Western Cape, Gauteng and KwaZulu-Natal. The participants' experience varied from five to 30 years as social workers in schools. The majority of the school social workers sampled and interviewed are placed at a school, but others are placed at provincial or district level, from where they render services to the schools in their jurisdiction. The number of children in the relevant schools varies from 500 to 1300 learners. The social workers render services in both mainstream and special schools. One of the participants was placed at provincial level and two participants at district level. It was difficult to recruit participants for the study due to work obligations and their personal choice not to take part in the study. Ten school social workers were interviewed.

The specific inclusion criteria of the sample were as follows:

- Social workers had to be employed as social workers in schools in South Africa. These social workers did not necessarily have to be employed by the Department of

Education, but could be social workers who have experience in school social work and who have at least three years' experience as a school social worker;

- Social workers had to be registered with SACSSP (South African Council for Social Service Professions);

- The social workers had to be available to be part of a telephone/Skype interview that did not last longer than an hour;

- Social workers had to be willing to participate voluntarily in the study.

- Social workers who participated had to be Afrikaans or English-speaking.

Exclusion criteria:

- Social workers who speak languages other than Afrikaans and English were excluded from this study as the interviews were conducted via Skype and interpreters could therefore not be used.

Purposive sampling (Teddlie & Tashakorri, 2009:179) was used in this study as participants were selected from the population on the basis of their suitability and according to the specific inclusion criteria (Daniel, 2012:87). In order to do the sampling, the details of all the school social workers in the provinces were obtained from the social work managers or coordinators at the different provincial offices of the Department of Education. The managers informed the school social workers about the study and the aim of the study and provided the social workers with the necessary information. The social workers that were willing to participate in the study were requested to give permission to the researcher to contact them telephonically.

The researcher continued to contact those social workers whose names the managers provided until no more participants with those specific characteristics and who gave permission for participation could be found.

5.1.3 Data collection

Data were collected through semi-structured telephonic interviews (Nieuwenhuis, 2007:87). Rather than asking participants questions by means of questionnaires, researchers arrange interviews where questions are asked and recorded accordingly (Babbie & Mouton, 2001:249). Telephone interviewing follows the same guidelines as

face-to-face interviewing and the advantages of this method is that it saves time and money as there is no need to travel for the interviewer and participant (Howitt, 2010:65). Telephone interviews, as a data collection method, seemed appropriate for this study as the participants were from different provinces and the distance between the researcher and the participants was accommodated in this way. According to Howitt (2010:65), the interview process is more flexible and can be carried out in different ways. During the semi-structured telephone interviews, the researcher used questions that would motivate the participants to share their experiences (Howitt, 2010:154). This enabled the researcher to gain a detailed understanding of the participants' views on the topic of research.

The following steps were followed by the researcher to utilize the semi-structured telephone interviews with the participants as a method of data collection:

- Semi-structured telephone interviews were conducted with ten social workers. The researcher is from the Northwest province where she is currently the only school social worker employed at a high school. Data were collected until data saturation was reached and no new themes, findings or concepts could have observed in the data after the data had been analysed.

- The telephone interviews were conducted on a day and at a time convenient for the participants.

- An interview schedule with non-leading questions (see Annexure D) was used during the semi-structured telephone interviews to guide the researcher (Fouché & Delport, 2011:75). The questions were developed around the title and aim of the research and in consultation with experts in the field.

- The interview schedule was piloted during an interview with one of the social workers that were sampled from the population. This interview did not form part of the data analysis process. The questions were adjusted where needed. According to Mouton (2001:103), one of the most common errors made during the research process is failure to do pre-testing or piloting of interview schedules or questionnaires.

- The interviews were recorded using a MP3 recorder with the permission of the participants. The MP3 files were saved on the researcher's computer, which is password-protected.

- The interviews were transcribed by "Rand transcription services". The necessary consent was obtained from participants in this matter and confidentiality documents were signed by the transcribers, (see Annexure E). The files were put on CD's and will be stored at the Centre for Child, Youth and Family studies, where it will be destroyed after five years.

5.1.4 Data analysis

The data analysis strategy for the study was inductive. Neuman (2012:33) states that inductive implies that the research is started with "only a theme and unclear elements". Braun and Clark (2013:83) add that the inductive method implies that the data are coded without manipulating the data into a specific coding framework; therefore this process is based on information received from the data. During this study the researcher only made use of the information received from participants to draw a conclusion at the end of the study. Thematic analysis was used. Braun and Clark (2006:86) describe thematic analysis as a process of searching for trends and recording them.

Braun and Clark (2006:87, Creswell, 2009) outline the following phases in the process of thematic analysis which was used in this study:

Table 1   The process of thematic analysis

STEPS	DESCRIPTION OF THE PROCESS
Familiarizing oneself with the data	The researcher gathered the data and the interviews were transcribed, after which the researcher read and re-read through the transcripts in order to familiarize herself with the data. Initial ideas were noted during this process.
Generating initial codes	After the researcher had made a list of the initial ideas, she started to code the data and identified interesting tendencies. This was done in a systematic way across the entire data set. The researcher then collated data

STEPS	DESCRIPTION OF THE PROCESS
	relevant to each code.
Searching for themes	The researcher re-assessed the codes and codes were collated into potential themes.
Reviewing the themes	Themes were evaluated to see if they are of any worth and then "mapped". Themes were checked to see if they are workable in relation to the coded extracts and the entire data set, generating a "map" of the analysis.
Defining and naming the themes	Information was refined and clear names were given to each theme.
Producing the report	Analysis remained ongoing to refine the specifics of each theme during report writing.

5.2   Trustworthiness

Trustworthiness is crucial to ensure the credibility and reliability of the research findings (Nieuwenhuis, 2007:80).

In order to ensure trustworthiness, the four criteria as stated in Lincoln and Guba (cited in Nieuwenhuis, 2007:80), namely credibility, transferability, dependability and conformability, were used.

Credibility

Credibility was ensured by using member checking, which entailed that the researcher verified the interpretation of what was said in the semi-structured telephone interviews with the research participants after the interviews was transcribed after the analysis (Nieuwenhuis, 2007:86). After the transcription of the interviews, copies were sent to the participants via email and they were asked to check the accuracy of the interviews.

Furthermore, Janesick (as cited in Denzin & Lincoln, 2000:393) emphasizes the importance of member checking as part of the process to assure credibility. Padgett (2008:181) rightly says that "credibility is the degree of fit between respondents' views and the researcher's description and interpretation".

Transferability

Transferability measures whether the readers of the research will be able to apply the findings to other similar settings. School social workers can apply the results of the study in practice. Purposive sampling and data saturation contributed to the transferability of the study.

Dependability

Lincoln and Guba (1985:324) state that dependability is assured by assessing the final design that the researcher will use. This includes making sure deadlines are honoured and that the participants' interests are taken into account. The researcher ensured dependability by making sure that all participants were committed and signed the consent forms to take part in the study.

With dependability (Schurink *et al.,* 2011:420), the researcher must ask whether the research process is logical, well-documented and audited. An audit trail was kept throughout the research process. This makes it possible to describe the research steps taken from the start of the research project up to the reporting of the findings (Lincoln & Guba, 1985:319). The audit trail includes the raw data, transcribed interviews and data analysis notes. The researcher assures that transferability was achieved by providing as much data as possible on the topic of research (Lincoln & Guba, 1985:316). A thorough literature review was conducted and information was gathered from participants until data saturation was reached.

Confirmability

According to Lincoln and Guba (1985:319), confirmability can be achieved by means of a reflective journal. The researcher made sure to take time to reflect on the research throughout the process to sustain her own objectivity. A reflective journal served as a documentative tool to help her focus on the project (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000:392). Padgett (2008:181) advises that "confirmability is achieved by demonstrating that the study's findings were not imagined or concocted but, rather, firmly linked to the data", for example

by using the direct words of the participants. Confirmability was achieved by audio recording of the telephone interviews and transcribing the audio recordings verbatim to ensure an accurate reflection of the participants' views.

5.3 Ethical considerations

According to Resnick (2011), ethics should be a priority and for this reason, different professions, universities and government organizations have developed their own codes of conduct. The National Association of Social Workers code of ethics (NASW, 1995) highlights the following concerns, guided by the scholarly inquiry:

- The social worker engaged in research should consider carefully its possible consequences for human beings;

- The researcher should make sure that the consent of participants in the research is voluntary and informed;

- Social workers engaged in research should protect participants from unwarranted physical or mental discomfort;

- The social worker who engages in the evaluation of services or cases should discuss them only for professional purposes and only with persons directly and professionally concerned with them;

- Information obtained about participants in research should be treated as confidential. All sensitive information is protected by locking it up and storing it on a password-protected computer.

- The social worker should take credit only for work actually done in connection with scholarly and research endeavours and credit contributions made by others.

Ethical permission for this study was obtained from the North-West University's Human Ethics Committee (HREC) under ethics number NWU-00057-15-S1, (see Annexure B). The required approval to conduct the research was obtained from the National Department of Basic Education (DBE),(see Annexure A) .

The following ethical steps were taken by the researcher to ensure the participant's well-being at all times:

- The risks for this study were low and the study did not cause major discomfort for the participants. The researcher was aware of the fact that the participants may become tired or bored during interviews. Therefore, the interviews were no longer than an hour.

- Participation in the study was voluntary and participants had the opportunity to withdraw at any time without any consequences. Written consent is an agreement by participants that they are willing to be involved in the research (Neuman, 2012:12). No participant was forced to take part in the study. The importance of informed consent and voluntary participation were discussed with the participants before the interviews. Written consent was obtained from each participant before the study commenced.

- The researcher protected the dignity of participants at all times by first obtaining their voluntary consent and by keeping them informed about the research process. The researcher will provide the participants with a research report, a personal letter and a summary of the outcomes and findings so that they can be part and gain knowledge through the research findings. This will be finalized following the outcome of the examination process. Possible harm to participants was avoided at all times.

- All information received from the participants was treated as confidential as the information gathered was restricted to only the researcher, her supervisor and the transcribing company. Transcribers also signed a confidentiality form. The researcher made sure that the information received was recorded and reported in a trustworthy manner and that the data is kept in a safe place on conclusion of the research process (Mouton, 2001:240). The recorded files were saved on the researcher's computer, which is password-protected with only the researcher having access to it.

- No names or identities were linked to any information. "Privacy implies personal privacy, while confidentiality implies the handling of information in a confidential manner and information given anonymously guarantees the privacy of participants" (Strydom, 2011:119, 120). Confidentiality was ensured by not identifying participants and by using pseudonym names. Every individual had the right to privacy. Interviews were conducted telephonically and at a time and place comfortable for the participants.

- Anonymity was ensured by making sure that the participants' details are not revealed in this research dissertation. Pseudonyms are used in the presentation of the findings.

The researcher assured the participants of her support to establish trust. The participants' voices were recorded during interviews, but participants were assured that the data will be protected and managed appropriately.

- Participants did not feel deceived at any point during the study. Participants may never be forced to take part in a research project and the risks involved must be explained to them before the study is conducted (Neuman, 2012:12). No participants was forced to take part in the study and voluntary participation took place. No remuneration was provided.

- All data obtained from this study will be kept for a period of five years at the Centre for Child, Youth and Family Studies, NWU and then destroyed after five years according to the NWU procedures. The files were put on CDs and the transcribed interviews and notes are stored in a filing cabinet that is able to lock and only the researcher and the supervisor have access to it.

6. Choice and Structure of the Research Article

The dissertation follows the article format as prescribed by North-West University. The dissertation consists of the following sections:

Section A:

- Part 1: Orientation on the research

- Part 2: Literature review

Section B: Article

The journal Social Work / Maatskaplike Werk has been identified as a possible journal for submission.

Section C: Summary and conclusion

Section D: Appendices

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SECTION A

PART II: LITERATURE REVIEW

1.   Introduction

Social work as a profession sets goals that bring about change in the client and contribute to the welfare of the community by helping people to help themselves. This is applied to practice by social workers who embrace diversity, do not mind the differentness of their clients and value human beings as individuals (Du Bois & Miley, 2008:5). The literature review includes an overview of social work and school social work and the problems that social workers have to address in practice. This section also unpacks the social workers' role within education and the problems experienced in school settings. Inclusive education, barriers to learning and the theoretical frameworks that are used in social work and in the education system receive cursory attention, together with a number of important definitions.

2.   Social Work

In the draft document on the scope of practice for social work, the South African Council for Social Service Professions (SACSSP) (2015:7) states that one of the core purposes of social work is to support and guide individuals, families, groups, organizations and communities to better their quality of life and problem-solving skills. Therefore, social workers have to seek problem-solving skills in individuals and communities to help them to help themselves (Nicolas *et al.,* 2010:3). In this process, social workers help individuals not to repeat the problem behaviour. In other words, through the utilization of theories of human behaviour and social systems, social work intervenes at the point where the interaction of people with their environment affects their ability to accomplish quality of life (SACSSP, 2015:6). Social work also stands for a certain value system that includes respect for diversity, confidentiality, dignity and worth, social justice and ethical conduct (Du Bois & Miley, 2005:50).

2.1   Definition of social work

Compton *et al.* (2005:1) affirm that providing a clear definition and description of the social work profession is a challenging matter. The global definition of social work that was accepted by the International Federation of Social workers (IFSW) (2014) and the

International Association of Social workers (IASSW) is the following: "Social work is a practice-based profession and an academic discipline that promotes social change and development, social cohesion and the empowerment and liberation of people. Principles of social justice human rights, collective responsibility and respect for diversities are central to social work. Underpinned by theories of social work, social sciences, humanities and indigenous knowledge, social work engages people and structures to address life challenges and enhance wellbeing". Scheafor and Horejsi (2010:1) submit that the social work profession enhances social changes in people's lives and equip them to solve problems while in contact with their environment. This is done by making use of theories on human functioning and social systems, with the exclusive goal to better the quality of life of human beings.

When looking at the definition of social work within the South African context, the White Paper for Social Welfare (Department of Welfare, 1997:14) states that all forms of discrimination will be eliminated and that services will be rendered according to the constitution of South Africa. This implies that all rights of clients, whether it is cultural, religious or language, will be accommodated. Service delivery therefore focuses on the empowerment and development of the client. As indicated above, there was a shift in the South African service delivery from social work to social development, which means that social work is not exclusively available to a certain group, but to anyone (Gray & Lombard, 2008:4). The shift that took place towards the development of the client agrees with the definition of social work, which aims to promote the wellbeing of clients.

Different fields of practice are distinguished within social work, including elder care, child welfare, criminal justice/correction, drug and alcohol/addictive behaviours, family services, health care/public health, mental health and school social work. As this study focuses on social work services rendered in schools, the next section focuses on school social work as field of practice within social work.

3. School Social Work

School social work is defined by the Encyclopaedia of Social work (NASW, 1995:2089-2090) as an application of social work principles and methods to the advantage of the goals of the school. Rocher (1985:10) adds that school social work can be seen as a social work service that enhances the educational function of the school. Within the South African context, school social work is described as a field in social work that aims to provide a social service to learners, parents and schools where there are psychosocial

barriers within the context of the learning site, and to assist learners to use social opportunities to develop to their full potential (Kemp 2013).

Allen-Meares (1977:196) shows that school social workers had a vital role to play in supporting the educational system in its aim to educate learners in the USA. In the USA the school social workers were known as the "visiting teachers", a term that dates back to the end of the 19th and early 20th century (Pearman & Burrows, 1955:5). The visiting teacher grew out of the settlement houses in New York, Chicago and Boston, which were used to give housing to the underprivileged (Pearman & Burrows, 1955:6). Two settlement workers were appointed from the settlement houses to work in the schools and homes for underprivileged children. In 1907, the Director of Psychological Services appointed a visiting teacher, whose responsibility it was to collect information and history and to make recommendations regarding cases (Pearman & Burrows, 1955:6). During the Great Depression in the 1930's, the role of the "visiting teacher" changed to providing emotional support to children in need (Pearman & Burrows, 1955:5). During the period of the 1940's to the 1960's a clinical approach was followed with the main aim to build relationships with the learners and teachers (Allen-Meares *et al.,* 1986:23).

In Britain, an education welfare officer was appointed in the 1940's (Rom, 1982:11). Clinics that rendered services in schools were also opened. These clinic staff consisted of a dentist, doctors and social workers (Rocher, 1977:101). According to Rom (1982:13), social workers were appointed in schools in Britain from 1976.

Rocher (1977:82) provides some information on the situation in South Africa. As of 1920, psychologists were appointed at various Departments of Education mainly for the purpose of IQ–testing. It seems that school social work developed out of this context. In South Africa the need for social workers in schools was recognized in the late 1940's. From 1948 onwards the Transvaal and Natal Education Department appointed special teachers to address some of the social welfare problems in schools. These teachers, however, only focused on the cognitive, where social workers addressed the social functioning and interaction of the child in the school, at home and in the community (Kemp, 2014:13). In 1958, the Transvaal province created posts for school counsellors with a degree in teaching. The goal was that they would address behavioural and emotional problems in schools, but because of the fact that they only had a teaching background, this did not work. Thereafter a school counselling course was introduced and school counsellors were appointed (Rocher, 1977:82). Rom (1982:15) adds that these

school counsellors were appointed in the Cape from 1967 onwards. They had a BA degree in Psychology and a teacher's certificate. They were known as guidance teachers. According to Rom (1982:17), the University of the Western Cape placed four social workers in schools in the Cape flats during 1981. The positive response from the principals was overwhelming and they applied to the Minister of Education to place social workers in schools on a permanent basis.

In 1973, the government recognized the need to establish school social work in the South African education system because they saw the increase of social problems at schools (Kemp, 2013). However, the need to recognize school social work, as a specialized field, was only identified in 2009 by the South African Council for Social Services Professions (SACSSP). The first school social worker was appointed in KZN in 1983 and thereafter the other provinces followed (Kemp, 2013).

3.1   The role and functions of school social workers

The school social worker's role as part of a multi-disciplinary team is to render services to children and their immediate families to find solutions to educational and problem behaviour that directly affects a child's performance at school (Kemp, 2013). The current functions of school social workers in schools in South Africa include crisis intervention and counselling, support services to learners and their families, which include home visits and referrals to outside service providers, identifying and establishing support groups and providing training on social concerns (Kemp, 2013). School social workers furthermore have the responsibility to share information and to develop programmes that can assist the strategic goals of the Department of Education (Kemp, 2013). Johnson-Reid *et al.* (2004:6) agree that social workers can provide a wide range of services in schools, including crisis intervention, case management, grief counselling and the prevention of violence. Poppy (2012:9) furthermore also highlights the following areas where social workers can make a contribution towards the academic goals of the child: the improvement of system dynamics, the coordination of information, helping learners gain insight into their functioning in their social environment, assessment of the individual's strengths and the development of strengths-based interventions for the family, school, individual and community. Johnson-Reid Davis *et al.* (2005:7) agree that school social work interventions can play a vital role in supporting the learner academically.

Another important role of the school social worker, specifically within inclusive education, is outlined by the Department of Basic Education (2014a:9), which states that social

workers are obliged to see to it that educators report cases of physical abuse, sexual abuse or neglect (which implies that the emotional and physical needs of the child are not met at home). Therefore, school social workers should facilitate the process of reporting a case as described in the above, as it has to be investigated by an appointed social worker and/or police officer, where after the case will be considered by the children's court, who will decide if a child is in need of care (Department of Basic Education, 2010a:31).

According to Selderholm (2003:73-76, 78), the following tasks also form part of the school social worker's responsibilities:

- Collaboration with specialists and institutions – The social worker collaborates with specialists like psychologists, physicians and psychiatrists;

- Research – Research and surveys can be carried out in the school to generate ideas that can be applied at the school;

- On-going education – Social workers must make best use of courses offered to stay stimulated and to generate new and creative interventions;

- Supervision – When dealing with sensitive issues, the social worker must get support to prevent burnout.

Other social problems that can be addressed by school social workers are drug abuse, delinquency, poverty, emotional and physical illnesses (Allen-Meares, 1977:196).In the light of the above, Jacobs *et al.* (2011:366) suggest that social problems must be addressed at three levels, namely the psychological level, the managerial level and from a legal perspective. The school social worker's responsibility lies in the fact that they must provide social support to schools using relevant skills and resources (Kemp, 2013). As part of the helping process, the social work profession draws on theories of human development and behaviour and social systems to analyse complex situations. By doing this the school social worker helps to facilitate individual, organizational, social and cultural changes (Nicholas *et al.*,2010).

The above background clearly indicates that social workers have a definite role to play within the education system as part of a multi-disciplinary team.

3.2   School social work in the South African context

According to Kemp *et al* (2015:28) in their correspondence to the SACCP to apply for school social work to be acknowledged as a field of specialization, they state that the number of school social workers employed by die Department of Basic Education in 2015 was as follows:

Table 2   School social work situation in South Africa during 2015

Province	Number of social workers	Place where the school social worker is based
Eastern Cape	0	0
Gauteng	27	Provincial level and special schools
KZN	25	Special schools and District level offices
Limpopo	0	0
Mpumalanga	4	District offices
Northern Cape	3	Special schools
Northwest	1	District level offices (wellness programme)
Western Cape	57	Provincial and District level
Free State	31	District offices and special schools

The social workers indicated in the table above are employed by the Department of Basic Education, but there are also social workers placed at the schools who are employed by school governing bodies and by churches to render services at schools. The numbers for these social workers are not available.

In South Africa, school social workers face several challenges (Kemp, 2013). This includes that there is no national policy guidelines or guidance with regard to the appointment of school social workers at a national or provincial level. There is furthermore no provision for school social workers in some of the provinces and there is a need for school social work to be acknowledged as a specialized field in social work

(Kemp, 2013). According to the Department of Basic Education (2010a:6), all children need care and support to learn, but those in poor communities need additional support. The Department furthermore argues that the above challenges pose a threat to the policy on care and support in the following ways:

- Educators lack skills and motivation to provide care and support to learners;

- Schools are overwhelmed by the number of children that need support and assistance in schools;

- The Department of Basic Education does not always support schools to respond to vulnerable learners.

It is therefore evident from the above that school social workers in South Africa play a vital role to assist with these challenges as part of a multi-disciplinary team within the education system and especially with in the context of inclusive education.

3.3   School social work within the context of inclusive education

In South Africa school social workers work within the framework of inclusive education, but they still have a specialist role as social worker in terms of the Social Service Professions Act, Act 110 of 1978 (Kemp, 2013). According to Constable (2009:13), this inclines social work as a profession to relate to the policy of inclusivity by applying the values of social work to the school setting in the following way: each pupil is valued as an individual regardless of any unique characteristics, each learner should be allowed to share in the learning process, individual differences in learning should be recognized by supporting the learner in their educational goals so that every child, regardless of race and socio-economic circumstances, has the right to equal treatment in schools.

4.   Inclusive Education

Swart and Pettipher (2005:3) state that inclusion within the context of education is not an easy term to understand as it is multidimensional and a quite widely discussed topic. Different people understand the term inclusion differently. Nel *et al.* (2013:4) argue that inclusion, within the education context, means schools must accommodate the learners' diversity in the classroom. This includes the different personalities of the learners and different circumstances that impact on their academic performance.

In 2007 the Department of Basic Education (2010a:8) in South Africa signed the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disability. This convention, specifically Article 24, states that persons with disabilities, regardless of age and without discrimination on the basis of equal opportunity, should be guaranteed the right to inclusive education. Rheeders (2010:23) adds that inclusive education within the Department of Basic Education is the process where learners who experience barriers to learning, get access to mainstream education. The Education White Paper 6 (2001:16) points out that according to the principles of inclusive education, teachers must have empathy for each child's needs and barriers to learning, accommodate each learners learning style and ability in the classroom, build the learners self-confidence and see to it that learners are stimulated in the classroom without putting extra pressure on them.Therefore it is also important to acknowledge that different role players within the multi-disciplinary team must provide effective individual support in these environments to reach the goal of full inclusion (Department of Basic Education, 2014b:5).

4.1 Barriers to learning

Often learners are faced with difficulties in their process of learning due to circumstances at home or in their community, certain experiences in the classroom or at school, or health conditions or disability. These challenges are referred to as barriers to learning (Department of Basic Education, 2014b:5).

Barriers to learning may include the following:

- Socio-economic aspects: this may be a lack of basic services, poverty or under-development;

- Factors that place learners at risk, for example abuse (physical, emotional and sexual), political violence and HIV/AIDS and other chronic deceases;

- Attitudes of learners that may have a negative impact on their academic performance;

- Inflexible curriculum implementation, which may include a mind-set that refuses to grow on the side of educators;

- Language and communication barriers;

- Inaccessible and unsafe structural environments that prevent the learner from receiving an education in a safe environment;

- Inadequate provision of support services;

- The lack of parental recognition and involvement;

- Disability;

- The lack of human resource development strategies;

- The unavailability of accessible learning and teaching support materials and assistive devices (Department of Basic Education, 2014b:5).

Nel *et al.* (2013:15) also distinguish between the following categories of barriers to learning:

- Pedagogical barriers - which can include insufficient support from teachers that are not trained adequately, language barriers, the lack of classroom management;

- Intrinsic barriers - which are barriers within the learner, for example medical conditions;

- Systemic barriers – learners that do not have sufficient learning support, including learning material and facilities; and

- Extrinsic barriers – circumstances outside the learner, for instance problems experienced in developing countries like South Africa with factors like transport and infrastructure.

Rheeders (2010:27) adds that barriers to learning may also include circumstances at home that may affect the learner's performance at school, such as family, culture and socio-economic circumstances. Furthermore, Jacobs *et al.* (2011:366) highlight six problem areas in South African schools that can influence positive learning and academic performance in schools. These include the following: violence/bullying, substance abuse, truancy, rape, teenage pregnancy and HIV/AIDS. It is evident that these barriers to learning have to be addressed so that the child can function optimally in all spheres of his/her life.

Kemp (2014:18) emphasizes that the child who experiences difficulties and issues in his life cannot be seen as separate from his performance at school, and for that reason Rheeders (2010:27) speculates that the numbers of learners that experience barriers to learning in South Africa are higher than in other countries. According to Rheeders (2010:27), the reason for this could possibly be the high poverty rate and social difficulties experienced in South Africa. Poverty as barrier to learning has an immense impact on school attendance and dropout rates in South Africa. Some poor children suffer from malnutrition and attend school hungry, which affects their concentration levels and learning outcomes. Poverty is often seen as one of the causes for school dropout in South Africa as parents don't have the money to pay for school fees and children are subsequently denied registration at schools (Dieltiens & Meny-Gibert, 2012:132,133,135). According to Teasley (2004:117), poverty can furthermore contribute to problems experienced in schools that relates to absenteeism and truancy. Teasley (2004:117) describes absenteeism as a period of long absence from school and truancy as absenteeism from school without the knowledge of parents. Ramdass (2009:115) posits that other causes of non-attendance may include a lack of interest and care at home, sickness, pretending to be sick and the influence of peers on the learner. Ramdass (2009:111) reiterates the fact that the large percentage of learners who do not attend school pose a big challenge to the South African school system. Other reasons Ramdass (2009:111) give for absenteeism at schools is the threat of the HIV/AIDS pandemic in South Africa, which may result in learners being left orphaned and less likely to attend school. In light of the above-mentioned challenges and barriers to learning, the question arises of what role social workers can play to assist schools.

4.2   A multi-disciplinary approach to inclusive education

The Department of Basic Education (2010a:8) states in their policy on care and support for learning and teaching that the provision of care and support services in schools must follow a coordinated, multi-sectorial approach. This supports the argument of the Department of Basic Education (2010a:8) that the provision of an environment of care and support requires a multi-sectorial, holistic approach and holistically, in other words through the involvement of different departments and professions, for example the Department of Health, Department of Welfare and the South African Police Service.

Allen (2016:1) states that a multi-disciplinary team involves people from different professions who meet to share a common goal, for example to assess a learner's

abilities. Kemp (2014:32) adds that the multi-disciplinary team's role is to address the provision of health, therapeutic, psychological and social support within the context of education. Du Bois and Miley (2008:20) explain that school social workers form part of a multi-disciplinary team, which may include guidance counsellors, school psychologists and teachers. Kemp (2014:6) adds that within the Department of Basic Education, the multi-disciplinary teams are referred to as a circuit team and it involves professionals as a team and considers the way in which schools are clustered at a district office.

4.3 The school social worker as part of the multi-disciplinary team in the Department of Basic Education, South Africa

Within the Department of Basic Education, the multi-disciplinary team responsible for intervening when there is problem behaviour affecting the educational performance of the child, is called the district-based support team, which is based at the district offices of the Department of Basic Education. According to the Department of Basic Education (2014a: 8), the district-based support team is a structure of management at district level. Their role is to provide leadership and coordinate services in the best interest of the child. Services furthermore include counselling services to adapt to the school environment, meetings with families in the interest of the child and guidance on how children can manage certain problem behaviour. Nel *et al.* (2013:58) furthermore point out that the district-based support teams have the role to inform parents regarding support given to the learner, to provide evidence of support given to the learner, to provide the most cost-effective way in which support will be given to the learner and to identify the most appropriate support for learner needs.

The role of the school social worker who forms part of the district-based support team is to provide professional support and expertise. These services are rendered within special schools, resource centres and full service schools or other educational institutions (Department of Basic Education, 2001:8). Although the district-based support teams are based at district level, school social workers can also be placed in schools to form part of the school-based support team. The school-based support team can consist of school management, educators and when necessary parents are involved who collaborate with the district-based support team and/or other professionals who are available from the surrounding community. The school-based support team is usually managed by the principal or Deputy principal to ensure that the school becomes an "inclusive centre" of learning, care and support (Department of Basic Education, 2014a:10).

5. Theoretical Frameworks in Social Work and Education

The Department of Basic Education (2010a:11) adopted an ecological systems approach to understand and address possible barriers to learning. Constable and Flynne (1982:3) agree that school social work services must be seen from an ecological approach as children are seen, within the school system, as a subsystem who interact with their peers, family, school and community. Clark (2007:47) recognizes that inclusive education and social work should be viewed from an ecological perspective because of the fact that the learners' functioning is influenced by the interaction of different systems in their lives. Swart and Pettipher (2005:9) subsequently argue that as Bronfenbrenner's model of systems is multidimensional, it is useful in understanding classrooms, schools and family systems.

5.1 Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory

The ecological systems theory provides a framework to understand the interactions, influences and interrelationships between the learner and other systems as the different systems influence each other. This framework, according to Swart and Pettipher (2005:9), is based on Bronfenbrefenner's ecological systems theory. Blewett *et al.* (2007) write that the systems theory was most influential in the mid-70's. They furthermore mention that the ecological theory acknowledges the impact of structures and family circumstances on the individual's behaviour. In relation to this, Bronfenbrenner (1979) developed an ecological system of human development. This model indicates the direct and indirect influences on the child's life (Landsberg, Kruger & Swart, 2011:14). The micro-systems and the meso-system denote the interaction between different elements, for example the contact between home and school. The exo-system includes various social structures that have an influence on the indiviual's immediate setting. The child is not personally involved in the exo-system, but it has an indirect influence on him or her. The macro-system is the wider context, which includes the overarching pattern of micro-, meso- and exo-systems (Bronfenbrenner, 1979; Jack & Jack, 2000:92). Lastly, the chrono-system stretches across time and looks at how this has an influence on the interaction between the different systems. In conclusion, Bronfenbrenner's theory assesses the way the client interacts within the environment and the positive and negative factors that affect the family.

5.2 Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory within inclusive education and support to the learner

Rheeders (2010:390) submits that Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory can play an important role in the intervention process within inclusive education. It can furthermore play an important part in child development, as this approach assists in the understanding of the situation in the classroom. Schools and families are seen as systems and this approach aids the understanding of the barriers to learning that arise in the South African school environment. O'Conner and Braverman (2009:382) add that the main aim of this theory is to have the child's needs met in such a way that it does not affect other children's performance.

In the social work context, the ecological systems approach assists in the assessment of the problem and is applied to help in service-rendering to the client by exploring different systems in his/her environment that influence his/her functioning. This theory is based on the idea that people and environments interact and change each other in the process (Jack & Jack, 2000:96). This is echoed by Spray and Jowett (2012:68), who state that according to the ecological systems approach, the client has an impact on his/her environment and the other way around.

According to McKay and Johnson (2010:21), school social work interventions that aim to address social and emotional learning, work towards micro-level practice, but also works towards macro-level practice, which is the wider context. Frey and George-Nichols (2003:99) are of the opinion that school social workers' knowledge of the ecological systems approach gives them the advantage to make a valued contribution to the intervention process with children. The ecological systems theory places the focus on how individuals interact with their environment and encourages the recognition of negative factors affecting the family, including poverty or discrimination. It also enables positive support and networks to be explored. The Education White Paper 6 (2001:4) emphasizes that the aim is to move towards a system where the needs of the learner who experiences barriers to learning are addressed and to develop a system where all the barriers, including poverty, language, communication, gender and HIV/AIDS, are understood. With this goal in mind and in light of the above, it is clear that social work as a profession can play a vital role in assisting the Department of Basic Education within the framework of inclusive education.

6. Conclusion

The literature review provides a broad description of school social workers' role within inclusive education, especially with regard to addressing the different aspects in the child's environment that impact negatively on their performance. Social work interventions are needed to improve some children's academic performance within the school environment, but within the boundaries of the social work profession.

The role of the school social worker within the framework of inclusive education is of vital importance, seeing that there is supposedly an increase in psychosocial problems in schools and a need for these challenges to be addressed. School social workers can possibly contribute to addressing these social problems in schools and as a result, more social workers can be employed at school or district level. In conclusion, literature shows that the ecological approach underlies social work, meaning that the learner is influenced by the interaction with the different systems in his/her environment.

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SECTION B

ARTICLE

School social workers' perceptions of their role within the framework of inclusive education

SCHOOL SOCIAL WORKERS' PERCEPTIONS OF THEIR ROLE WITHIN THE FRAMEWORK OF INCLUSIVE EDUCATION

Hester Wilhelmina van Sittert, Dr Lizane Wilson

ABSTRACT

School social work has played an important role within schools from early on. Within the South African context, school social workers render services within the framework of inclusive education. The study explored school social workers' perceptions of their role within this framework. Purposive sampling was used to select ten participants based on specific inclusion criteria. Semi-structured telephone interviews were conducted and data analysed using thematic analysis. Findings revealed that school social workers do contribute in schools within the framework of inclusive education by being part of a multi-disciplinary team and by using various theoretical models and skills.

Key words: school social work, inclusive education, ecological approach

INTRODUCTION AND PROBLEM STATEMENT

The importance of social workers in schools has been internationally acknowledged for many years. School social work started in New York in 1906 and was an established field of practice in at least twenty countries by 1977 (Kelly, 2008; Huxable & Blyth, 2002). Allen-Meares (1977) shows that school social workers had a vital role to play in supporting the educational system in its aim to educate learners in the USA. In South Africa, the need to establish school social work in the education system was already recognized by government in 1973. However, school social work, was identified as a possible field of specialization, in 2009 by the South African Council for Social Service Professions (Kemp, 2013). The first school social worker was appointed in KZN in 1983 and thereafter the other provinces followed (Swart, 1997). By employing school social workers, the Department of Basic Education (2010a) acknowledged that all children need care and support to learn.

The Encyclopaedia of Social work (NASW, 1995:2089-2090) defines school social work as "an application of social work principles and methods to the advantage of the goals of the school". Kemp (2013) states that school social work, as a field within social work, aims to provide a social work service to learners, parents and schools where there are psycho-social barriers within the context of the learning site. According to Jonson-Reid, Kontak, Citerman, Essma and Fezzi (2004), school social workers render services within schools that include crisis intervention, case management and counselling, grief support and violence prevention. Johnson-Reid, Davis, Saunders, Williams and Williams (2005) add that school social work interventions can play a vital role in supporting the learner academically. These social workers can also address problems like drug abuse, delinquency, poverty, and emotional and physical illnesses (Allen-Meares, 1977).

Since 2006, school social work services in South Africa have been based on inclusive education principles (Kemp, 2013). Inclusive education aims to promote an atmosphere of care and guidance, enhancement of the learner's full potential and expectations and

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supporting and guiding teachers on how to deal with learners who experience social problems. Inclusive education is described by Swart (2004) as a practice where the diverse needs of learners, regardless of age, ability, socio-economic background, talent, gender, language, HIV status and cultural origin, are met in the classroom and schools. Rheeders (2010) furthermore posits that it provides learners who experience barriers to learning, access to mainstream education. Barriers to learning can be seen as the problems and difficulties that learners experience that affect their performance at school (Department of Basic Education, 2014) and that arise within the education system as a whole (Department of Basic Education, 2010a). Within South African schools, there are several categories of barriers to learning, including pedagogical barriers such as insufficient support from teachers who are inadequately trained, language barriers and insufficient classroom management (Department of Basic Education, 2010a). It can furthermore include intrinsic barriers within the learner, for example medical conditions or systemic barriers such as insufficient learning support, for instance learning material or facilities. Lastly, there can be extrinsic barriers that may be specific circumstances that the learner has no control over, such as transport issues (Nel, Nel & Hugo, 2013). Although the principle of inclusivity acknowledges the fact that children with barriers to learning can be guided to experience success in mainstream schools, the Department of Basic Education (2010b) admits that there are still challenges that pose a threat to their policy on care and support. The work of school social workers forms part of this policy. These school social workers therefore, as part of the multi-disciplinary team, have a role to play in addressing threats that include the following: educators lack skills and motivation to play a part in the care and support of learners and therefore school social workers should support them with the process; schools feel overwhelmed with the number of learners that need support and assistance in schools; and the schools are not always supported in their efforts to support the vulnerable learners (Department of Basic Education (2010b).

Kemp (2013) states that in South Africa, school social workers are seen as part of a multi-disciplinary support team with the role of rendering psychosocial support services within the framework of inclusive education. As part of such a team, the school social worker has a specialist role as social worker in terms of the Social Service Professions Act, Act 110 of 1978. The multi-disciplinary team within the Department of Basic Education can consist of a social worker, teacher, educational specialist and an educational psychologist (Department of Basic Education, 2010b). Each school/province, however, decides who the role players will be.

In order to understand and address barriers to learning, the Department of Basic Education (2010b) adopted the ecological systems theory developed by Bronfenbrenner (1979). The ecological systems theory provides a framework to understand the interactions, influences and interrelationships between the learner and other systems as the different systems influence one another. Bronfenbrenner's theory focuses on how the client interacts with the environment, as well as positive and negative factors that affect families like poverty or discrimination, and their different support systems (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). However, Frey and George-Nichols (2003) argue that the fact that school social workers have knowledge on several theoretical frameworks, specifically the ecological systems theory, offers them an advantage in service delivery to the child.

As the aim is to understand the barriers to learning that learners encounter in an effort to address them in the best possible way (Department of Education, 2001), it is evident that

the school social worker has a specific role to play within inclusive education in addressing the different aspects in the child's environment that impact negatively on their performance. Not only do the barriers to learning influence the child's academic performance, but there is supposedly also an increase in psychosocial problems in schools that should be addressed. Intervention is needed to improve the child's academic performance within the school environment. This indicates that the school social worker, within the multi-disciplinary team and within the boundaries of their profession, has a specific role to play regarding the academic support of the child. Studies have been conducted on school social work (Kemp, 2014) and social work in the context of inclusive education (Clark, 2007), but none of these studies focused on the role of the school social worker within the framework of inclusive education and the value added through these services. Therefore, this study aimed to explore the role the school social worker plays in inclusive education.

RESEARCH QUESTION AND AIM OF THE STUDY

The research question that provided a framework and boundaries for this study was: "How do school social workers perceive their role within the framework of inclusive education?" The aim of this qualitative research was to through a qualitative descriptive design explore and describe the perceptions school social workers have of their role within the framework of inclusive education.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research approach

A qualitative research approach was followed during this study as the researcher was interested in capturing the individual's perspectives (Howitt, 2010), but also to understand the meaning or impressions that the participants constructed to make sense of their worlds (Merriam, 1998). By using this approach, the researcher wanted to explore a social phenomenon to elicit data that reflect the participants' own views, beliefs and values regarding the issue in their own words (Delport & De Vos, 2011). Creswell (2009) emphasizes that, within qualitative research, the researcher is the key instrument as they collect data themselves, and within this study the researcher collected the data herself by conducting semi-structured telephonic interviews.

Research Design

A qualitative descriptive research design (Sandelowski, 2000) was used to explore and describe the perceptions school social workers have of their role within the framework of inclusive education. The qualitative descriptive design requires of the researcher to gain insight into a specific phenomenon (Magilvy & Thomas, 2009), for the purposes of this study the role that school social workers play within the framework of inclusive education was explored. This qualitative descriptive study involved a low level of interpretation or suggestions from the researcher (Sandelowski, 2000).

Research population and sampling

The population for this study included all social workers who are employed as school social workers in South Africa. The participants were selected by means of purposive sampling, as participants were selected according to inclusion criteria (Daniel, 2012). The inclusion criteria for this study specified that the participants had to be employed as school social worker in South Africa. These social workers did not necessarily have to be employed by the Department of Basic Education, but could be social workers that had experience in school social work and who had at least 3 years' experience as a school social worker. They had to be registered with SACSSP (South African Council for Social Service Professions) and had to be available to participate in a semi-structured telephone interview that no longer than an hour. Participation was voluntarily and the participants had to be Afrikaans or English-speaking. Participants who spoke languages other than Afrikaans and English were excluded from the study as the interviews were conducted via telephone, which made the use of interpreters difficult.

In order to recruit participants for the study, the details of all the school social workers in all five provinces that employ school social workers were obtained from the social work managers/coordinators at the Department of Basic Education of the different provinces. The managers/coordinators also acted as mediators between the researcher and the participants. The mediators were provided with an information letter that contained the aim of the study. More than forty school social workers who met the inclusion criteria were identified across the five provinces. The potential participants were contacted, but only ten school social workers agreed to participate in the study. The researcher kept contacting social workers whose names were provided by the managers until no more individuals with those specific characteristics who were willing to give permission for participation, could be found.

Data collection

Semi-structured telephone interviews were used to collect the data (Nieuwenhuis, 2007). Telephone interviews seemed appropriate for the study seeing that the participants were from different provinces and the distance between the researcher and the participants was addressed in this way. A semi-structured interview schedule containing non-leading questions was used during the semi-structured telephone interviews to guide the researcher (Delport & Roestenburg, 2011,Greeff, 2011, Ruben & Babbie, 2011). The interview schedule was developed prior to the study with experts in the field and adjusted after a pilot study. The questions were aimed at motivating the participants to share their experiences (Howitt, 2010). The interviews were no longer than an hour and were digitally recorded and transcribed verbatim by a transcription service. The data was collected until data saturation occurred and no new themes occurred during analysis.

Data analysis

Thematic analysis was used to analyse all the collected data. During thematic analysis the researcher went through a process of searching for tendencies and recording it (Braun & Clark, 2013).The steps described by Braun and Clark (2013) were followed during the data analysis: First the researcher familiarized herself with the transcribed data by reading

and rereading the transcripts. Then the researcher generated initial codes across all of the data sets by hand. Thereafter the researcher searched for initial themes by collecting codes into initial themes. These were then reviewed and clear names were given to each theme.

ETHICS

The researcher obtained written permission to conduct the research from the Department of Basic Education and received ethical clearance from the North-West University's Human Research Ethics Committee (HREC). The risks for this study were low as the study did not cause significant discomfort for the participants. The researcher was constantly aware of the fact that participants may have uncertainties regarding the purpose of the study and therefore kept them informed about the research process.

No participants were forced to take part in the study and informed consent and voluntary participation was discussed before commencing with the interviews. Informed written consent was obtained from each participant. Confidentiality was also explained to the participants and maintained by keeping the data confidential by restricting access to the data to only the researcher, her supervisor and the transcribing company. The transcription company signed a confidentiality form. Privacy was ensured by making sure that no names or identities can be linked to the information received. Interviews were conducted at a time and place convenient for the participants as some participants preferred to do the telephone interview from home and not from their offices. Anonymity was ensured by not stating any names in the final research report. All the data have been stored on a password-protected laptop. Once the research has been published, the digital recordings and transcriptions will be kept for a period of five years at the Centre for Child, Youth and Family Studies, NWU, after which it will be destroyed according to policy. A research report will be made available, accompanied by a personal letter and summary of the outcomes of the study, to all the participants.

TRUSTWORTHINESS

Trustworthiness is important to ensure the credibility and reliability of the research findings (Nieuwenhuis, 2007). The model of Lincoln and Guba (1985) was followed to ensure the trustworthiness of the research study. This model describes in detail the four criteria (credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability) necessary to sustain trustworthiness.

Credibility was ensured through member checking, which implies that the researcher verified the interpretation of what has been said (Nieuwenhuis, 2007) after the semi-structured telephone interviews with the participants. This was done by emailing the transcribed interviews to the participants and giving them a reasonable timeframe to react and to make the necessary changes if needed. The researcher clearly described the context of the study and provided a description of the setting in which the study was conducted in order to assure transferability (Nieuwenhuis, 2007; Scott & Morrison, 2006). Dependability was ascertained by making sure that all participants were committed to participating in the study and by getting informed consent from each participant. Dependability was furthermore established through an audit trail that provided a description of the research steps followed from the start of the research project and during

the reporting the findings (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Denscombe (2010) states that confirmability addresses the issue of objectivity and focuses on the extent of how far the researcher could stay objective. The researcher achieved confirmability through audio recording the interviews and transcribing the audio recordings verbatim to ensure accurate reflection of the participants' views.

RESEARCH FINDINGS

Five major themes were produced on the topic, "School social workers' perceptions of their role within inclusive education". The themes that emerged from the transcribed interviews are shown in Table 1. The themes (with specific subthemes) are discussed and described further on.

Table 1   Themes and subthemes portraying the school social workers' perception of their role within inclusive education

Theme	Subtheme
Theme 1: The responsibilities of the school social worker	1.1 Support to learners on an individual level and through group work
	1.2 Networking and collaboration with other professionals
	1.3 Development of prevention programmes in schools
	1.4 Support to learners with regard to emotional barriers to learning
	1.5 Empowerment and training of educators
Theme 2: The school social workers' role within the framework of inclusive education	2.1 Social workers' understanding of inclusive education
Theme 3: School social workers' challenges in being part of inclusive education	3.1 Lack of support from the Department of Basic Education regarding the development of programmes
	3.2 No guidelines regarding school social workers' roles and responsibilities
	3.3 No supervision in certain provinces
	3.4 Lack of recognition of school social work as

Theme	Subtheme
	a specialized field
Theme 4: The school social worker's role as part of a multi-disciplinary team	4.1 The multi-disciplinary team at provincial and district level
	4.2 The multi-disciplinary team at school level
Theme 5: The contribution of school social workers towards inclusive education and in schools	5.1 Skills of social workers that contribute to schools
	5.2 School social workers' contribution in schools as the first point of assessment
	5.3 Knowledge of different models to assist the child according to their specific needs and problems

Theme 1: The responsibilities of the school social worker

The participants were asked to reflect on their tasks and roles as school social worker. Different viewpoints arose, as discussed below.

Subtheme 1.1: Support to learners on an individual level and through group work

It is evident from the data that the majority of the participants feel that they have a supportive role to play within the school system, which includes support to learners on an individual level and through group work. This was described by a participant in the following way: *"... my duties that I do here on a daily basis are mostly case work or individual therapy that I work with learners. ... I also do group therapy ... that ... promotes our children's overall wellbeing... awareness and empower the learners with skills."*

Kemp (2013) states that some of the duties of school social workers are counselling and to conduct support groups. Sederholm (2003) agrees that individual counselling helps learners to identify their problem and group work helps learners to cope with certain circumstances, for example bullying. It therefore creates a supportive environment for learners.

Subtheme 1.2: Networking and collaboration with other professionals

The participants indicated that it is important to network and collaborate with other professionals in order to render an effective service in schools. It is reflected in the following quote *"... I will network with professionals outside of our school... for instance*

referring a child for an eye test…occupational therapist." Another important aspect when doing counselling with the learners is that the school social worker should act as a link between school and home, as shown by the participant who made the comment in this excerpt, *"…so ja ek sien my rol as maatskaplike werker….. om 'n spontane verhouding tussen die skool, huis en die kinders te help vestig"* [*"yes I see my role as social worker …* to develop a relationship between school, home and the child"].

Sederholm (2003) supports this by stating that the school social worker also collaborates with specialists like psychologists, physicians and psychiatrists. As promoted by the National Association of Social work NASW (2012), the school social worker is the contact person between school, home and the community.

Subtheme 1.3: Development of prevention programmes in schools

The participants indicated that another part of their responsibilities is to work proactively and to develop prevention programmes as described in the following excerpts*, "… then also I have another role, is preventative programmes that I would say to work proactive with the learners in the sense of for instance anti-bullying, substance abuse, rather stay away, the danger of gangsterism and… the use of drugs". ; "…It is also programmes that I developed myself … like anger management, self-esteem or alcohol, substance abuse programmes" … deel van my pligte is natuurlik ook om voorkomend op te tree en relevante temas soos boelie gedrag en sosiale media aan te spreek"* / [*"part of my duties of course is prevention and to address themes like bullying and social media"]. "…I also have projects that I initiate and develop".*

Johnson-Reid, Davis, Saunders, Williams and Williams (2005) state that when school social workers enhance the self-esteem of learners as part of their duties, it can contribute to the improvement of the child's performance at school. Considering the South African context, Kemp (2013) argues that school social workers have the responsibility to share information and to develop programmes that can assist the strategic goals of the Department of Basic Education. Participants on provincial, district and school level all saw programme development as part of their duties.

Subtheme 1.4: Support to learners with regard to emotional barriers to learning

The majority of participants indicated that they provide support to learners who experience emotional barriers. The following excerpts show that the participants indeed see emotional support as part of their responsibilities in schools*: "…then further….is being a therapist to some of the learners with emotional problems". "… probleem is moeilik … nie noodwendig kognisie … maar dit is emosioneel van aard … die emosionele probleem wat daar is betyds hanteer"* / [*"… the problem is difficult, not necessarily cognition… but it is* emotional…to address the emotional problem in time"] *"…kinders help met enige emosionele probleme"* / ["…Helping children with any emotional problems"].

Fisher, Dillard, Morrison, Sebian, Massat, Martin, Yeck, Raines, Morton and Thomas (2007) agree that social workers must provide emotional support to learners as part of their role and by using their knowledge to establish a supportive environment at schools. Part of this emotional supports includes compassion and understanding for the learners'

circumstances and discussing their emotions by providing a "safe place" for the child (Compton, Galaway & Cournoyer, 2005).

Subtheme 1.5: Empowerment and training of educators

The majority of participants agreed that they also have a responsibility towards educators to empower them with information. This was echoed in the following statements *"... I also train educators in programmes that would empower them to support our learners in the school. "... The District-based school social worker educates educators on policy". "...we are the custodians of legislation and policies...we are acquainted with legislations relating to children protecting acting in the best interest of the child" "...develop and empower educators with legislation relating to the protection of children such as Children's Act 38 of 2005". "...also training of educators".*

The above statements are supported by literature as Kemp (2013) argues that within the South African context, school social workers at provincial, district and school level respectively are responsible for the empowerment and training of educators regarding policy, management of social matters and psycho-social barriers to learning. The Department of Basic Education (2014) prescribes that school social workers have the responsibility to share information on the process of reporting cases of abuse. This includes all forms of abuse, namely physical, sexual abuse and neglect.

This subtheme indicates that the school social worker not only has a responsibility towards the learners, but also to the educators. They have to focus on empowering them with knowledge so that they can act in the best interest of the child. School social workers must collaborate with educators, support, and assist them in dealing with learners' problems (Fisher *et al*, 2007).

Theme 2: The school social workers' role within the framework of inclusive education

Inclusion within the context of education means that all learners with their different diversities should be accommodated within the classroom and that every learner has the right to education, no matter what their circumstances are (Nel, Nel & Hugo, 2013). School social workers also form part of inclusive education and render services accordingly. The following subtheme relays the participants' understanding of inclusive education.

Subtheme 2.1: Social workers' understanding of inclusive education

The majority of the participants indicated that they have a clear understanding of the term inclusive education. *"... to my understanding inclusive education is a school that accommodates different learners with different kinds of needs ... that the school will be able to accommodate learners whether they are ... having learning disabilities or using assistive devices... so it is a school that caters for a wide variety of learners with a wide variety of needs" "... Inklusiewe onderwys vir my is ... so ver as moontlik die outjies wat bietjie sukkel...sover as moontlik in die hoofstroom probeer hou" / ["Inclusive education*

for me is to accommodate the learners that struggle… to keep them within mainstream education for as long as possible*"]. "… Wat ek onder inklusiewe onderwys verstaan is dat elke kind kry die geleentheid om met sy spesiale behoeftes in die breë gemeenskap te funksioneer en om dan nou sy potensiaal te bereik" / [*"What I understand inclusive education to be is that every learner gets the opportunity to function in the wider community with their special needs to reach their potential*"]. "…to see how we can accommodate the learner".*

Rheeders (2010) states that inclusive education within the Department of Basic Education is the process where learners who experience barriers to learning gain access to mainstream education. It is furthermore clear that inclusion challenges teachers to consider all aspects of their classroom to accommodate the learner (Nel *et al.,* 2013). Nel *et al.* (2013) agree that inclusion, within the education context, means accommodating the learners' diversity in the classroom. This includes the different personalities of the learners and the different circumstances that affect their academic performance. The participants reveal in the data that they feel that inclusive education should give every child, no matter what their circumstances or abilities, access to education. Through the data it became clear that the participants support the fact that all learners no matter what their circumstances are must be supported in mainstream schools.

Theme 3: School social workers' challenges in being part of inclusive education

Several participants indicated that they face several challenges within the framework of inclusive education.

Subtheme 3.1: Lack of support from the Department of Basic Education regarding the development of programmes

The first challenge that was mentioned was the fact that the participants felt that they are not being supported by the Department of Basic Education in the development of programmes that can be applied at school level. The following excerpt is a good example of this view: *"…I think one suggestion that I would say is that the Department of Education can maybe be more supportive in the sense of like programs or … tools that can assist us when working with these learners" ….like ongoing assistance like…. books or techniques or any kind of items that we can use in therapy".*

Internationally, the standards for school social workers as outlined by NASW (2012) support the fact that the responsible departments of education should provide ongoing professional development for school social workers and that interventions in schools should include programmes that teach learners positive attitudes and emotional maturity. Within the South African context, the Western Cape Education Department's (WCED) Guidelines for Full-service/Inclusive schools (2010) promote a view that the support of the specialized school social workers and the support programmes developed at the district base are essential to support learners at these schools. According to this document, the necessary education officials at provincial and district level are busy with ongoing efforts to support learners through the development of programmes. Kemp (2013) confirms that part of the school social workers' task is to develop programmes for in schools. Sederholm (2003) agrees and posits that part of the school social workers' responsibilities is ongoing

research that generates ideas for use in schools. It is therefore evident from the data that, although the available literature emphasizes that school social workers must develop programmes and that they should be supported by the Department of Basic Education, the participants felt that they do not receive support in this regard.

Subtheme 3.2: No guidelines regarding school social workers' roles and responsibilities

Participants felt that there is no uniformity on their roles and responsibilities as the following statements indicate*; "...proper guidelines for what exactly are our role and our responsibility". "...het uitgekom dat dit wat ek doen nie gedoen word by 'n ander skool nie",/ [*"it came to my attention that what I do is not done at other schools*"] / "... of hulle verwag sekere goed"/* ["…or they expect certain things*"] "...so ons het nie ons verpligte staat nie dit wissel...so daar kom baie verwarring.... Waar stop hulle pligte waar begin hulle pligte"] [*"...so we don't have a specific job description … there is much confusion … where do our duties stop and where do they start?"] "... Jy weet daar is nie 'n spesifieke 'job description' nie, daar is nie spesifieke riglyne. Ek praat nou van die 'school-based' maatskaplike werker wat deur die beheerliggame van die skole betaal word" / [*"you know there is not a specific job description, there are no specific guidelines. I am talking about school-based social workers now who are appointed by the governing bodies at schools*"].

Subject literature emphasizes the importance of clarifying the roles of the school social worker. This is supported by NASW (2012), which states that the applicable departments within the education system must provide a clear description of the roles and expectations of the school social worker. However, it is evident from the data that this is not the case. The research data are confirmed by Kemp (2013), who laments the fact that there are no national policy guidelines or guidance that clarifies what exactly is expected of the school social worker.

Subtheme 3.3: No supervision in certain provinces

Several participants indicated that they experience challenges in terms of supervision or guidance. *"...ons almal sukkel met supervisie" / ["...we all struggle with supervision"] "...riglyne en regulasies want van hierdie persone het nie op enige manier supervisie nie"/ ["...*guidelines and regulations because some of these people have no supervision in any form"].

The literature emphasizes the importance of supervision. Selderholm (2003) writes that supervision is important when dealing with sensitive issues and that the social worker must get support to prevent burnout. The NASW (2012) also prescribes support to school social workers with the appointment of a person with experience in school social work and preferably with a master's degree. Professional supervision will assure a high quality of service to schools (NASW, 2012).

Subtheme 3.4: Lack of recognition of school social work as a specialized field

Lastly, the participants felt they should be supported as an accredited or specialized field of social work. *"...school social work must be acknowledged as an accredited stream for social workers".*

The NASW (2012) concedes that school social work services is indeed a complicated specialized field of practice that can be influenced by changes in the education system and on-going research. One of the challenges that school social work faces in the South African context is the need for school social work to be acknowledged as a specialized field in social work (Kemp, 2013). The participants agreed that the fact that school social work is not acknowledged as a specialized field is problematic.

Theme 4: School social workers' role as part of a multi-disciplinary team

The Department of Basic Education promotes the fact that care and support should be provided within a multi-disciplinary team comprised of different professionals with different fields of expertise to assist the child in the best possible way. The majority of the participants indicated that they form part of a multi-disciplinary team and felt that they have a specific role in this team.

Subtheme 4.1: The role of the school social workers as part of the multi-disciplinary

team at provincial and district level

Some participants form part of the multi-disciplinary team at the provincial and district levels and have specific roles to play. Some of them provide assistance to the social work managers, as indicated by the following responses*: "...I am based at the provincial office as a social work supervisor who assists the social work manager with policy development and implementation of social work services in schools...on provincial level we call it a provincial task team. ...it comes from the provincial and goes to the district.... Psychologists are there...curriculum is there....educators that are rendering services like substance abuse they are there...so there are different levels of teams that we are working with".* Some of the participants take part in programme development *"...So social workers as part of the multi-disciplinary team in department of education ... develop programmes for the department of education....and advocates for what is in the best interest of the children..."*Some participants are placed at a specific division of the district office*: "...so in psycho social...where they provided the following assistance... we have an overarching plan of action which covers...... the psycho social section... I am on the trauma team of the district....District-based...render services in 30 schools".*

According to the Department of Basic Education (2014), the provincial team is a management structure and their role is to provide leadership. The multidisciplinary team within the Department of Basic Education is responsible for intervening when there is problem behaviour impacting on the educational performance of the child. This is called the district-based support team, which is based at the district offices. These services are rendered at special schools, resource centres and full service schools or other educational institutions (Department of Basic Education, 2001). The data reveal that participants do

see themselves as part of the multi-disciplinary team. Networking with other professionals which form part of the multi-disciplinary team is of extreme importance and social workers cannot work in isolation; this is to make sure that all the needs of the learner (community) is addressed (De Kock, Kerckhove & Vens, 2014).

Subtheme 4.2: The role of school social workers as part of the multi-disciplinary team on school level

The majority of school-based participants indicated that they form part of a multi-disciplinary team at school level that consists of several disciplines. *"… in the school the people that are officially in our school the school-based support team is me and the …educational psychologist and then the teachers…like the HOD and the deputy principle…once a month …we discuss the…issues…they are concerned about…then there is master's students in psychology…that each year come and do their…practical…assist …learners…that cannot afford…psychologists". "… daar is 'n suster by…van die spesiale skole…dan ook by sekere skole sielkundiges" / [*"there is a professional nurse at some of the special schools… then at certain school there are also psychologists*"]. "Ek is deel van, ons noem dit koukusspan, die skoolhoof…die ondersteunings onderwyser en dan betrek ons ook die onderwyser van die leerder wat bespreek word… op 'n later geleentheid betrek ons die ouer".* / *[*"I am part of, we call it a caucus team, the headmaster… the support teacher and then we involve the educator of the child who is being discussed…and then later we involve the parent"].

The participants as part of the school-based support team also have the following roles to play within the school setting*: "...in die skool …deel van 'school-based support team'…was ek self, die leerder se onderwyser en die leerder se ondersteunings onderwyser" "...die hoof sit in in besluite, onderwyser by die kind betrokke, sielkundestudente help met assesserings…reik uit, remediërende onderwysers identifiseer probleem areas" / [*"in the school…part of the school-based support team…myself, the learner's teacher and the learner's support teacher…the headmaster is involved in the decisions, psychology students help us with the assessments…we reach out, curriculum teachers identify problem areas".

School social workers can also form part of a team, which is called the school-based support team. The school-based support team can consist of school management, educators and parents who collaborate with the district-based support team and/or other professionals who are available in their community. The school-based support team is usually managed by the principal to ensure that the school becomes an "inclusive centre" of learning, care and support (Department of Basic Education, 2014). Du Bois and Miley (2008) support the fact that school social workers form part of a multi-disciplinary team that may include the following professions: guidance counsellors, school psychologists and teachers. The data indicate that school social workers see themselves as part of the multi-disciplinary team that acts in the best interest of the child. The available literature supports this view.

Theme 5: School social workers' contribution to inclusive education and in schools

The majority of participants felt passionate about the fact that they have a definite contribution to make within schools. They base their statements on the fact that they felt that they can make a difference within schools because of specific skills and the fact that they are usually the first available person within the school to assess the problem.

Subtheme 5.1: Skills of school social workers that contribute to schools

The following excerpts indicate that participants agree that school social workers have specific skills that can make a contribution to schools *"...yes I think when school social work is involved in skills...we can empower children...assist children and their families and teachers to develop the child to the best of their abilities...to give the child a feeling of belonging". "... ons is statuter opgelei en om iemand op die personeel te hê wat statuter opgelei is"* ["We are trained in statutory work to have someone on the staff that is trained in statutory work"]. *"...we have skills, we have people skills".*

Fisher, Dillard, Sebian, Massat, Martin, Yeck, Raimes, Morton and Thomas (2007) agree that school social workers have specific skills that can be applied successfully in the school environment. This is why the staff at schools utilize social workers to act in the interest of learners.

Subtheme 5.2: School social workers' contribution in schools as the first point of assessment

Some participants were of the opinion that the school social worker is the starting point in assessing the child's problems at school. The following comment explains this*: "...Ek dink 'n maatskaplikewerker kan 'n beginpunt wees...'n ongelooflike waardevolle rol speel...dat 'n mens kan assesseer "* ["I think the social worker can be the starting point… we can play an important role…so that we can assess"]. *"...ons kan dadelik help en 'n verskil maak"* ["…we can make a difference immediately"].

Fischer *et al.* (2007) argue that school social workers must assist the school in assessing the child socially and emotionally on a regular basis. Sederholm (2003) agrees that the information that school social workers receive are 'privileged', which means they know about it first and can therefore act immediately and make a difference.

Subtheme 5.3: Knowledge of different models to assist the child according to their specific needs and problems

The Department of Basic Education promotes the use of the ecological systems theory to address barriers to learning in the child's life. The majority of the participants indicated that they have knowledge of the ecological systems theory and do apply it, but also stated that they make use of various other theoretical models, depending on the child's individual needs and problems.

It is evident from the data that school social workers use several theoretical models in service delivery to children, depending on the specific needs of the child or the child's level of functioning: *"... because we work with so many so different kinds of children there is such different kind of needs and problems...I think it is an eclectic kind of model...bit of different kinds of models...like systemic...ecologic systemic perspective where the child stand to...different kinds of systems...whether family, community and friends and educators...".* Some participants do use the ecological systems theory *"... ek maak gebruik van die sisteemteorie omdat sisteme het 'n invloed op mekaar...ons leef nie op 'n eiland nie"* ["I make use of the systems theory because systems influence each other… we don't live on an Island"]. *"... The ecological one".*

The Department of Basic Education (2010) adopted an ecological systems model to understand and address barriers to learning. Constable and Flynne (1982) agree that school social work services must be seen from an ecological perspective as children are seen, within the school system, as a subsystem who interacts with their peers, family, school and community.

Some participants indicated that they follow a problem solving approach, as indicated by the following excerpts, *"...I also use ...problem solving skills... I usually use problem solving". "... The problem-solving model". "Ek dink die model wat ek die meeste gebruik is dan probleemoplossend"* ["...I think the model that I use the most is the problem solving model"].Problem solving assists the child with the process of dealing with the problem. The school social worker therefore helps the child to apply these skills (Simmons Staff, 2014).

In addition, as echoed by the following statement, school social workers also apply the strengths perspective in service delivery, *"...I usually use the strength perspective...quick and effective".* Fisher *et al.* (2007) agree that the strengths perspective can work effectively when working with the child as the child uses their own strengths and resources in their community to stimulate change.

Lastly, participants indicated that they use the developmental model: *"...ja ek dink ons almal het mos maar, ons eie model en ons eie teoretiese raamwerk en goed waarvan uit ons werk ["...yes I think all of us have...our own model and theoretical framework for where we work"]. "...the developmental model is very important...it tells you where your client is and then we have the psychosocial model where we look into the barriers of learning". "...and the specific needs" "...but not a specific model". ... "omdat ek by 'n spesiale skool is...is dit moeilik... hulle kan nie konkreet dink nie".* ["… because I am at a special school…it is difficult…they…cannot think in a concrete way"].

Fischer *et al.* (2007) propound that the social worker in schools must have knowledge of various models and use the developmental perspective to understand the clients' own identity and the stage of life where the client is. They must also have knowledge of the child's current psychosocial functioning (Fisher *et al.*, 2007). It is therefore clear that the school social workers do not use only one model, but make use of different models to assist the child in the best possible way.

Conclusion

In exploring social workers' perceptions of their roles within the framework of inclusive education, it emerged that they feel that they have certain responsibilities. These responsibilities included that they support learners at an individual level and through group work to bring about change in the way they think and to empower learners with skills. Networking and collaboration with other professionals are of high priority as part of the day-to-day responsibilities of the school social worker. School social workers use the expertise of other professionals in their service-rendering to the children. Another responsibility that they have is the development of preventative programmes. School social workers develop programmes that are based on the needs of the learners and that equip learners with skills. The school social workers also indicated that they have a responsibility towards the educators to also empower them with certain information and by involving them in training sessions. Lastly, as part of their responsibilities the participants indicated that they support learners emotionally in an effort to strengthen the education system with regard to the barriers to learning that learners may have.

Being part of the education system, the school social workers indicated that they have a clear understanding of inclusive education and that they do accept its principles. However, school social workers still encounter challenges within their scope of service. Although they are expected to develop programmes, they feel that they do not receive support from the Department of Basic Education with information to assist them in developing these programmes. It furthermore came to the fore that not all of the social workers have job descriptions that clearly indicates what their roles and responsibilities are. Some social workers are allowed or not allowed things that others are. A void that was identified is that not all of the school social workers receive supervision or guidance within their respective provinces. They see this as a serious challenge that should be addressed. The fact that school social work is not yet recognized as a specialized field in social work is problematic for some of the participants.

The school social workers indicated that they form part of a multi-disciplinary team within their different workplaces. At provincial and district level they indicated that they have more managerial functions, which include the development of policy and the development of programmes. This all takes place within a multi-disciplinary team that may consist of educational psychologists, curriculum educators and educational specialists. At school level the participants also deliver a service within a multi-disciplinary team (school-based support team). This team may consist of the principal or deputy principal, curriculum teacher, parent, a psychologist or any person involved with the learner that can make a positive contribution to the solution of problems.

Despite some of the above-mentioned challenges, school social workers strongly feel that they can make a contribution in schools as they have people skills that help them to deal effectively with people. School social workers also feel that they make a contribution in schools as the first point of assessment because of their availability within schools. They also have knowledge of policies, for example the Children's Act 38 of 2005, which assists them in service rendering. The school social workers furthermore have knowledge of specific theoretical models, which they can apply in schools in the best interest of the child. Some of the models mentioned during interviews include the strengths approach, the

problem solving model and the ecological systems theory of Bronfenbrenner. Participants indicated that the model they use during service rendering depends on the child's needs and the specific problem that the child experiences. They assess the whole situation before deciding which theoretical model they will use.

Recommendations

It is recommended that the Department of Basic Education focus on policy concerning the appointment of school social workers in schools, especially guidelines with regard to their roles in schools. Furthermore, uniformity regarding supervision is important, seeing that there are social workers in some provinces who do not receive guidance and support. It will also be helpful if there is a managerial structure of support at national level that can guide school social workers in provinces on policies, procedures and programmes. An annual conference for school social work would also assist in discussing and addressing issues concerning school social work. School social workers will also benefit if school social work can be recognized as a specialized field in social work. Further investigation on the placement of school social workers in schools will be helpful, especially in provinces where there are currently no school social workers. Future research may include writing guidelines on the duties of school social workers and the development of an orientation programme for newly appointed school social workers on what their responsibilities in schools are.

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SECTION C

SUMMARY, EVALUATION, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The previous sections of the research presented the orientation, findings and discussions of the research project. In this section, the findings are evaluated and recommendations are made in terms of school social work services.

1. Research Summary

All over the world, school social work services have played an important role within schools since the early years. School social work started in 1906 in New York (Kemp 2013). In the USA, the education system was supported by school social work services and school social workers had a vital role to play within this system (Allen-Mears, 1977:196). Also in Britain the value of school social work was discovered in the 1940's when the government appointed welfare officers and opened clinics that rendered services in schools (Rom, 1982:11). In the South African context psychologists were appointed in the 1920's at various Departments of Education, mainly to do IQ testing (Rocher, 1977:82) and school social work developed out of this context. Today in South African schools, school social workers have various roles to play and fulfil their duties as part of a multi-disciplinary team (Kemp, 2013). These duties include grief counselling, crisis intervention and case management (Johnson-Reid *et al.*, 2004:6). Within the South African context school social workers also work within the framework of inclusive education (Kemp, 2013). According to Constable (2009:13), this inclines social work as a profession to relate to the policy of inclusivity and to apply the values of social work to the school setting. Learners often face difficulties in their process of learning due to circumstances at home, in their community or certain experiences in the classroom or at school. Their health conditions or certain disabilities may also play a role. The ecological systems theory provides a framework to understand the interactions, influences and interrelationships between the learner and other systems as the different systems influence each other. According to Swart and Pettipher (2005:9), the interactions between systems can be described along the lines of Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory. Rheeders (2010:390) is of the opinion that Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory can play an important role in the intervention process within inclusive education.

Therefore, this study aimed to explore and describe the perceptions school social workers have of their role within the setting of inclusive education and to provide a basis for further studies on this important issue.

This study was done based on a qualitative descriptive approach to explore and describe school social workers' perceptions of their role within inclusive education. A literature review was undertaken to explore the definition of social work and more specifically school social work, the definition of a multi-disciplinary team, the term inclusive education and how school social workers form part of it. The literature review lastly also probed the ecological theory of Bronfenbrenner and how school social workers utilize this model. The model underlies the policy of inclusive education as part of the government's service-rendering in schools. Ten participants who met the inclusion criteria were selected through purposive sampling. Data was collected through semi-structured telephone interviews using an interview schedule. All the sessions were audio-recorded and recordings were transcribed verbatim. Thematic analysis was utilized to analyse and code the data and findings were compared with the content from the literature review. From the coded data five main themes arose and the findings were presented in article format. The article ends with recommendations and suggestions for further studies to enrich the literature with regard to school social work services, specifically within the South African context.

2.   Evaluation of the Research

2.1   Aim of the study

The aim of this qualitative study was to use a descriptive design to explore and describe social workers' perceptions of their role within the framework of inclusive education. This aim was reached seeing that participants gave their opinion regarding a new field.

2.2   Significant findings

The participants mentioned that they have different roles and responsibilities in schools, including support to learners through individual therapy and group work, emotional support to learners, empowerment of educators and the development of proactive programmes. Participants also collaborate with other professionals in their efforts to assist the child in the best possible way. The participants confirmed that they form part of a multi-disciplinary team with specific roles depending on whether they are based at the

provincial, district or school level. Participants indicated that school social workers at the provincial and district levels fulfil managerial functions and develop policies and programmes that are applied in schools. The participants at school level usually form part of a team that may consist of the principal/deputy, clinical psychologists, a professional nurse, the curriculum teacher, parents, occupational psychologists and the child's teachers. They have regular meetings to discuss issues concerning specific children.

The participants had a good understanding of inclusive education and how they can assist the child within this framework. They mentioned challenges that they face within the education system, including a lack of support regarding the development of programmes. A minority of the participants indicated that there was no uniformity regarding their job descriptions and that in certain cases their roles differed from that of their colleagues at other schools. Supervision is also a problem in some provinces where participants indicated that they receive no support or guidance. Lastly, participants mentioned that they want school social work to be recognized as a specialized field in social work.

The participants also indicated that they make use of various theoretical models in schools and that they do not necessarily utilize the ecological systems theory. Services are rendered by first assessing the child's problem and needs before deciding on which model to use. The strengths perspective, where the focus is on positive factors in the child's environment and the problem solving model are some of the theoretical models used by the participants. They did not abandon the use of the ecological systems model, but indicated that it is not the only model they utilize.

The participants also highlighted the fact that they feel they can make a definite contribution in schools because of the mere fact that school social workers have specific skills and knowledge that can be applied in schools. They specifically mentioned that school social workers have knowledge of the legislation regarding children and the skills to help empower children. Lastly they felt that the school social worker is the first person available in schools to which the child can reach out, in other words the first person to assess the situation and to refer it to the right person.

2.3   Dissemination of information

- An article has been prepared for submission to the journal Social Work / Maatskaplike Werk for possible publication.

- The researcher will provide feedback to the participants by presenting them with a full research report, accompanied by a personal letter and summary of the outcomes of the study.

3. Recommendations from the Study

The following recommendations are put forward based on the findings of the study:

National Level

There should be further investigation into the placement of school social workers in schools, especially in provinces where there are currently no school social workers. It is also recommended that information sessions must be held within the Department of Basic Education to promote the contribution that school social workers can make in schools. The negotiations for school social work to be recognized as a specialized field in social work must be promoted as a matter of importance.

Provincial Level

Job description for school social workers should be developed in an effort to delineate the duties and responsibilities of school social workers. The issue of supervision/guidance should be addressed in all provinces where school social workers render services.

School Level

The majority of school social workers felt that they can make a contribution in schools. It is important that school social workers collaborate with colleagues in other provinces to establish uniformity in their roles and to support each other.

Further Research

- Future research may include writing guidelines for the responsibilities of school social workers in schools;

- Research can focus on the development of an orientation programme for newly appointed school social workers;

- Another possible topic for further research may be an information marketing programme to promote school social work services in the Department of Basic Education.

4. Limitations of the Study

The following are limitations of this study:

- Only ten of the more than 40 school social workers contacted were prepared to take part in the study.

- Literature on school social work is very limited, especially information from the South African context. Limited recent references could be found.

5. Contribution of the Study

The findings of this study contribute on a macro-level by broadening the literature in the field of school social work. Other researchers can use the findings from this study to elaborate on what the role of the school social worker is, specifically within the framework of inclusive education. Other professionals can gain a better understanding of the role of school social workers within the education setting by means of this study. The study may have raised the participants' awareness of the difference that they make in schools and the contribution they make and can make towards school social work services.

6. Conclusion

The study aimed to qualitatively explore and describe school social workers' perceptions of their role within inclusive education. It was found that school social workers do have definite duties and responsibilities in schools within the South African context. They also understand the concept of inclusive education and are obliged to work towards the goals of inclusive education and to assist in addressing barriers to learning. Although the ecological systems theory is promoted by the Department of Basic education, school social workers indicated that they are committed to working towards the needs of the child and their specific circumstances and they therefore use various theoretical models in rendering services to the learner.

7.   Reference List

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Annexures

Annexure A

basic education

Department:
Basic Education
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

Private Bag X895, Pretoria, 0001, Sol Plaatje House, 222 Struben Street, Pretoria, 0002, South Africa
Tel.: (012) 357 3000, Fax: (012) 323 0601, www.education.gov.za

Ref. no: C-1873-20/10/2015
Enquiries: Dr M Simelane
Tel: 012 357 4082
E-mail: simelane.m@dbe.gov.za

Ms H van Sittert
P O Box 6254
BALLIE PARK
POTCHEFSTROOM
2526

By email: hvansittert@gmail.com

Dear Ms van Sittert

REQUEST TO CONDUCT A RESEARCH PROJECT

The Department of Basic Education (DBE) acknowledges and appreciates your study on Inclusivity with special focus on the role of social workers in assisting learners experiencing barriers to learning.

You are kindly advised to contact the Provincial Heads of Department as they will be able to facilitate your access to the selected schools. Please find the attached addresses of Provincial Heads of Education.

I wish you every success with this study and trust that you will share the results with the DBE.

Yours sincerely

MR/HM MWELI
DIRECTOR-GENERAL
DATE: 23/10/2015

Basic Education • Basiese Onderwys • iMfundo eLesisekelo • iFundo lseselo • iFundo eByis sekelo • iNfundo esiSiseko • Dyondzo ya le Hansi
Pfunzo ya Mathec • Thuto ya Motheo • Thuto ya Motheo • Thuto e Podana

Annexure B

NORTH-WEST UNIVERSITY
YUNIBESITI YA BOKONE-BOPHIRIMA
NOORDWES-UNIVERSITEIT

Private Bag X6001, Potchefstroom
South Africa 2520

Tel: (018) 299-4900
Faks: (018) 299-4910
Web: http://www.nwu.ac.za

Institutional Research Ethics Regulatory
Committee
Tel +27 18 299 4848
Email Ethics@nwu.ac.za

ETHICS APPROVAL CERTIFICATE OF PROJECT

Based on approval by Health Research Ethics Committee [IHREC) (REC-130913-037)] the North-West University Institutional Research Ethics Regulatory Committee (NWU-IRERC) hereby approves your project as indicated below. This implies that the NWU-IRERC grants its permission that, provided the special conditions specified below are met and pending any other authorisation that may be necessary, the project may be initiated, using the ethics number below.

Project title: School social workers' perception of their role within the framework of inclusive education

Project Leader: Dr L Wilson

Ethics number: N W U - 0 0 0 5 7 - 1 5 - A 1

Approval date: 2015-11-20   Expiry date: 2016-12-31   Risk   Minimal

Special conditions of the approval (if any): None

General conditions:

While this ethics approval is subject to all declarations, undertakings and agreements incorporated and signed in the application form, please note the following:

- The project leader (principle investigator) must report in the prescribed format to the NWU-IRERC
  - annually (or as otherwise requested) on the progress of the project,
  - without any delay in case of any adverse event (or any matter that interrupts sound ethical principles) during the course of the project.
- The approval applies strictly to the protocol as stipulated in the application form. Would any changes to the protocol be deemed necessary during the course of the project, the project leader must comply for approval of these changes at the NWU-IRERC. Would there be deviated from the project protocol without the necessary approval of such changes, the ethics approval is immediately and automatically forfeited.
- The date of approval indicates the first date that the project may be started. Would the project have to continue after the expiry date, a new application must be made to the NWU-IRERC and new approval received before or on the expiry date.
- In the interest of ethical responsibility the NWU-IRERC retains the right to:
  - request access to any information or data at any time during the course or after completion of the project;
  - withdraw or postpone approval if:
    - any unethical principles or practices of the project are revealed or suspected,
    - it becomes apparent that any relevant information was withheld from the NWU-IRERC or that information has been false or misrepresented,
    - the required annual report and reporting of adverse events was not done timely and accurately,
    - new institutional rules, national legislation or international conventions deem it necessary.

The IRERC would like to remain at your service as scientist and researcher, and wishes you well with your project. Please do not hesitate to contact the IRERC for any further enquiries or requests for assistance.

Yours sincerely

**Prof LA
Du Plessis**

Prof Linda du Plessis
Chair NWU Institutional Research Ethics Regulatory Committee (IRERC)

Informed consent for participants

NORTH-WEST UNIVERSITY
YUNIBESITI YA BOKONE-BOPHIRIMA
NOORDWES-UNIVERSITEIT
POTCHEFSTROOM CAMPUS

HREC Stamp
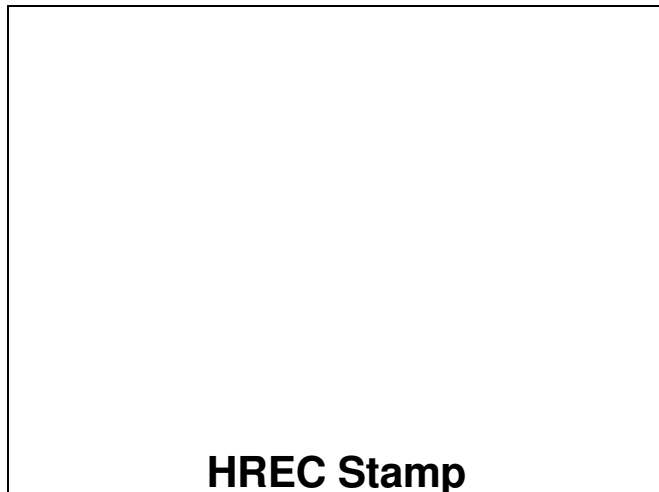
PARTICIPANT INFORMATION LEAFLET AND CONSENT FORM FOR SOCIAL WORKERS EMPLOYED IN SCHOOLS

TITLE OF THE RESEARCH PROJECT: School social workers' perceptions of their role within the framework of inclusive education
REFERENCE NUMBER: NWU-00057-15-S1

PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR: Mrs Hester van Sittert
ADDRESS: PO Box 6254, Baillie Park, Potchefstroom, 2526
CONTACT NUMBER: 0761058929

Dear social worker

You have been identified by your manager/coordinator as a possible participant for a research study. You are therefore being invited to take part in a research project that forms part of my Masters Degree in Social work. Please take some

time to read the information presented here, which will explain the details of this project. Please ask the researcher any questions about any part of this project that you do not fully understand. It is very important that you are fully satisfied that you clearly understand what this project entails and how you could be involved. Also, your participation is entirely voluntary and you are free to decline to participate. If you say no, this will not affect you negatively in any way whatsoever. You are also free to withdraw from the study at any point, even if you have already agreed to take part.

This study has been approved by the Health Research Ethics Committee of the Faculty of Health Sciences of the North-West University (NWU-0057-15-S1) and will be conducted according to the ethical guidelines and principles of the international Declaration of Helsinki as well as the ethical guidelines of the National Health Research Ethics Council. It might be necessary for the research ethics committee members or relevant authorities to inspect the research records.

What is the research study all about?

The purpose of the study is to gain a better understanding of the role of the school social worker within the framework of inclusive education. Furthermore it is to analyse the data in order to make recommendations on the role the school social worker can play within the framework of inclusive education and to compile findings in a research report in article format. The study will involve telephone/skype interviews with an experienced researcher trained in qualitative studies and interviewing as method of data collection. The aim of the study is to, through a qualitative descriptive research design, explore and describe the social workers' perceptions of their role within the framework of inclusive education.

Why you have been invited to participate:

You have been invited to participate because you are a social worker employed at a school in South Africa. You have also complied with the following inclusion criteria:

- If you are employed as a social worker in a school in South Africa. You do not necessarily have to be employed by the Department of Education, but you must have at least three years experience in school social work;

- You must be registered with SACSSP (South African Council for Social Service Professions);

- You must be available to be part of a telephone/skype interview that will last no longer than an hour;

- Your participation in the study must be voluntary.

- You must be Afrikaans or English speaking. You do not meet the set criteria if you are not able to speak Afrikaans or English.

What will your responsibilities be?

If you agree to be in this study you will expected to do the following:

- Be part of a semi-structured telephone/skype interview at a convenient time for you

- During this semi-structured telephone/skype interview approximately 6 semi-structured questions will be asked and it will be expected that you share your perceptions of the role of the school social worker within the framework of inclusive education. The interview will not take longer than an hour and will be conducted through Skype. The interviews will only be voice recorded by means of a MP3 Skype recorder. These voice recordings will be downloaded on a CD.

Will you benefit from taking part in this research?

The indirect benefit will be that the role of the school social worker within the framework of inclusive education is of vital importance, seeing that there is supposedly an increase of psycho-social problems in schools and a need for these challenges to be addressed. School social workers can possibly be of great value in addressing these problems in schools and as a result more social workers may be employed at schools.

It is possible that you may not experience any direct benefit personally from participation in the study, although the knowledge that may be gained by means of the study may benefit other persons or communities such as the newly established National Committee for School Social Work Education and Practice (NACOSSWEP) that will look into school social work in South Africa.

Are there risks involved in your taking part in this research?

The risks in this study are that some of your private time might be taken up during this study because of the time taken for taking part in the telephone/skype interview. You might also feel tired or bored and may ask for a break if you prefer that.

What will happen in the unlikely event of some form of discomfort occurring as a direct result of your participation in this research study?

Should you have the need for further discussions after the skype/telephone interviews an opportunity will be arranged for you to speak to your manager.

Who will have access to the data?

Anonymity will be ensured by making sure that the participants details are not made known in the research dissertation.   Pseudonyms will be used. Confidentiality will be ensured by handling the data confidential. Only the researcher and the supervisor, Dr Wilson will have access to the data. The researcher will record the participants' voices during interviews. Participants will be reassured of the researcher's support regarding their decisions in the case if they feel uncomfortable with a question or if they don't want to be part of the research process at any time. Data will be kept safe and secure by locking hard copies in locked cupboards in the researcher's office and for electronic data it will be password protected. The MP3 files with the voice recordings of the skype interviews will be put on CD's and with the transcribed documents stored at the Centre for Child, Youth and Family studies where it will be destroyed after 5 years. As soon as data has been transcribed it will be deleted from the records.

What will happen with the data?

This is a once off collection and data will be stored for 5 years after which it will be destroyed.

Will you be paid to take part in this study and are there any costs involved?

No you will not be paid to take part in the study. The skype/telephone cost will be for the researcher. There will be no costs involved for you, if you do take part.

Is there anything else that you should know or do?

You are welcome to ask any questions to the researcher before you decide to give consent. You are also welcome to contact Dr L Wilson, the study leader at 082 730 8396.

You can also contact the Health Research Ethics Committee via MrsCarolien van Zyl at 018 299 2089; carolien.vanzyl@nwu.ac.za if you have any concerns or complaints that have not been adequately addressed by the researcher.

You will receive a copy of this information and consent form for your own records.

How will you know about the findings?

The findings of the research will be shared with you through the distribution of the research report via email. You are also welcome to contact Mrs. Hester van Sittert regarding the findings of the research.

Declaration by participant

By signing below, I …………………………………..………… agree to take part in a research study titled: School social workers' perceptions of their role within the framework of inclusive education

I declare that:

- I have read this information and consent form and it is written in a language with which I am fluent and comfortable.

- I have had a chance to ask questions to both the person obtaining consent, as well as the researcher and all my questions have been adequately answered.

- I understand that taking part in this study is voluntary and I have not been pressurized to take part.

- I may choose to leave the study at any time and will not be penalised or prejudiced in any way.

- I may be asked to leave the study before it has finished, if the researcher feels it is in my best interests, or if I do not follow the study plan, as agreed to.

Signed at (place) ....…......……………….. on (date) …………....……….. 20....

…………………………………   ……….…………………………

Signature of participant   Signature of witness

Declaration by person obtaining consent

I (name) …………………………………………..……… declare that:

- I explained the information in this document to …………………………………..

- I encouraged him/her to ask questions and took adequate time to answer them.

- I am satisfied that he/she adequately understands all aspects of the research, as discussed above

- I did/did not use an interpreter.

Signed at (place) ....…......……………….. on (date) …………...……….. 20....

…………………………………….   …………………………………

Signature of person obtaining consent   Signature of witness

Declaration by researcher

I (name) ………………………………………..……… declare that:

- I explained the information in this document to …………………………………..

- I encouraged him/her to ask questions and took adequate time to answer them.

- I am satisfied that he/she adequately understands all aspects of the research, as discussed above

- I did/did not use an interpreter.

Signed at (place) ....….......……………. on (date) …………...……….. 20....

……………………………

Signature of researcher

…………………………………...

Signature of witness

Annexure D

Interview schedule

The researcher will introduce herself and again explain the aim of the study. She will ask if the participants have any questions or concerns.

The following questions will be asked to school social workers employed at schools.

1. Tell me about your career as a school social worker.

2. What is your understanding of inclusive education and your suggestions to support the role of the school social worker within the framework of inclusive education?

3. How do you perceive your role as school social worker within the framework of inclusive education and within a multi-disciplinary team should be?

4. What social work model/s do you suggest should be used in your work as school social worker within the framework of inclusive education?

5. What contribution do you think school social work can have in the framework of inclusive education?

The researcher will ask if the participants have any questions or if they still want to add something. The researcher will thank the participants for their time and willingness to participate. She will explain that the data will be analysed and documented and that the participant will receive feedback of the findings when the study is finalized.

Annexure E

CERTIFICATE

I, THE UNDERSIGNED TERSIA HEATHCOTE DO HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THE AFOREGOING IS AS TRUE AND CORRECT A TRANSCRIPT AS WAS POSSIBLE OF THE RECORDING OF THE CONFIDENTIAL INTERVIEW.

RAND TRANSCRIPTION SERVICES
18 BLYVOOR STREET
OBERHOLZER
CARLETONVILLE
19 SEPTEMBER 2016

Annexure F

Colour coded transcribed interview (16   pages) – black blocked-out areas are to protect the identity of the participant.

Theme	Subtheme
Theme 1: The responsibilities of the school social worker	1.1 Support to learners on an individual level as well as through group work 1.2 Networking and collaboration with other professionals 1.3 Development of prevention programs in schools 1.4 Support to learners with regards to emotional barriers to learning 1.5 Empowerment and training of educators
Theme 2: The school social workers role within the framework of inclusive education	2.1 Social workers' understanding of inclusive education
Theme 3: School social worker' challenges in being part of inclusive education	3.1 Non-support from the Department of Basic Education regarding the development of programs 3.2 No guidelines regarding school social workers' roles and responsibilities 3.3 No supervision in certain provinces 3.4 Non-acknowledgement of school social work as a specialized field
Theme 4: The School social workers role as part of a multi-disciplinary team	4.1 The multi-disciplinary team on provincial and district level

	4.2 The multi-disciplinary team on school level
Theme 5: The contribution of school social workers towards inclusive education and in schools	5.1 Skills of social workers that contribute to schools
	5.2 School social workers contribution in schools as the first point of assessment
	5.3 Knowledge of different models to assist the child according to their specific needs and problem

R: Wil jy hê ek moet in Engels antwoord ▓▓▓▓ gaan dit vir jou makliker maak?

I: Jy kan maar Afrikaans hoor, jy kan maar in Afrikaans vir my sê.

R: Okay, okay. My >career as school social worker.= Dit is wat jy nou net gevra het?

I: Dit is reg.

R: Askies, ek wil nou net gou bietjie >clarity= hê.   ▓▓▓▓ bedoel jy soos in wat was my take, hoe ek dit ondervind het of wat?

I: Ja en wanneer het jy begin en ja hoe was jou ervaring en wat het dit behels.

R: Okay, okay, ek moet nou gou dink. Waar is ons nou, 2016, ek dink ek het so 2011 begin by ▓▓▓▓▓▓▓▓ hier in

█████████   Dit is >n baie groot ███skool, ek weet hierdie jaar is hulle ████ leerders en op daardie stadium was hulle seker so omtrent ████ gewees. Ja dit was >n baie groot ███skool gewees, █████████ en uit die aard van die saak hoe meer kinders daar is, hoe groter behoefte is daar mos nou maar aan, jy weet dalk van >n maatskaplike werker ook. Dit is a ████████████████ Die maatskaplike probleme waarmee ons te doen ███████ is nou maar die gewone goed, maar minder van jy weet materiele nood verligting en goed. Daar ██ enkele kinders wat ██████ help met kos en klere en so aan. So daar ██>n groot persentasie egskeiding waarmee >n ou nog █████ het, molestering het ook maar voorgekom en verder was dit nou

                              goed soos siekte/...

goed soos siekte in die familie of dood of inbrake of kapings of daai tipe goed. So dit is die tipe goed waaroor ek kinders ██████ ███ Ook boelie, die skool het >n goeie boelie beleid, maar ons het nou maar baie daarmee te doen █████ en dit ██ my rol as maatskaplike werker ook om te help skryf aan die beleide of dit jy weet nou te >refine= en te >update= en so aan. So dit nou net oor die boelie en ek dink >n ou het redelik daarmee te doen gekry. Aggressiewe gedrag by kinders, selfbeeld probleme, wat is daar nou nog, ek dink ek het redelik leerdertjies █████ wat maar leerstoornisse ook gehad het en dan nou as gevolg van dit jy weet gespot is of so aan. Ja, so ek dink dit is min of meer die tipiese goed waar ek nou in >n ondersteunende hoedanigheid ingaan. Dit is maar >at heart= is ek >n terapeut, dit is seker ook maar

hoekom ek ███████████████████████████   So ek ████

myself by die skool redelik weerhou daarvan om nie regtig

terapeuties betrokke te raak nie, want >n ou kan nie by ander

kinders nie, dit word eenvoudig net te veel. Dit gaan naderhand

te erg, daar is elke dag sommer >n klomp aanmeldings wat hanteer

moet word. So dit is die tipiese goed ja wat ek dink in terme van

die kinders self waar jy nou in >n >one on one=situasie met die

kind self is. Dit is min of meer waarmee >n ou te doen gekry het.

I: Okay, wonderlik.

R: Ek weet nie of jy bietjie oor die ander take

ook...(tussenbei)

I: Ja, ja doodreg.

R: Okay. Soos ek vinnig genoem het hier was ek redelik betrokke

by die beleidvorming en skryf van beleid en so aan, waar daar nie

goeters in plek ███ nie en wat nou spesifiek rondom maatskaplike

>issues=, goed soos boelie, dwelmmisbruik, molestering, >social=

media tipe goeters. So >n ou ███ by dit betrokke gewees. Ek was

ook op (onhoorbaar) >individual limit support team.= Ek weet nou

nie of word dit orals dieselfde genoem nie. So dit is waar

leerders individueel ondersteun moet word en bespreek moet word en

dit was dan nou die bestuurspanvan die skool wat daarby betrokke

was en dan die leerder ondersteuningonderwyseres en die spesifieke

kind self se onderwyser en dan ek self. Dan het >n ou nou maar jy

weet die probleem wat preseteer ███████ en gekyk wie moet waar

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betrokke raak en watse hulp moet gekry word of waar moet dit verwys word en daai tipe goed. Dan ▮▮ ek ook maar baie betrokke by projekte soos uit die aard van die saak met kinderbeskemings week en daai tipe goeters, het >n ou maar projekte gereël. Ek het baie nou saam met die polisie▮▮ gewerk. So ons het goed ▮▮▮▮ soos poppekaste vir die grondvlak fase kinders, praatjies rondom >social media en sexual abuse= en daai tipe goeters vir die ouer grade.

Wat is daar nou nog? Ja ek dink miskien moet mens net uit die aard van die saak met die skool evaluering wat ▮▮▮▮ is, van die maatskaplike departement >n hele spesifieke gedeelte gehad wat ons (onhoorbaar) voor gegee het en ek dan nou rondom my dienste in terme van die skool evaluering. Dit was >n hele

(Onhoorbaar) inset/...

(onhoorbaar) inset gewees. Ja ek dink dit is min of meer, daar is seker nou nog baie ander goetertjies ook, maar dit is ek dink (onhoorbaar).

I: Okay doodreg. Dan wil ek net hoor, wat verstaan jy onder inklusiewe onderwys en hoe dink jy kan die maatskaplike werker se rol binne inklusiewe onderwys ondersteun word?

R: Weet jy ek gaan in terme van hoe ek dit verstaan gaan ek nou uit my vorige pos wat ek gehad het dit op vir jou antwoord. Ek was ▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮ en toe hoof ▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮ nadat die onderwys die skool begin subsidieer het, vir verstandelik gestremde kinders.

I: Okay.

R: Ons het in daai tyd, het nou in 1992 al daar begin, maar in die jare daarna her inklusiewe onderwys redelik op die tafel geland. So as ek dit nou antwoord moet ek nou my ondervinding wat ek gehad het met inklusiewe onderwys vir die verstandelik gestremde kind.

I: Ja.

R: So dit is amper die oortreffende trap, maar ons het op daai stadium het ons kinders met ███████ byvoorbeeld was in die ou bedeling gesien is as verstandelik erg gestremde kinders, het ons by hoofstroom skole ingesluit ██████████, uit die aard van die saak met die nodige ondersteuning en goeters aan die skool. So ek kom uit daai

                                            atergrond uit waar/...

agtergrond uit waar ons regtig kinders wat verstandelik gestremd was gehoofstroom het. Ons het daardie jare ook hier by ███████ ████████ >n klassie begin, dit is nou >n bietjie ander vorm van die inklusiewe onderwys, ons het klassies van gestremde kindersders op die gronde van ██████████. So hulle het byvoorbeeld pouses en so aan het hulle saam met die kinders gespeel, saam ook met ander kinders en saal opening saam met hulle gehad en musiek en sulke tipe goeters, maar nou net van die ander goedjies was nou apart. In die gewone hoofstroom skool jy weet wat my onderviding van dit was, by ██████ kan ek vir jou sê die tyd wat ek daar was, was daar ook >n kind met downsindroom wat █

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████████ was en hy is nie weg omdat dit nie goed gegaan het met hom of oor dit nie gewerk het nie, hulle het ████████████████ to. So toe is hy nou daar uit. So die skool waar ek was het >n baie oop gesindheid gehad wat betref inklusiewe onderwys al was dit >n bitterlike groot skool soos ek net nou gesê het, ons het ██████ kinders.

Ek moet jou sê ek is nie honderd persent oortuig daarvan jy weet hoe goed dit altyd werk nie. Ek is nie seker of al die goed in plek is om dit te laat werk nie en sekerlik hoe, ek bedoel hoe ek dit nou sien is dat enige kind met enige stoornis of hindernis of >obstacle= of wat ook al >to learning= moet dan nou eintlik mos nou in die hoofstroom ingesluit kan word, maar ek dink die groot klasse is problematies. Ja, ek dink dit tel as een van die groot goed. Jy gaan >n groot klas kry waarin >n kind met >n leerstoornis okay gaan wees, want dit gaan >n

juffrou wees met/...

juffrou wees met jy weet >n passie vir dit of wat regtig moeite gaan doen en so aan en dan gaan jy >n ander onderwyser kry vir wie dit baie moeiliker is om so kind te akkommodeer.

I: Okay.

R: Ja en dan ek dink die assessering is mos maar >n ander gedeelte daarvan, want die kinders met spesifieke leerbehoeftes sou moes nou kon kwalifiseer om alternatiewelik geasseseer te word, maar daarvoor moet die skool aansoek doen. So as die skool nie aansoek gedoen het vir alternatiewe assesering en die

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opleiding gekry het en geregistreer is om dit te doen, nie, dan kan nie alternatiewe assesering, soos ek dit altans verstaan, nie gebeur nie. Ja en al die skole is nou nie so, ek weet ▓▓▓▓ self was nie op daardie stadium, het nie alternatiewe assesering gedoen nie. So die kinders met leerbehoeftes wat in hoofstroom klasse was jy weet is op die gewone manier geassesseer.

I: Okay, goed. Dan wil ek net hoor, het jy ooit binne in >n multidissiplinêre span gewerk en wat dink jy kan, watse rol kan die maatskaplike werker binne >n multidissiplinêre span speel?

R: Weet jy in die skool self netnou soos ek vir jou gesê het was ek nou deel van (onhoorbaar) span, dat daar nou maar onderwysers was en dan ek self en die leerder ondersteunings onderwyseres. So daar was in redelike span verband gewerk. Ek dink ons as maatskaplike werkers omdat ons baie ekosistemies die meeste van ons dink en werk jy weet is

dit ons >default=/...

dit ons >default= half om jy weet in >n span aan te spreek. So en ek dink veral binne skool maatskaplike werk maak jy maar baie gebruik van veral you arbeidsterapeut, waar dit kom by kinders met, jy weet met ADHD en daai tipe goed, jou sensoriese, ouditiewe integrasie probleme en alle sensoriese >issues= is mens mos nou maar baie keer emosionele problem wat ook, jy weet die goed gaan mos maar hand aan hand.

I: Ja.

R: Ek het baie nou saam met die arbeidsterapeut ████ Die skool het nie >n arbeidsterapeut in diens ████ nie, maar hulle het >n lokaal gehad wat >n arbeidsterapeut van buite af gebruik het om kinders in die skool te sien. So ons het baie nou saam gewerk en dan ███████████████ omdat ek ████████████ ██████, het ek baie kontak met jy weet kliniese sielkundiges wat ook in privaatpraktyk is. So ek het maar altyd die ouens se raad ingewin of verwys, baie lekker ████████ met die (onhoorbaar) se sielkundiges ook. Regtig >n goeie verhouding met hulle gehad. Dieselfde geld vir spraak terapeute, fisioterapeute, dieetkundiges. Ja dit, want dit was nie noodwendig binne in die skool nie.

I: Ja.

R: Sommer aan die hand van >n spesifieke faam en die werk identifiseer dat daar jy weet op daai terreine ook mense betrokke moet raak en dan nou daai kontak gehou word en moet verslae gekry word en in ag geneem word en so aan.

I: Ja, ja. Dan wil ek net gou hoor, watter model

                                        of probleemoplossings model/...

of probleemoplossings model dink jy werk die beste binne in >n skool opset en binne in maatskaplike werk? Of dink jy nie daar is iets spesifieks, >n spesifieke model nie?

R: Ja, nee, weet jy ek gaan nou meer vir jou sê daar is >n spesifieke model, ja ek dink ons almal het mos maar, ek sê altyd

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elkeen van ons ==ontwikkel half soos wat ons aangaan in die praktyk,==
==ons eie model== en ons eie teoretiese raamwerk en goed waarvan uit

ons werk. So ek maak die werk, jy weet die pos van maatskaplike

werker in die skool is so divers, jy moet so verskillend,

verskeidenheid goeters doen. Dat >n ou regtig maar kreatief moet

wees in terme van dit en aanpassings moet kan maak, want partykeer

vervul jy amper die rol van >n leerkrag, verstaan jy?

I: Ja, ja.

R: Jy kan tot gevra om >n LO...

I: Klas aan te bied.

R: Onderrig klas aan te bied, verstaan jy, daai tipe goed. Ek
self is, ek is >n >█████████= ook. So ek het baie speel

terapie gebruik of dit nou was in groepwerk of jy weet soos ek

die kinders individueel gesien het. Ek het ████████groepies

kinders █████ en dan het ons op die mat █████ en goed uit klei

uit █████ en ons monsters hanteer en sulke goed, maar ja bietjie

meer terapeuties. Dit het goed gewerk, maar ek sal nie sê

verstaan jy, my ondervinding met die ander skool maatskaplike

werkers is dat dit hang ook maar af wat jou, jy weet die

==verwagting binne die skool== is van die

                              maatskaplike werker, want/...

maatskaplike werker, want ek dink dit is een van die
==probleme==█████ en ek weet nou nie of jy met █████████████e doen

het nie. Ons het al baie met █████ hieroor gesels. Jy weet daar

is nie >n spesifieke >job description nie=, daar is nie spesifieke riglyne. Ek praat nou van die >school based= maatskaplike werkster wat deur die beheerliggame van die skole betaal word. So dit hang maar af wat die skool se verwagting is en die hoofde van die skole as hulle maatskaplike werkers aanstel weet ook nie, verstaan jy, hulle het ook nie >n >job description= en sê dit is wat ons wil hê jy moet doen nie. Jy ontwikkel eintlik maar jou eie ding. Ek sê altyd ons is eintlik >n (onhoorbaar)

I: Ja dit is so.

R: As ons net met mekaar praat, ons het dieselfde tipe probleme wat ons hanteer, maar die hoofde se verwagtinge verskil, die beheerliggame se verwagting verskil. Van die ouens word toegelaat om sê nou maar na huise toe te gaan ander glad nie. Party word nie toegelaat om die skool terrein te verlaat nie, ander word toegelaat. Ja, ek het baie, by my skool het ek regtig ongelooflike vryheid ███ in terme van hoe ek is. As ek nou ry en >n sielkundige gaan sien om >n kind te bespreek of wat ook al, het ek net uitgeteken. Obviously hou >n ou jou (onhoorbaar) en goeters nou reg, maar van die ouens jy weet het nie daai tipe... So dit is deel van, die moeilike deel van jou >school based social worker= wat nie deur die onderwysdepartment betaal word nie is, daar is nie regtig

riglyne of regulasie/...

riglyne of regulasie rondom dit nie.

I: Ja, ja okay. Dan laastens wil ek net gou-gou by jou hoor wat dink jy watse bydrae kan die skool maatskaplike werker binne die raamwerk van inklusiewe onderwys doen?   Watse bydrae kan ons lewer?

R: Wel ek dink the maatskaplike werkers kan >n ongelooflik bydrae lewer in die sin dat jy veral jy weet half in >n ondersteunende hoedanigheid vir die leerkrag wat nou sit met die kind in >n groot klas nou, of in >n kleiner klassie waar die, jy weet tussen ander leerders wat nou nie noodwendig >n >obstacle to learning= het nie en veral waar die gedragsprobleme en goeters nou maar uitpak. Verstaan jy? Waar die kind dalk nou gespot word omdat hy nie reageer soos die ander of nie so vinnig reageer nie of wat ook al en daar waar hy homself probeer verdedig, die kind skud nou die ander een of skel of stamp of wat ook al. Ek dink ook in terme van die opleiding van personeel, jy weet binne in die skool.   Maatskaplike werkers kan >n belangrike rol vervul en (onhoorbaar) van die skole wat maatskaplike werkers het. Nou ek weet nie hoe werk ████████████, maar ██████████ is nie so baie skills wat >social workers= het nie. Ons het in ons ██████ (onhoorbaar) is ons nou baie gelukkig om hier in ████████████ ████████████ en meeste van die skole het maatskaplike werkers, maar dit geld mos maar nie >all over= nie.

I: Ja.

R: Maar ek sou sê, ek sou definitief sê skole waar daar maatskaplike werkers is wat wel inklusiewe onderwys jy weet toepas of ja, maar almal is mos nou maar eintlik veronderstel om toe te pas, maar ja ek sou sê die maatskaplike werkers het verseker >n belangrike rol en ook waar, jy weet baie keer sit jou ouers ook maar met >issues= en kommunikasie van die onderwyser se kant af na die ouers toe waar hulle goed sal sê soos maar jy weet aan die einde van die kwartaal of begin volgende kwartaal is daar nou >n oueraand, maar juffrou hoekom het jy nie vroeër vir ons gesê nie. Jy weet ja, daai tipe goed wat the maatskaplike werker insit met die ouers en ons weet nogal beter hoe om hierdie goed te kommunikeer en oor te dra, of nie beter nie, ons kan maar bietjie op >n ander manier.

I: Ja, ja.

R: Ja, ek sou definitief, ek weet nou nie of ek jou vraag nou baie spesifiek beantwoord het nie.

I: Ja, nee, nee.

R: Ek dink definitief ons kan. Dan ook wat vir my nogal belangrik is en super is, terugvoer aan kommunikasie met die ███. Ek dink dit is baie belangrik en, want jy weet ons is, die ouens hoef dit nie regtig te doen nie, want daar word nie van die ██████ Jy weet ons het byvoorbeeld >n ding by ons skole begin waar ons op >n gereelde basis ons ████████, ons het >n hele rekenaarprogram eintlik ontwikkel waar ons maandeliks ons ████████████████ dan het ons dit

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deurgegee ▉ toe. Dit het so bietjie verval met goed by die ▉ wat verander het, nie regtig wat van ons kant af, so dit gebeur nie regtig meer nie, maar op ▉ kon >n ou nogal in terme van die statistiek wat by die skretaresse aan die einde van die dag, kon jy nogal gesien het watter skole jy weet het >school based social workers= en watter verskil dit aan die statistiek gemaak het wat >overall= vir die ▉ se, ja ons kon dit definitief sien.

I: Ja.

R: So, maar ons het >n punt gemaak daarvan om saam met die ▉ ▉ en ons ▉ byvoorbeeld deur te gee.

I: Okay, goed, nee wonderlik. Ja, dit is nou maar basies my vragies wat ek vir jou wil vra. Ek weet nie of daar enige ietsie is wat jy dalk wil byvoeg nie, maar jy weet ek sal nou die data en goed verwerk en jy weet as daar die verslag en goed geskryf word sal ek dan >n punt daarvan maak jy weet om vir julle ook terugvoering te gee dat julle ook net sien jy weet.

R: Ja. Wat ek nou net so op die >sideline= kan noem is wat vir my nogal a >burning issue= is ▉ is die hele ding rondom riglyne en regulasie want van hierdie ouens het nie op enige manier supervisie nie.

I: Ja, ja, hulle is so half aan hulle eie lot oorgelaat.

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R: Ja, ja. Ons opset is baie lekker omdat ons die ███ het.
So >n ou kan plomp goed van kollegas af >bounce=

                                          Jy weet en/...

jy weet en so aan, maar ek praat nie net van professionele leiding
nie, ek praat ook van goed soos uitbranding en so aan. Die druk
is hoog, die gevalle na aan ons is hoog en jy is stoksiel alleen,
want jy is regtig alleen en die onderwysers verstaan nie altyd die
rol van die maatskaplike werker nie. So hulle verwagting is baie
keer nie reg nie en dit, ja die ouens raak dalk baie gestres nogal
oor dit. Daai is vir my >n redelike >burning issue= an dan het ek
nou aan nog ietsie gedink. Die ander ding dat ek kan my nogal
indink miskien omdat ek nou in die skool ███ en spesifiek regtig
beleef het ███ >n >school based social worker= het binne die skool
opsie, kan ek my indink dat dit regtig in die toekoms, jy weet dit
baie spesifieke veld behoort te raak.

I: Ja spesialis veld, ja.

R: Spesialis veld moet raak ja en in terme van die opleiding ja
en plasing van die studente en meer prakties en so aan dat daar
bietjie meer na daardie geleenthede, maar bevondsing bly die groot
ding.

I: Ja.

R: Want verstaan jy dit gaan nie al die beheerliggame wees wat
ons kan steun, ja veral en jou skole waar die grootste krisisse is
en die grootste jy weet prorate hoeveelheid maatskaplike probleme

gaan juis jou skole wees waar beheerliggame nie kan bekostig om >n maatskaplike werker aan te stel nie. So dit is die meer gegoede skole. Ja wat het

Ja en wat nou maar net, die meeste maatskaplike werkers of die onderwysdepartement en maatskaplike werkers moet dan nou daai ander maar hanteer en nou sit jy, ek weet nie van julle daar █ █, █ hier by ons ████████████████ per maatskaplike werkers.

I: Sjoe ja, ja dis >n groot klomp kinders.

R: Dit is woes, dit is waarom jy so, ja ek dink nie, ek weet ook nie wat is die moontlikheid. Ons het redelik aan ████████ al met die ██████ gesprekke gehad, het ons op >n stadium was ons baie betrokke by die >████████████████████, jy weet wat direk aan die minister terugvoering geggee of >n gesprek mee gehad het. Ons was op daai >level= betrokke om te kyk jy weet is daar nie ████████████████ wat, want dit bly die >issue= van wie moet verantwoordelikheid neem vir ons, verstaan jy? Is dit >social development= is dit dan nou die onderwysdepartement.

I: Ja.

R: Maar niemand doen eintlik nie en nie op enige >level= nie en veral nie in termse van fondse nie.

I: Ja, ja okay. Goed, nee maar verskriklik baie dankie vir jou bydrae ook en vir al jou inligting. Ek waardeer dit regtig baie.

Ja nee vreeslik baie dankie en baie voorspoed met jou werk ook daar vorentoe.

R: Dankie Hester, sterkte met jou, ja om alles bymekaar te kry en dit is seker not lang ure, laat nagte se werk.

I: Ja.

R: Sterkte vir jou ook hoor.

RESEARCHER: Baie dankie hoor.

INTERVIEWEE: Okay baai.

RESEARCHER: Totsiens.

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